

Capacity and Organisational Development for Collaborative Forest Management A Process Consultancy in a TC-Project in Ivory Coast

Oliver Karkoschka

Independent Consultant, Georgstr. 30,
D – 53111 Bonn, Germany, Karkoschka@aol.com

Abstract

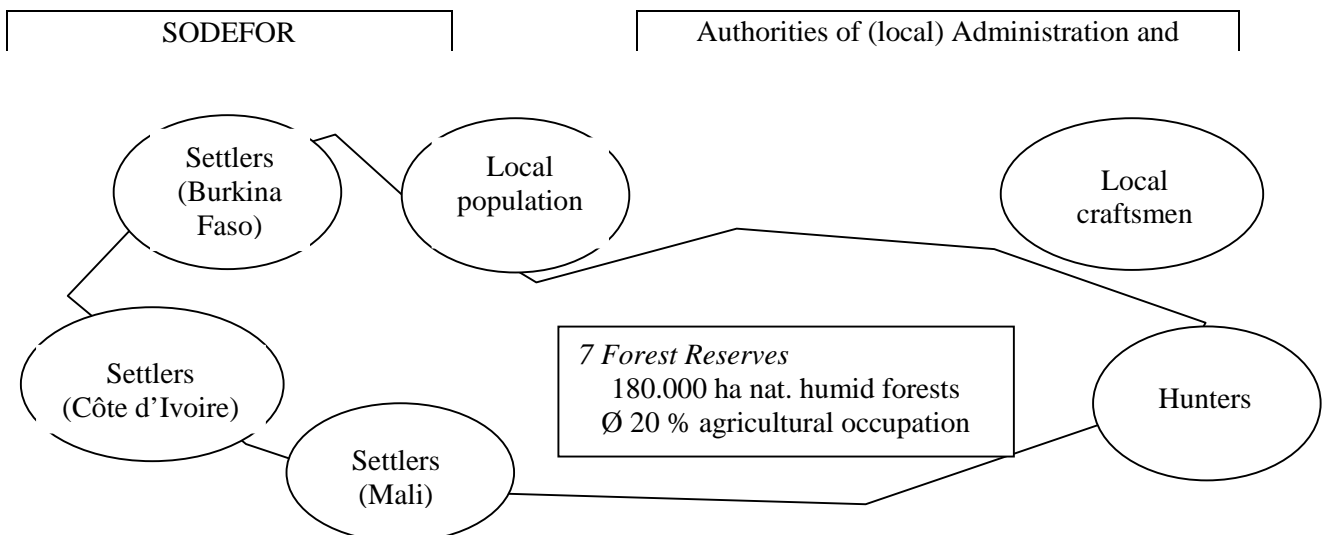
A process consultancy was carried out in a forestry project in Ivory Coast to promote collaborative management of forests between project staff and other stakeholders. Experiences suggest that expert consultancies (e. g. **approach**) or training (**capacities**) are insufficient. Specific attention has to be given as well to organisational development in order to integrate collaborative management in forest organisations. The process from unilateral management decisions to collaborative forest management has to be seen as a **organisational development process** which affects the self understanding of the organisation and the organisational culture. The process consultancy has to focus on the interwoven personal, organisational and conceptual changes.

Keywords: Process consultancy, organisational development, capacity development, collaborative forest management,

1 Introduction

The project „Protection of Nature and Forest Management“ pursues the rehabilitation and sustainable management of seven forest reserves (forêts classées) in the east of Ivory Coast. It is carried out by SODEFOR (Société de Développement des Forêts) with the support of GTZ and KfW. The management of the forest reserves has been assigned to SODEFOR in 1993. Today, between 5 % and 50 % (average of 20%) of the forests are deforested for agricultural purposes, mainly plantations of cacao and coffee by the surrounding population but also by settlers coming for this end from neighbouring countries. Another threat for the biodiversity of the forests is hunting, which is forbidden but control is not effective.

Figure 1: Main stakeholders around the forests reserves



Repression of farmers and community groups by SODEFOR did not allow to achieve the expected results: intact and productive forests which are sustainably managed. As a main concern of a new project phase 1997 a different approach (collaborative management) was suggested in order to achieve sustainability of forest resources. This approach implies new challenges for the project team, particularly

- to involve other actors especially the local population into a process of co-operation and negotiation between all actors in order to achieve common management agreements
- to develop capacities of communication and dialogue, to manage conflicts and conciliate interests and to support local organisations
- participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation
- process orientation and to develop actions together with other stakeholders
- to learn from own experiences and to support other actors to learn from their experiences

The project decided in early 1998, to support the development of these capacities of staff by a consultancy. In the beginning, four missions of each 2 weeks over a period of two years were scheduled. The objective of this consultancy was the development of the capacities of staff in order to be able to conceive processes of co-operation, communication negotiation etc (see above) in order to come to common management agreements of forest reserves together with settlers and the local population.

2 The methodology of the consultancy – a process consultancy

All the required capacities cannot be transferred by single training events. Capacities have to be developed in a process. As a consequence, the methodology employed was a process consultancy based on the following principles:

- support of learning processes of project staff
- participation of staff in all elements of the consultancy – staff play an active role, to contribute, to experiment, to manage their learning processes, etc.
- using experiences of project staff before introduction of external input
- actor orientation versus approach orientation
- considering doubts and resistance of staff.

The consultancy was based as well on two other experiences:

- more important than the utilisation of new methods or tools is the way, tools are applied – the attitudes and behaviour of staff towards the other actors (the “*how*” is more important than the “*what*”).
- more important than training of new methods and instruments was the mobilisation of energy for change to bring collaborative management forward within the organisation.

As a consequence, roles of the consultant varied according to the specific situation: facilitator, resource person, devil’s advocate, trainer, moderator etc. whereas the role of a teacher or expert was avoided.

Table 1: Main Characteristics of Process Consultancy and Expert Consultancy

	Process consultancy	Expert consultancy
Role of the consultant	Moderator, Facilitator (working together with participants)	Expert (working alone – presenting his recommendations)
Main contribution	Support of reflection and learning of participants	Knowledge
Role of project staff	Contribute, experiment, manage their learning processes - <i>active</i>	Recipients with lack of knowledge <i>passive</i>
Centre of interest	Actors and their learning	Issue and topics
Origin of results	Are developed together in the interaction between consultant and participants	Knowledge of the expert
Character of results	Elaborated specific to the context	Transfer of “external” knowledge

3 The Consultancy - Process

After a first visit of 5 days to clarify the mandate of the consultant and to design the consultancy process three consultancies took place (June 1998, November 1998 and June 1999). The first consultancy focused on the establishment of a common understanding of collaborative management and its relation to experiences and organisational and personal values. Space was given to express personal questions, doubts and resistance to change which were important particularly during the first consultancy.

The second consultancy concentrated on the initiation of real negotiation processes with stakeholders and the joint development of a collaborative management approach. One part was reserved for project management on monitoring and sustaining of the change process. The third consultancy gave specific support to three negotiation processes and was completed by an mid-term (self-) evaluation of collaborative management and the consultancy.

Clarification of the Mandate - May 1998 (5 Days)

First Contact – Creation of a Basis for co-operation

Course:

- Discussion at the Management Centre
- Two one-day workshops in the forest districts (FD) with staff from 4 of 5 districts
- Final discussion at the Management-Centre (MC)

Topics:

- Discussion and clarification of expectations and concepts of the MC and the staff of the forest districts with regard to the process of collaborative management and the consultancy
- Clarification of the methodology of process-consultancy – presentation of my understanding
- Discussion of the design of the consultancy process

Methodological Aspects

- Involve all the staff concerned
- Clarification by questions and discussion
- Emphasis on existing experiences – keep back proposals (interruption of the “expert pattern”)

Results

- First mutual clarification of interests and experiences
- Mandate from the district staff
- Uncertainty due to interruption of expert pattern and unclear consequences for staff

1. Consultancy June 1998 (12 Days)

Unfreezing: Diagnosis – Notions - Visions

Course:

- Begin conclusion and a one – day workshop at the MC
- Four workshops of each 1 ½ days in all districts (two districts participate at the same workshop)

Topics

- Discussion of the understanding of “*collaborative management*”
- Self-Diagnosis of the present practise of district staff with regard to other actors
- Clarification of objectives and discussion of visions
- Determination of first actions for implementation of collaborative management
- Analyse of consequences and advantages and disadvantages different approaches (repression en collaborative management)

Methodological Aspects

- Definition of collaborative-management and diagnosis of practice carried out by the forestry staff themselves. Contribution of the consultant: tools and arrange situations
- Collaborative–Management of the workshops as concrete basis of experience
- Use and exploitation of concrete workshop situations e. g. the participants communication

Results in the district offices

- Resistance against collaborative –management but support for continuation of the consultancy
- Common understanding of collaborative–management
- New insights into the own practice and the consequences
- Principles of collaborative management were transferred to internal co-operation

Results in the management centre

- Fostering of the internal communication from “bottom to top”
- Director supports collaborative-management but has reserves towards the consultancy – no successes until now

Resistance to change

Resistance to change was a main hindering factor of the process of capacity development particularly during the first mission. Main sources of resistance were (the quotations in italics represent original remarks by project staff)

- **Values / emotion / passion**
„Repression allows to keep the dignity of a forester“,
„Today we were the bosses of the forest, with collaborative management we are nothing but partners“
- **Interests and legitimacy**
„To keep my job“, „To rehabilitate and to protect the resources“,
„to contribute to the development of the country“,
- **The way, foresters see themselves and their role**
“we defend the interests of the country”, “collaborative management would question what we had been doing the last 5 years” “we would lose our authority with regard to the farmers”
- **The way, the organisation SODEFOR sees its role**
„The SODEFOR is foremost a reforestation company”
- **Uncertainty with regard to the new approach**
„The farmers are not adequately prepared”, “farmers look for immediate benefits, collaborative management lasts too long”
- **Fear of losing power (the districts with respect to the farmers and the management centre with respect to the districts)**
„Collaborative management increases the power of the farmers“

Resistance was dealt on two levels, problem level and emotional level

Problem level

- Direct comparison of different approaches repression and collaborative management and their, advantages, disadvantages consequences
- Development of scenarios
- Reduction of uncertainty by working on concrete cases

Emotional Level

- Giving room and time to express resistance in order to be able to deal with
- Broad participation in steps contents and form of the collaboration within the organisation and the consultancy. Common responsibility for the change process is a precondition for identification and ownership with goals
- Fostering change of perspectives – comparison of own values and motivations with those of colleagues and other stakeholders

2. Consultancy November 1998 (12 Days)

Communication - Begin of negotiations with other stakeholders

Course:

- Begin an end at the management centre
- 2 day-workshop at the MC
- 2 workshops each 3/4 days with all district staff

TopicsDistrict offices

- Training: Communication and process in collaborative management
- Begin of dialog-oriented discussions and negotiations with other stakeholders aiming at management agreements
- Evaluation of the meeting and discussion of lessons deriving
- perspectives and concrete activities

Management -centre:

- Monitoring and management of the change process
- Clarification of responsibilities and actions

Methodological Aspects

- Workshops were organised as learning loops: Input – practical training and discussion in the workshop – experience under real conditions – critical evaluation – development of new practices
- Compared to other missions high extent of inputs and training's
- Facilitate learning from concrete personal experiences
- Promotion of change of perspectives

Results

- Satisfaction and motivation
- Communication tools and methods are known and applied – sensibility of staff is increased
- Negotiations of management agreements have started
- Next steps were identified
- The role of the management centre within the process of change towards collaborative management has become clearer

3. Consultancy May/June 1999 (17 days)

Support of three negotiation processes and mid-term evaluation

Course

- Three workshops (2 - 4 days) in districts related to concrete negotiations
- Begin and mid term evaluation (3 days) at the management centre

Topics

- Procedure and strategies for negotiations of
- Secondary forest products
- Fauna management / hunting

- Reforestation of agricultural plantations
- Action-plans for the three negotiation processes
- Mid-term evaluations of the negotiations and the consultancy process
- Discussion of measures fostering the change process

Methodological Aspects

- Moderation and facilitation: using experiences for the development of indicators, strategies etc.

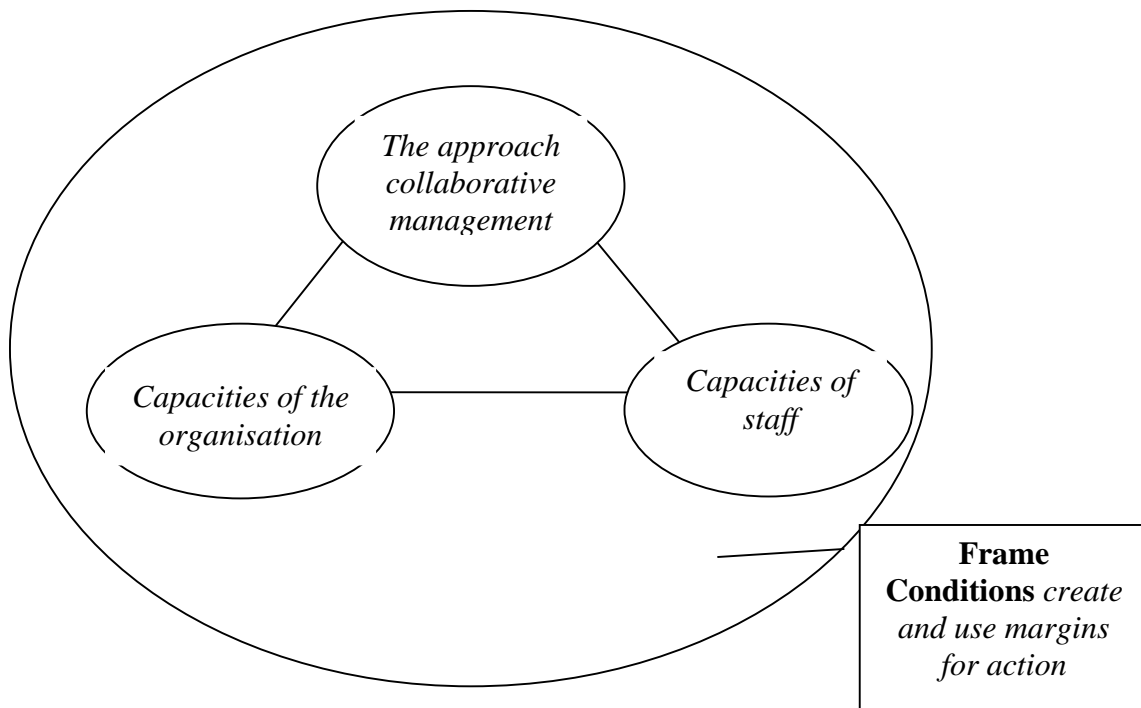
Results

- Strategies for negotiations aiming at management agreements were accomplished in three fields
- Criteria for the appreciation of negotiations were defined
- The mid-term evaluation spells out hindering and promoting factors of the change process and supplies links for further impulses

Conclusions

Expert consultancies (e. g. focussing on the **approach of collaborative management**) or training (**capacities of individuals**) are insufficient to integrate collaborative management in forest organisations and to achieve management agreements with other stakeholders. Specific attention has to be given to development and change on the organisational level e. g. the interaction between different levels of hierarchy, organisational culture etc. The process from unilateral management decisions to collaborative forest management has to be seen as a organisational development process (**capacities of the entire organisation**) where support has to focus on the interwoven personal, organisational and conceptual changes.

Dimensions in the promotion of collaborative management



The approach Collaborative management

- Steps and Process / Strategies / Tools and methods

Capacities of staff

- Collaboration, communication with other stakeholders
- Moderation facilitation negotiation, conflict management
- Sensibility with regard to social economic reality of different stakeholders
- Sensibility with regard to the own attitudes and behaviour and the effects on the other stakeholders
- Process orientation – versus implementation of a plan

Capacities of the organisation

- Creation of a common under-standing of notions like collaborative management and of a vision shared by the staff
- Create responsibility and margins for action of the field/ district level
- Process orientation - Understand collaborative management as a change process
- Develop a new organisational culture (Internal support versus control – allow participation of staff, live internally collaborative management what is intended for external relations)

Promotion of collaborative management – some hypothesis

- Development of the three dimensions: capacities of staff, development of an appropriate approach and organisational development is necessary
- Harmonic Development of the three dimensions is necessary
- Top-down implementation of a new approach does not work
- Collaborative management changes the power pattern inside and outside the organisation – it requires to deal with resistance, to induce willingness for change etc.
- Promotion of collaborative management has to be understood as a change process

Advantages of process consultancy

- Process consultancy is able to deal with all three dimensions (versus expert mission)
- It allows to work on concrete examples of the working context (versus training)
- It promotes learning from own experiences and develop potentials versus transfer of approaches or knowledge
- Principles of participation and self-help are applied to the consultancy itself
- Persons are in the centre, not things (e. g. the approach)
- Orientation of the contribution of the consultant is (lack of) dynamics of the process and not (lack of) knowledge

Main challenge

willingness to start processes concerning oneself with open end and results