

# POLICY BRIEF

## Globally responsible, locally responsive



Over the past decades, participatory and collaborative approaches have significantly influenced understandings and strategies of **locally responsive natural resources governance**. There are many efforts for promoting practical solutions for enhancing participatory initiatives. In our on-going research, we acknowledge that social relations among diverse actors across time and space continue to determine the outcomes of participatory initiatives in our case studies in Finland, Mexico, Russia, Tanzania, Nepal, Indonesia.

**We have found** that: **1)** gender, age, ethnic and socio-economic inequalities nourish various forms of disagreements – e.g. emotional, direct, structural – that hinder voluntary collaboration between the different actors; **2)** when the coordination, transparency and distribution of socio-economic benefits derived from natural resources remain limited, collaboration between the different actors becomes ephemeral; **3)** short-term and fragile commitments at multiple levels, regardless of their legality, often promote unsustainable exploitation of natural resources as well as unfair competition and disputes over natural, financial and human resources.

In **setting up collaborative approaches**, it is important to consider the definition and distribution of potential benefits and of risks across time and space: This entails analysis of how costs, responsibility and risks involved in collaborative initiatives are defined and shared among actors.

**Based on our three research findings, we highlight the importance of four aspects in natural resources governance, namely:**

1. It is helpful to **understand how governance processes develop in specific social contexts** where the production of diverse forms of injustice is hidden or normalized: Collaborative governance processes which entail the heritage and property rights of local communities, women and youth should be fostered, including rights to land and natural resources.
2. Meaningful participation is likely to **be associated with participatory actions that foster opportunities and inclusiveness**. However, these actions can also counter excessive responsabilization: there is a need for critical understanding regarding the production, validation and circulation of knowledge between different actors subject to various responsibilities.
3. Knowledge, including technical and scientific information, is a relevant aspect of responsive governance processes: Environmental collaboration could **encourage a process of co-creation of knowledge among local actors** that can be preserved and shared using Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs).
4. Market initiatives may create useful platforms for collaboration based on transparency, networking and risk sharing: Responsive and collaborative market-based initiatives **require consideration of the intersections between gender, age, status, class, ethnicity and other social categorizations** that affect the ability of vulnerable actors to appreciate the benefits of participation.

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