

PART I
Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations for Policy Makers

This chapter advocates and elaborates the following three-fold approach that policy makers in OECD countries can take to support sustainable natural resource management for pro-poor growth:

- i) Provide development co-operation support for improved natural resource management.*
- ii) Enhance policy coherence for development.*
- iii) Negotiate pro-poor multilateral environmental agreements.*

5.1. Conclusions

While the relationship between natural resources and pro-poor growth is complex and dynamic, there are some basic facts which deserve attention from policy makers if growth in developing countries is to yield its full potential for lasting poverty reduction.

1. Poor countries are much more dependent on natural resources as economic assets than are rich countries. Natural resource sectors provide important contributions for growth, exports, employment and public revenues in many developing countries.
2. Natural resources are a major, and maybe *the* major, asset of the poor. They are critical for subsistence and a significant source of income for many households. They help the poor to fight poverty and protect the non-poor from falling into poverty.
3. The international context of natural resource management is changing. Many emerging economies are major importers of natural resources. This increased demand makes improved resource management even more urgent.

For all these reasons, pro-poor growth strategies will need to be linked to improving natural resource management while ensuring that the poor have access to these natural resources and the rights, knowledge, capacities and accountability mechanisms to use these resources sustainably. This will require recognising that natural resource management is political in character and must be based on an understanding of the respective interests of key stakeholders, their incentives to work for, or against, reform and the key political factors that can be harnessed to promote positive change.

Broad consultative processes on national development strategies which engage and give voice to poor women and men can strengthen public demand for reform. These processes will often open up dialogue and debate, where concerns about natural resources are likely to emerge as development priorities, and will result in awareness of the need to challenge vested interests. Enhanced accountability mechanisms for the use of development resources should also be harnessed to achieve tangible improvements. Donors should better support both areas, *i.e.* efforts to strengthen participatory approaches in decision making and accountability mechanisms. Both areas are important for ensuring poor people's access to, and appropriate use of, natural resources and for enhancing aid effectiveness as outlined in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Pro-poor changes in natural resource management have often occurred in the context of wider pro-poor policy changes, *e.g.* after regime changes. To make use of these windows of opportunity, it is important to be prepared for them, for example by raising awareness among decision makers, public and private stakeholders and the broader public of the actual and potential benefits of natural resources for the economy and the poor.

*** **Climate change** poses additional pressure on poverty reduction and growth. In particular, some natural resource sectors which often play a very important role in developing countries' economies, such as agriculture, fisheries and forests, are also highly sensitive to climate change. While climate change is not addressed specifically in this paper, the threats it poses to natural resource productivity are increasingly recognised and should be addressed in natural resource management.

5.2. Recommendations

There is widespread evidence of the positive catalytic role development interventions can have in facilitating positive change. This section highlights the main recommendations for action to better harness the potential of natural resource management for pro-poor growth. It highlights some of the key issues from the previous chapters as well as additional recommendations that are particularly relevant for policy makers in OECD and partner countries, including for development co-operation agencies. It advocates a three-fold approach:

- *Providing development co-operation support for improved natural resource management.* This includes demonstrating the benefits of improved natural resource management, supporting pro-poor governance of natural resources and empowering the poor.
- *Enhancing policy coherence for development.* This implies making sure that the policies of industrialised countries in areas other than development co-operation support, or at least do not undermine, developing countries' efforts to attain internationally agreed development goals. Policies of emerging economies have to be aligned with these goals as well.
- *Negotiating pro-poor multilateral environmental agreements.* This means providing political support for improved and secured access of the poor to natural resources in the context of negotiations of multilateral environmental agreements.

5.2.1. Providing development co-operation support for improved natural resource management

Demonstrating the benefits of improved natural resource management

Demonstrating the economic and social benefits of sound natural resource management is a precondition for the mobilisation of public resources for that management and the development of better policies. It is crucial to influence strategic planning exercises where various policies and interests compete for attention, as in poverty reduction strategies, national development plans and sector reforms.

Approaches which can be used to demonstrate and quantify the socio-economic importance of natural resource management include analyses of the contribution of natural resources to poor people's incomes and livelihoods, for example through participatory rural appraisals, Strategic Environmental Assessments and Poverty and Social Impact Assessments, "cost of inaction" analysis, green accounting and others. Active involvement of key stakeholders such as the ministries of planning and finance can improve the outcome of such processes.

But quantification of the value of natural resources is often hampered by lack of data and the poor quality of such data that there is. Basic information on stocks of natural

resources, their flows and the interventions affecting them often cannot be generated sufficiently, limiting evidence-based resource management. Donors can provide support for strengthening data and observational documentation and statistical capacities, *e.g.* by providing support for domestic strategies for the development of statistics and funding projects to build capacity related to tools, methods and data, as well as observations related to natural resources.

Supporting pro-poor governance of natural resources

While demonstrating the actual and potential socio-economic benefits of improved natural resource management is a precondition for attracting the attention of policy makers, natural resource management regimes must be based on sound institutions and governance regimes. Donors can provide support in a number of areas which can enhance the pro-poor governance of natural resources.

- *Support for design and implementation of market-based instruments for natural resource management.* Environmental fiscal reform (EFR) can be a particularly promising approach. Natural resource pricing measures, such as taxes for forest and fisheries exploitation and payment for environmental services, can protect natural resources from degradation that would impact on the poor, while generating fiscal revenues from natural resource use that can be spent on pro-poor investments.¹ Forests have a significant potential to generate public revenues, and some countries, such as Cameroon, now manage to generate 25% of their public revenues through timber taxes and other fiscal instruments.
- *Support the development of sound regulation and effective institutions that ensure poor people land rights and/or user rights to natural resources.* For example, rights-based approaches can contribute to an effective institutional framework for regulating natural resources such as soil and fisheries. If farmers and herders do not have the right to the long-term tenure of the land they use, the incentive to preserve the productivity of the land is lost. Furthermore, customary tenure rights should be considered. Successful fisheries often involve some form of rights allocation, *e.g.* secured and transferable long-term access rights for fishing. In Namibia rights-based fisheries management has clearly demonstrated economic and environmental success. The country has developed a competitive, nationally owned fishing industry that generated profits of over USD 350 million in 2001.
- *Support co-operation among natural resource users, i.e.,* measures that motivate people to change their resource use patterns by giving them the opportunity to participate in the decision-making and governance processes. For example, community-based natural resource management yields a measurable improvement in household welfare, stemming from increased economic activity, investment in community infrastructure and improved management of resources.

Promoting the use of Strategic Environmental Assessments

Natural resources are often indirectly impacted by policies outside the natural resources sectors, such as trade, infrastructure and private sector development. Thus it is of great importance that such policies also consider impacts on natural resources. Strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) are a particularly promising approach for doing so. SEAs are analytical and participatory approaches to strategic decision making that aim to integrate environmental considerations into policies, plans and programmes and evaluate

their linkages to economic and social considerations. A growing number of countries at all levels of development have legislation or regulations prescribing the application of SEAs and many more are introducing these as part of their suite of policy tools. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, adopted in 2005, called upon donors and partner countries to "... develop and apply common approaches for strategic environmental assessment" and in 2006 the DAC guidance on *Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment* was endorsed.

To further SEA implementation, development co-operation agencies should be encouraged to use SEAs and support developing country partners with financial resources and knowledge to develop institutional capacities for applying SEA in their countries.

Empowering the poor

Empowering the poor, women and marginalised groups to take a more active role in formulating and implementing natural resource policies and programmes is of outstanding importance for pro-poor governance approaches. Institutions and governance have to ensure that the contributions of the poor to harnessing natural resources for pro-poor growth can be fully realised. That requires the removal of formal and informal institutional barriers preventing the poor from taking action to improve their wellbeing – individually or collectively – and limiting their choices, for example by increasing their access to land by land tenure reform and investing in institutions and infrastructure for responsible resource management. The measures necessary to achieve empowerment are closely linked to those to build better institutions and governance in general, but require a particular focus on the needs and capabilities of the poor. Some donors use country governance analyses that focus on a state's political and economic capability, a government's accountability and its responsiveness. The "drivers of change" approach is more general and helps to analyse the role of actors (agents), institutions and structural features in political change.

The following four elements of empowerment should be addressed simultaneously to strengthen natural resource management:

- *Increase access to information and transparency for the poor.* Information is power. Informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of opportunity; access services; exercise their rights; and hold state and non-state actors accountable. Critical areas where information has to be disclosed and made accessible and understandable to the poor include state and private sector performance; allocations of, and payments for, concessions; financial services and markets; and rules and rights concerning natural resource management. Information and communication technologies targeting the poor should be used to complement efforts to broaden access to information more generally.
- *Strengthen accountability mechanisms.* Changes in rules and regulations have to be connected to efforts to strengthen the capacity of citizens, especially the poor, to monitor natural resource governance and hold state officials, public employees and private actors answerable for their policies, actions and use of funds. Government agencies, both administrative and political, and firms must enhance horizontal or internal accountability mechanisms, and should become more accountable to their citizens and clients for their performance.
- *Support local organisational capacity.* The ability of people to work together, organise themselves and mobilise resources to solve problems of common interest should be

enhanced. Coalitions of the poor and organised communities are more likely to have their voices heard and their demands met, as evidence suggests in the case of the successful mobilisation of marginal fishermen in Kerala, India.

- *Institutionalise participation.* Opportunities for poor people and other excluded groups to participate in decision making are critical to ensure that use of limited public resources builds on local knowledge and priorities, and brings about commitment to change. However, sustaining inclusion and informed participation usually requires changing the rules in order to create space for people to debate issues and participate in the setting of local and national priorities, budget formation and resource management control. Shifting substantial management control over natural resources to communities gives them a voice where often they had none. It often restores traditional rights that may have been lost as modern states centralised their authority, such as rights governing water use, forest collection or fishing.

While the benefits of empowerment of the poor for better natural resource management have often been significant, empowerment also exerts a substantial psychological effect on communities that may be even more important, particularly for the poor. This manifests itself as a new sense of pride and control over their lives, as well as greater confidence in dealing with others outside the community and with government authorities. This empowerment dividend is often augmented as local community members gradually develop the accounting, monitoring, planning and dispute-resolution skills that good resource management demands. The benefits of such new personal and group skills spill over into domains well beyond natural resource management.

5.2.2. Enhancing policy coherence for development

Natural resources in developing countries should become a key concern in shaping developed countries' policies. OECD countries should adopt a whole-of-government approach supporting the pro-poor use of natural resources in developing countries and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals such as the MDGs.

A variety of issues concerning policy coherence for development have to be addressed in important areas for the poor, such as agriculture and trade. For instance, in the fisheries sector key issues relate to the management of fisheries capacity, as well as marine resource management, investment rules for harvesting and processing fish catches, and the use of subsidies. Internationally, fisheries access agreements (FAAs), tariffs and tariff escalation, and preferential market access agreements raise specific coherence issues that may impact on developing countries' ability to develop their comparative advantage and economic potential in this sector. Greater transparency in FAAs is needed, as well as stronger monitoring and compliance capacity, aid for infrastructure, mechanisms to limit fishing, by-catch reduction, and improved research and statistics.²

Grants, subsidies and other support for developed countries' private sectors should not hinder poor countries' export opportunities. Tariffs in the fishery sector of some OECD countries have to be reviewed as they may harm the fishing sectors of poorer nations. For example, Fiji fishing communities are struggling due to unfair competition from foreign fishing boats that receive generous fuel subsidies, as well as subsidies for capital costs of ships and equipment. Fishery subsidies absorb USD 14 billion to USD 20 billion a year in OECD countries, benefit large companies more than poor fishing communities and deplete fishing populations on which poor countries' coastal fisheries depend.²

Corruption and lack of transparency surrounding public revenues from natural resources are other key issues that OECD countries should address more actively, as suggested in the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The OECD convention is an important instrument for combating bribery of foreign public officials in international business transactions.³ The EITI supports improved governance in resource-rich countries through the verification and full publication of company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining.⁴ Further action is needed to develop initiatives that target other natural resource sectors, as oil, gas and mining are not the only areas where money is lost due to poor management and corruption.

These efforts should be complemented by efforts to foster demand for resources derived from sustainable harvest and production processes. An important approach is to promote internationally agreed corporate social responsibility standards such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. These guidelines provide voluntary principles and standards for responsible business conduct in a variety of areas, including the environment. Private corporations and business organisations should be urged to adhere to the principles in the guidelines. Some donors are also supporting NGOs that act as watchdogs of the overseas operations of multinational corporations.

Western consumers' interest in high environmental, social and economic standards of imports from developing countries should be harnessed for development, *e.g.* by supporting trade of certified products which meet high standards. Certification of natural resource supplies has huge potential for extension, especially for tropical forests. Currently, about 140 million hectares of forests are covered by various types of certification schemes. Conversely, the proliferation of standards can lead to market barriers against developing countries' products and should be resisted.

Furthermore, strong alignment of public procurement policies with certified resource supplies is a key step towards sustainable resource use. It is already practiced for legally sourced timber in countries such as the United Kingdom, Denmark and Japan.

There is also a need to fill a wide gap by ensuring that independent performance evaluation systems that reach beyond aid and to examine the footprint of all relevant OECD policies on the natural resource prospects of poor countries, as well as the natural resources governance record of developing countries themselves.

Finally, the key role of rapidly growing emerging economies in stimulating demand for natural resources must also be recognised, requiring the urgent extension of recommendations on policy coherence for development to key emerging economies. Many emerging economies must forge new partnerships with developing countries to secure continued access to commodities. For example, China is rapidly becoming a major player in natural resource markets, particularly in Africa, providing new incentives for rapid resource exploitation. Therefore emerging economies have to be included in international dialogue and co-operation on natural resource extraction, processing and use. Established forums for dialogue and co-operation, such as the OECD, have to reach out to emerging economies and include them in their activities. Joint activities should aim to ensure that all interventions by emerging economies on natural resources in developing countries, including both aid and other external policy measures that affect natural resources, can be shaped to support domestic efforts for the pro-poor management of natural resources.

5.2.3. Negotiating pro-poor multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)

The conservation of the globe's natural resources can only be assured if the poor people who depend most on them benefit from their sustainable use and if those people have the power to govern the use of the resources and/or the ecosystems. In international negotiations to further develop and implement MEAs (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention to Combat Desertification) there is a need for increased awareness and knowledge of the links between conservation and sustainable use on the one hand, and access and revenue generation for the poor on the other.

Related approaches are emerging. For example, the Convention on Biological Diversity is developing an international regime for access and benefit sharing which can support the interests of the poor and of the global environment. As national implementation strategies get funds directly from the international community, ownership and incentives for effective national implementation of MEAs are weak. It is therefore crucial to improve ownership of national implementation strategies of MEAs in developing countries. Furthermore, key partner country strategies such as poverty reduction strategies, sector strategies and others should be informed by, and be coherent with, the national implementation strategies of MEAs. Finally, alert and permanent monitoring of the implementation of the MEAs, with particular attention to links between poverty and the environment, needs to be formalised in the reporting procedures.

Notes

1. OECD (2005), *Environmental Fiscal Reform for Poverty Reduction*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD, Paris.
2. Recent work undertaken by the OECD on policy coherence for development outlines key findings and recommendations *inter alia* on fisheries and development policies: OECD (2007), *Progress Report on Policy Coherence for Development and a Coherent Framework for the OECD's Work on Development*, internal document.
3. www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34859_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.
4. www.eitransparency.org.

Checklist for Practitioners

This checklist aims to help to translate the messages highlighted in this publication into concrete action. It contains a loose set of questions on natural resources and pro-poor growth linkages. These questions can be considered and addressed by practitioners of natural resource management in development agencies and their partners in developing countries to improve natural resource management.

Socio-economic aspects of natural resource management

- Is it known how important natural resources and ecosystem services are for the economy and the poor of the country, and is the knowledge considered in key development policies and programmes? What is the importance of natural resources and ecosystem services and what are the trends in terms of:
 - ❖ share of GDP;
 - ❖ share of exports;
 - ❖ share of employment for: agriculture, forestry, mining, fisheries, wildlife and other similar sectors;
 - ❖ comprehensive measurement of capital stocks, *e.g.* genuine net savings, green accounting;
 - ❖ income, employment, livelihood support and safety net functions for the poor?
- How can sustainable management of natural resources be proactively built into proposed programmes in different sectors (*e.g.* health, education, rural development, energy)? Are sectors asked to contribute to an assessment of how environmental and natural resources are affected by the proposed plans? Are plans modified with respect to the outcome of the assessment?
- To what extent are natural resources taxed? What is the share of tax in the state budget? To what extent are resources from taxation redistributed to the poor?
- Are there any subsidies pertaining to natural resource use? How are tariffs, for example on water and energy, set and collected (for domestic and industrial use)? Are there hidden subsidies *e.g.* trade restrictions and publicly funded infrastructure?
- Are there small and medium-scale enterprises which are natural resource-dependent (*e.g.* fisheries, forestry, mining, tourism)? What is their scale in terms of economic share of GDP and what are the trends over time?

- What are the natural assets upon which the poor depend in terms of income and wealth? How much employment or income-earning opportunities do natural resources provide, particularly to the poorest?
- What policies exist in respect of access to, and ownership of, natural resources by local communities?

Capacity and governance for natural resource management

- Is there sufficient capacity within institutions and agencies, at national and sub-national levels, to implement, manage, regulate and be accountable for use of natural resources? How can these institutions be strengthened?
- The characteristics of natural resources: do they have a public, private, club or common pool resource character? Are the rules for their use enforced, or does an open-access situation prevail?
- The capital endowments and the flows of goods and services between actors: do existing governance mechanisms favour or disfavour poor people in the use of natural resources?
- The existing formal and informal rules: do rules exist, are they enforced, and who benefits from them (e.g. who benefits from the prevailing property rights regimes or from rules on public decision making)?
- The market-based, regulatory, information and co-operation measures that could change the existing governance mechanisms: what are their effects on the distribution of benefits? Do they set the right incentives for a sustainable use of the resources?
- The processes of change: how can change be supported and embedded so that outcomes are sustainable?
- Are there any active ongoing debates about natural resource use? Can these debates be influenced by further analytical work, or by facilitating the engagement of other stakeholders?
- How are natural resources and growth concerns addressed in key partner country strategies? These can be integrated through instruments such as political manifestos, statements by key politicians, the country's poverty reduction strategy (PRS), and sector and trade strategies. How are these reflected in the national budget?
- Are key partner strategies informed by, and coherent with, national implementation strategies of multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)?
- What are the priority needs and requirements for investment and institutional change for enhanced natural resources management? What would be the net benefits and to whom would they accrue? What is the rate of return, including non-market benefits?
- What are the primary challenges and opportunities for social movements, civil society organisations and large and small private sector stakeholders in relation to natural resource management?

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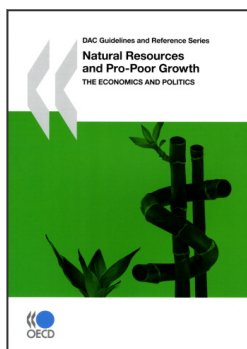
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