DIALOGUE, CONSENSUS AND VISION

PARTICIPATORY AND NEGOTIATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT – MORE THAN A METHODOLOGY – A STRATEGY FOR TERRITORIAL INTERACTION AND INTEGRATION

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With the supervison of:
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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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List of abbreviations

CSO   Civil Society Organisation
FAO   Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIAHS Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System
ICARRD International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
ILC   International Land Coalition
NGO   Non Governmental Organisation
PNTD   Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development
SDA   former FAO Rural Development Division

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Foreword

Dialogue and negotiation; dialogue and inclusion; dialogue and participation; dialogue and development. These expressions permeated the resolutions made during the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD). A common understanding that dialogue is a fundamental element in rural development was forged during the conference.

In a time when the concept of dialogue is a valued solution to conflict – including agrarian conflict – the Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development methodology assumes important relevancy. Developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the PNTD is a facilitative process that strives for rural development through negotiation, participation and dialogue. The dialogue process starts with the establishment of international partnerships between the FAO and local government that will lead to the consolidation of a territorial social pact.

The importance of the PNTD gained increased recognition during ICARRD, which brought together governments, NGOs, representatives from civil society, politicians and specialists from a variety of countries to discuss access to land and territorial development in March 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Many debates, working sessions and proposals for ways to overcome the social and economic inequalities that affect rural populations, for the eradication of hunger, and for the promotion of social inclusion were put forward.

ICARRD developed a vision for rural development policies that focus on poor populations and their organizations and that respect gender equality within the context of sustainable economic, social and environmental development. The policies should also contribute to food security and the eradication of poverty, while assuring individual, community and collective rights. The vision recognizes the need to reinforce local and national markets in order to generate income and improve social inclusion.

The principles put forward by the international community during ICARRD mirror the key elements of the PNTD strategy. As a contemporary territorial development process, PNTD aligns itself with the desire for social and cultural development and the preservation of the environment. In other words, the PNTD considers socio-political aspects to be just as important as technical and economic elements.

This participatory approach is based on economic, social and cultural rights and good governance leading to equitable management of land, water, forest and other natural resources in order to reduce inequalities and eradicate poverty and hunger. Developed through years of research and field activities carried-out by the FAO, the PNTD has been widely and successfully tested in a variety of territorial development projects in five continents.

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1. Introduction

The emergence of territoriality in the current discussion on rural development is not accidental. It is the product of economic and social changes within countries and in the wider political context of globalisation. It responds to the need to adapt methodologies, instruments and activities to the new requirements imposed by these changes and their undesired impacts. Finally, it promotes a different image of territorial issues and directly involves rural populations in the design of new development perspectives.

Actors define the territories they live in or interact with. The actors' territoriality, or territorial vision, helps to establish a common identity and supports the realization of actors' strategies and projects. In addition, a plurality of actors with different and sometimes conflicting interests and values influence the dynamics and interrelationships within the same space.

The following document is a product of the continuous research on the common denominator of experiences, elaborated and implemented by FAO. The document proposed here takes up these preoccupations and aims to link the work done in this regard within the former FAO Rural Development Division (SDA).

In recent years, a number of FAO officers have analysed the existing relationships between local actors and their territories and the implications of these relationships on local development. The output of this first effort to conceptually frame the idea of territorial development resulted in the *Methodological orientations for a participatory and negotiated territorial approach*. These reflections focused mainly on the territorial diagnostic process as a means to promote social dialogue within a territory and which leads towards a negotiation table for rural development.

Awareness was growing in the Division that this approach could help the FAO technical services to complement each other in their respective work. Consequently, various interviews with several officers were conducted with the aim of highlighting commonalities in the approaches developed in the Division through field experiences, and supporting and complementing the key principles put forward in the *Methodological orientations for a participatory and negotiated territorial approach*.

In collaboration with representatives of NGOs, the International Land Coalition (ILC), experts and university professors from various countries, a workshop was held in Venezuela (April 2001) to share experiences and to study more deeply the issues related to "territoriality and actor-based approach" and "decentralised institutions and participatory territorial planning".

This document also received valuable inputs from the workshops' discussions held in Colombia and in Hungary in 2003.

In evolving towards more sustainable production systems, agriculture and rural development, efforts should ensure the attainment of three goals:
- Food security by ensuring an appropriate and sustainable balance between self-sufficiency and self-reliance;

- Employment and income generation in rural areas, particularly to eradicate poverty;
- Natural resources conservation and environmental protection.

The sustainability of every human activity is closely connected to the impact of their exploitation of renewable resources, losses in eco-system services etc. The most intensive causes of socio-ecological conflicts or crises are related to an unsustainable management of agricultural land.

In this sense, the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) initiative, with its efforts to promote local/indigenous agricultural systems and raise awareness of their importance for biodiversity conservation and food security as well as their contribution to natural, landscape and cultural heritage, will have as one of its core challenges to develop methodologies which allow for the conservation of the heritage characteristics of agricultural systems, while allowing for their evolution and adaptation to changing socio-economic and environmental contexts, and, more importantly, the sustainable development and livelihood security of their populations.

Last but not least, the chapters that follow are elaborated on the synergies and crosscutting issues of rural development and other specific abilities of different FAO services. This only illustrates the possibilities of improving the efforts of those working in rural development but without replacing the individual specificities and main area of technical assistance.

2. Managing territorial development projects

2.1 Rationale for a different methodology

Classic rural development approaches do not respond to the complexity of rural contexts. Current changes occurring in rural areas further test the capacities of these approaches to promote rural development. The Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development (PNTD) approach offers concrete responses to several challenges:
- Improving trust among actors
- Strengthening social cohesion
- Promoting systemic territorial development

The concept of territorial system is derived from the school of Agrarian System analysis[1]. The definition of territorial system includes, in addition to the dynamics of the agrarian systems, the interrelationships between rural and urban areas, the existence of poles linked to market, production and technology, new information systems and the resulting changes in the environmental, social, economic and cultural dimensions. Territorial systems are open to influences from the national and supra-national contexts and from the relationships between territories.

2.2 The Failure of Top-Down Approaches

The rise of systemic thinking
Over last 30 years, technical assistance projects were mainly based on top-down, supply-driven approaches. Interventions were defined by sectoral issues (agriculture, natural resource planning and management, soil and water conservation, etc.) and only partially addressed the constraints and potentials of the territories they dealt with. Therefore they were rarely adapted, nor adaptable, to local contexts. To compensate for these limitations, purely technical projects became large integrated programs, which were very often overcharged with activities and thus unmanageable.

A growing awareness from civil society and NGOs of the need to fill the gaps left by these large projects, led to the promotion of bottom-up approaches and a wider use of participatory methods. Working mainly at grassroots levels these new approaches took into account the real needs of local populations but were limited in scale and not easily replicable when successful. These constraints stemmed from the fact that civil society and NGOs did not have (and still do not) the capacities to integrate local action into national and international governance context.

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1 "An agrarian system is a (predominantly agricultural) way of exploring an environment that has been established over a period of time and is durable, is adapted to the bio-climatic conditions of the given area and is responsive to the conditions and the social needs of the time. The expression agrarian system looks at the interaction between bio-ecological, socio-economic, cultural and political systems, across agricultural practices." (FAO (2003) Multilingual thesaurus on land tenure, FAO Rome)
http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/X2038E/X2038E00.HTM

2.3 Today's challenges

Resolving some of the rural development problems
The uncertainty and unpredictability of the interactions between the local and global must be taken into account when addressing development issues. The adoption of the territory as the system of reference and considering the new active role of civil society are key issues to counteract the negative impacts of these changes and redefine the parameters of the rural development.

Local actors
Local actors must be aware of and have the capacities to protect their rights and livelihood choices, overcome constraints and reduce the effects of global changes, thus enabling them to enter actively in policy and decision-making processes. In fact, local actors have to face to the high uncertainty of global environmental processes, their causes and the effects for their life (e.g. climate changes, pollution, and land degradation). In addition, they are submitted to the less predictability of economic and rapid technological changes and their possible dramatic effects. They must also react to the new arrangements of institutions and governance processes (decentralization) and the creation of new spaces for different groups to shape these processes (e.g. actors in the private sector, particularly multinational corporations; but also social global movement of resistance).

Transformations and changes
Social processes transform as economic and institutional changes occur. For instance gender relations, demographic trends (e.g. urban-rural migrations, southern-northern migrations), and cultural identities can take new forms. Understanding how individuals and households support themselves and try to secure and improve their well being in the face of this complexity is a major challenge. Rural areas face a changing economic, social and political environment, which requires a redefinition of the parameters of their development. Rural actors must have the capacities to face the challenges emerging from these changes.

Decentralization and disengagement of the State
The lack of public service provision
Imperfect decentralization – de-concentrating responsibilities without devolving power and without equipping the lower administrative levels with the needed financial and human resources – or disengagement of the state has resulted in severe gaps in the fulfilment of the state's functions. Such inefficiency from the side of public institutions (partially filled by CSOs and NGOs) creates obstacles to the realization of actors' visions and causes decreasing credibility of public administration in the eyes of civil society. In turn, this lack of credibility reduces the margins of action of public administration when enforcing law and order, redistributing welfare, collecting taxes, and providing basic services.

The diversity of actors and projects
Possible cause for inefficient local resource use and management
The diversity of rural populations comprises a wide array of actors (public-private, groups and individuals) and does not limit itself to the agricultural sector. Powerful actors influence decisions and people's livelihood strategies within a territory but they are often not participating in social dialogue, which is essential for sustainable local

development. Those actors are, for instance, the private sector, powerful policy-makers, and landlords. The diversity of actors, their values, and the interdependencies between them often lead to conflicting interests causing the improper use and inefficient management of local resources.

Interdependencies within and between territories
Possible difficulties defining their boundaries
Delineating a territory is not an easy task since territories are social products conditioned by their history. Territorial resources are limited leading to competition over their use among the actors. The dynamics and flows within a territory and between territories also make it very difficult to limit the scope and scale of a territorial intervention.

2.4. Innovation

The values of the PNTD approach
The Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development (PNTD) approach sets out a territorial development strategy to overcome the challenges described above. The debate remains open on the risk of including marginalized and disadvantaged actors in a process of negotiation, dialogue, without strengthening their bargaining power and realizing their rights. Negotiation processes must be conducted in a way that the fundamental human rights (political, socio-economic, cultural, and environmental) of the actors are not questioned.

The dialogue and negotiation among the actors already occurs without external support. In this sense, the negotiation process is supported in respect of the human rights based approach and in virtue of the first article of the International Covenant on Human Rights which states that all peoples have the right of self-determination

Building credibility between private and public actors
In view of the growing competition over limited resources among actors and territories and the decreasing credibility of public administrations, this approach focuses on establishing and maintaining social dialogue within the territory and restructuring and/or strengthening territorial institutions. Intermediate level institutions have an important role in integrating the territory and its actors in the existing governance framework.

Strengthening social cohesion
A better use and management of resources
Territorial diagnostics are a means to promote dialogue between pluralities of actors. The aim is to reach a negotiated agreement defining territorial development activities that allows the realization of the actor's environmental, social, economic and cultural projects and recognizes them as promoters of their own development. A wide participation must be guaranteed including powerful actors with little interest in dialogue.

The proposed approach assumes an inherent learning process with the objective of increasing social cohesion, strengthening the bargaining power of the marginalized, increasing people's and institutions' organizational capacities and improving their

access to information and channels of communication, and their abilities to use these for their own development.

The territory as an arena for dialogue and negotiation
A systemic vision of the territory offers a better view of its functioning (dynamics, flows, inter-territorial relations, boundaries) and enables vertical and horizontal integration between territorial scales and levels (e.g. geographic, socio-economic, administrative). Furthermore, working on a territorial level allows focusing on the assets of the territory (including the cultural and natural heritage), its potentials and constraints. Giving value to territorial assets serves to develop synergies within a territory while taking into account linkages with other territories and helps to revitalize formerly marginalized territories.

The different and sometimes conflicting values, visions and interests related to the use and management of land and other natural resources coexist in a given territory and must be oriented towards a common ground as a basis for the design of territorial development strategies. Negotiation is the means to an agreement. With the term negotiation we not only refer to the management of conflictive situations but also to any process of searching through dialogue a way to harmonize the diversity of interests.

Box 1. Principles of the approach

Actor based: Recognition of the heterogeneity of the actors' interests and visions of the territory.
Territorial based: Based on the territories as spatial units of analysis, shaped by the social and historical relations between the actors and the territory.
Dynamic: Understanding of and learning from the complexity of a changing environment to support positive patterns of change and help mitigate negative patterns.
Systemic: Assumption of the complexity of a territorial context and the interdependencies within and between territories.
Multi-sectoral: Integration of the environmental, social, economic, political, cultural dimensions of the actors' visions of the territory.
Multi-level: Integration of different territorial levels and scales in the governance system.
Participatory and negotiated: Notion of the territory as a negotiation arena to strengthen dialogue and mutual trust, and increase bargaining power.
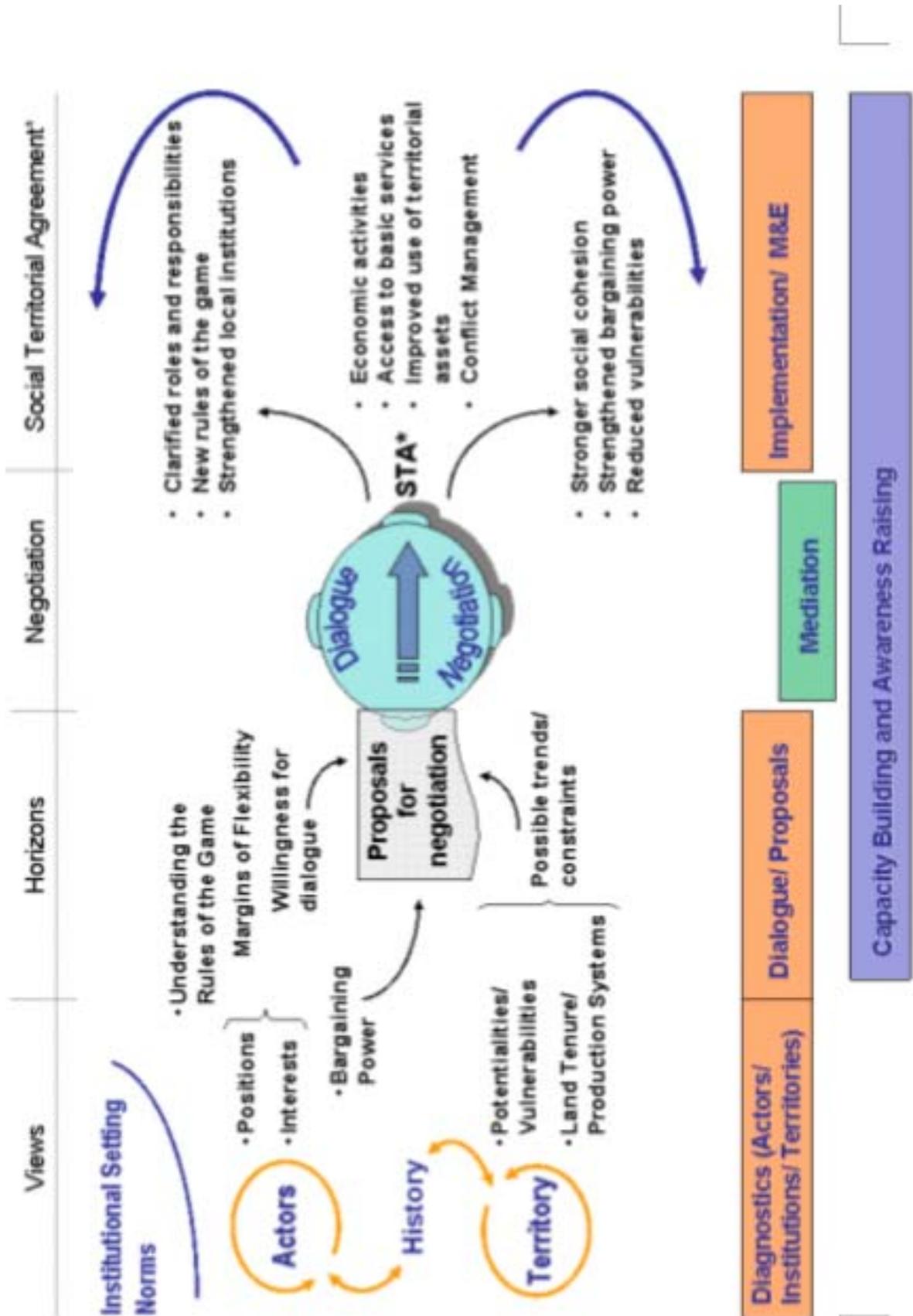
3. PNTD: A better path to territorial development

3.1 Defining the PNTD process

The PNTD is a territorial development strategy that begins with a systemic, bottom-up and negotiated vision. It promotes consensual decision-making in the quest for rural development solutions involving territorial actors and considering socio-political aspects as much as technical and economic aspects.

Based on dialogue and participation, the PNTD attempts to stimulate social changes and dialogue so that rural populations are assured access to land and adequate livelihoods. The strategy stimulates the strengthening of local actors so that they may use their own, available resources for the development of their visions of the territory.

3.2 The challenge of the PNTD process

Reducing power asymmetries amongst actors over natural resource access and control by supporting a process aiming at the creation of socially legitimised agreements involving all stakeholders and leading to their commitment and ownership over a sustainable rural development process.

3.3 The objectives of the PNTD process

The main objective of the PNTD process is to re-establish dialogue between different actors and institutions while renewing the social ties that are frequently victims to power relations and inequalities. This strategy aims at establishing and maintaining social dialogue in territories through the restructuring and/or reinforcement of territorial institutions in order to achieve development and the social pact.

3.4 PNTD strategies

- Formulate rural development projects and support ongoing field activities;
- Empower disadvantaged actors and their organizations to voice their needs and concerns;
- Support bottom-up decision making processes and strategy formulation;
- Promote local development initiatives in the context of national regulations and international norms, with special attention to human rights and the conservation of the environment;
- Foster inter-agency collaboration and partnerships with governments, NGOs and civil society;
- Discuss international strategies for rural development.

3.5 Basic characteristics of the PNTD process

In order to reach its objectives, the PNTD process should exhibit the following characteristics:
- **A learning process:** The approach is not outcome oriented but attention is put on the process of re-establishing social dialogue in order to guide the course towards a negotiated territorial agreement that effectively takes into consideration and

involves all the actors. Learning from mistakes is equally important. It is important that the right questions are asked. Open questions start with: who, how, why, when and where.

- **Coherent and feasible:** In order for the process to be as efficient and effective as possible given available resources (financial and temporal). In this context, precision does not mean the pursuit of in-depth observations and exact data per se, but the intention not to neglect anything important towards understanding root causes of problems and territorial trends.
- **Transparent and accountable:** Based on a wide access to and open sharing of information and its use through the participatory design and implementation of communication strategies. A transparent process guarantees a clear assumption of responsibility by the actors and this is a key indicator of the quality of the process.
- **Iterative and progressive:** In order to be able to come back to a question and draw up new hypotheses, analyses, evaluations, adding new elements to the diagnostic little by little and allowing for a renegotiation of the outcome and agreements.
- **Flexible and replicable:** Both in space (i.e. applicable to different geopolitical, agro-ecological and socio-economic contexts) and in time. The progressive analysis is carried out with a continuous adaptation and responsiveness to changes in the cultural and social context; respecting actors' pace of learning and expression, and in order to ensure that resulting plans are feasible and sustainable. Simplicity and practicality are required in order for the process to be easily understood and to allow actors' involvement in each phase.

3.6 The PNTD audience

The PNTD process can support actions led by governments at different administrative levels as well as local NGOs and CSOs for the promotion of territorial development. The strategy is also directed at other development practitioners, members of international organizations and NGOs.

4. Men and women as agents of change

4.1 What is an actor?

The term actor refers to a concrete, localized agent in a certain context. An actor is any individual, social group or institution that possesses a stake (or interest) in the development of a territory. Actors can be thought of as those parties who are affected directly or indirectly by decision-making, in a positive or negative way. It includes those who can influence such decisions, as well as those who would like to influence decisions.

Actors can be thought of as belonging to three types. Actors that affect or are affected by:
- The structural characteristics of the territory;
- The objectives and interests vis-à-vis the issue being examined;
- Power relations.

5. How to develop a project using the PNTD approach

The PNTD's methodology develops in three phases and attempts to understand not just the components of the territorial systems but also the relationships and interdependencies at different levels. The territorial diagnostic produces a vision of the territorial system and the different actors' strategies to access, use and manage natural resources. This step forms the base for the later phases of the PNTD process.

5.1 Phase 1 – Views. Understanding the actors and the territory as a social product

The objective of the first phase is to carry out a diagnostic process of the situation by taking into account the actors concerned and the territory as a whole system. The systemic vision implies vertical and horizontal dimensions to assessment. This process involves qualifying the territory and conducting an analysis of actors and institutions to understand the issues at stake and their causes and interdependencies. Using participatory tools and methods ensures that the process implementation is stimulating for social dialogue.

The historical analysis of the territorial system is essential for a coherent understanding of actors' global visions and livelihood strategies likewise for formulating possible scenarios of evolution of the main issues under discussion like the right and access to resources, land use and management, relationships within the whole productive chain.

The logic for a required intervention
Before assessing the actor's positions and interests, and the potentials and vulnerabilities of the territory, it is very important to identify the explicit or implicit reasons for the request of external support and their implications with regard to the modalities of interventions.

This analytical process is significant because it brings to light certain problems, which are often well known, but have not been expressed or taken into account. The formulation of these problems is important, but the changes that this assessment can produce in the perception by the various stakeholders of the territorial issues, are even more important.

Doubts arise, however, about the need for the intervention and how requests for such interventions are stimulated and identified. The idea is to clarify the origin of the request for intervention and understand the context where the intervention will take place.

Key informants
The use of key informants is an efficient technique to quickly collect information and in-depth points of view on current issues. Key informants express opinions and provide analyses of the situation. In addition, they actively collaborate in the survey by suggesting other information sources and suggesting new directions of research. It is by means of their perceptions, and the judgments and memories of such persons that the researcher can perceive certain underlying tones in the midst of the numerous observations and detect coherence or incoherence in the arguments.

Identify explicit and hidden demands
Identifying explicit and hidden demands (internal and external) and the origins of the request gives a first overview of the issues at stake, the existing asymmetries within the civil society and with the governmental authorities.

When looking at beneficiaries of an intervention, it is important to understand the indirect target that will be also affected by such intervention and to include them in the whole process of the implementation of activities.

Identify the driving forces impacting on the territorial system
Global change processes are impacting the dynamics and the functioning of territorial systems. The specific driving forces that will influence the intervention must be identified taking into account the risks and opportunities of the current trends in the environmental, economic, institutional and social context.

A change in government, a transition to a market economy, changing patterns in social relationships, the introduction of new technologies, the failure of past policy or programmes, a conflict or a peace agreement, and gradual or sudden climatic disasters can all offer opportunities to stimulate a change process, because such events can generate a collective awareness of the need to change.

Identify key figures and leaders
From the beginning of the process, which can take place at different levels (local, intermediary or national), it is necessary to identify key figures at the respective levels who have the capacity to articulate the key demands, are responsible and committed, trusted, credible and respected by the involved actors. These key figures will for example help to overcome historically built mistrust and reduce the existing gap between public administration and civil society.

The Actors in the territory
The first step of the diagnostic process is the identification of the actors of the territorial system and its assessment, through a stakeholder analysis of their visions, interests, power relations, and margins of flexibility. It is fundamental to understand throughout the diagnostic, the rules of the game that have shaped the relationships among the actors and the governance system.

Identifying and characterizing the actors
Actors are the key entry point to assist in the identification of the issues at stake of the territory in a given area, and through their history, help understand their causes.

The identification of the actors is linked to the questions being asked and to the scale and purpose of the study. There is a risk that attention is given only to "dominant" actors or those who are formally organized, and that only what they explicitly relate is taken into consideration when trying to understand their behaviour.

The relationships among the actors
Social relations defined by the structures of society link actors: parental relations, productive relations, transactions, etc. From these social relations stem relations of power, dominance and submission. In order to objectively assess these power relations, (that are often unspoken or hidden), it is necessary to specify them in detail.

Specific relationships exist between actors around a given issue (e.g. a specific resource). Relationships of cooperation and alliances are established, or to the contrary, of opposition and conflicts, depending on the degree to which the interests of the different actors on the territory converge or diverge and whether they are complementary or incompatible. The actors may cooperate for a given purpose (e.g. the conservation of a certain area) and be in opposition on other issues. Alliances and oppositions are considered as rational behaviours by the actors, a form of social practice and a strategy to reach their objectives

Stakeholder analysis
A stakeholder analysis is a tool for planning and guiding participation in natural resource management. A stakeholder analysis can be used to predict the support that can be expected and the resistance that may be met in a participatory development process. It can be used to identify weak parties who may need special assistance and support in order to participate effectively. It can be used to avoid the pitfall of bypassing powerful stakeholders who can derail the process if they so desire, and other stakeholders who depend on and affect the resource in substantial ways.

Analysis of institutional setting
Conceived as a continuum composed of a set of rules, forms of access and modalities of use, the territory reflects the relationship between such rules and the actors. Problems arise when one or more of these components no longer fit with the others, thus creating a distortion in the system. For example, when the following occur:
- A set of unclear or not formalized rules (statutory or customary), regarding
  - Access to land: the distribution and access to fertile soil within the community;
  - Management of natural resources, with improper or overlapping use - competition over a transhumance corridor or fertile areas, for example;
  - Security (environmental risks, etc.).
- An unclear regulatory framework leaves the field open to competition and rivalry with consequent unequal and predatory power relations.

These issues contribute to generate territorial critical situations, which manifest themselves with varying intensity and modalities depending on the context. Such situations generate area-specific problems of competitive and improper uses of land and natural resources, and this is happening in times when national and local politico-institutional systems are undergoing deep changes and encounter difficulties in implementing planned land policies.

Historical analysis
The historical analysis of the territorial system is pivotal for a coherent understanding of actors' global visions and livelihood strategies. The objectives of a historical analysis are to describe in a coherent framework the causes of the existing territorial issues, actors' visions regarding access to and use of land and natural resources and current dynamics on the territory and possible trends. This is the basis for the formulation of alternative options of interventions to be discussed around the negotiation table. It is essential not to lose sight of the historical evolution of national and international policies and economics and their effects on the territorial situation and the problems being considered.

What historical information are we looking for?
The analysis of the evolution of social relations is fundamental in order to understand territorial dynamics: exchange flows, networks, systems of social differentiation and the adaptation/modification of social practises, actors' livelihood strategies, modalities for territorial administration, etc. It will be important to reconstruct the evolution of the following aspects:

- Land tenure regimes, in terms of rules for gaining access to land and its use;
- Soil cover as well as land and resource use;
- Production and agrarian systems;
- Demographic structure;
- Actors' livelihood strategies;
- Social and power relations between the actors and public institutions.

Analysis of the territory
The PNTD approach allows the actors to position themselves and their territory within the existing political, socio-economic, environmental system. The systemic analysis of the territory is a key instrument for the study of a geographical space defined less by boundaries than by existing exchange flows, overlapping, interferences, trends and dynamics. Qualifying the territory and its assets will lead to a definition of territorial potentials or problem areas.

The actors themselves constitute one of the entry points in identifying critical areas for territorial management and it will be up to them to explain why and how their territorial system has evolved through history and to highlight the potentials and constraints of their territory. The historical analysis of the interface between the actors and the territorial system is helpful in the understanding of the functioning of the territorial system. The scope is not about giving a definition of territory but rather to illustrate the complexity of a geographic, social, cultural, economic, political, dynamic, interrelated, multilevel, interdisciplinary, territorial system analysis for rural development.

Analysing the potential of the territorial system
Developing local potentials requires the identification of the specific trends particular to the micro-region under consideration. An endogenous strategy must take into consideration the strength of regional cultures that include regional economic trends, the unique characteristics of the regional culture, the specific networks of interaction and communication within the region, the preservation of the region's cultural heritage as well as its natural resources. Territorial capital cannot therefore be evaluated purely in terms of the area's history. The past sheds light on the present, just as the present makes it possible to pinpoint elements of the past on which it might be possible to base a strategy. There is therefore an ongoing back and forth exercise between analysing today's capital and examining the past. Similarly, the area's capital depends on how people see their future.

Opportunities rather than problems
There are two disadvantages to looking at rural management from a problem perspective rather than an opportunity perspective. The first is its negative connotation. Problems present themselves; opportunities, however, have to be thought out. The solution of problems is liable to maintain a static situation rather than

promote a development one. The second disadvantage is that problem solving may lead to misallocation of resources while the opportunity creation, by contrast, would direct attention to seeking out new possibilities
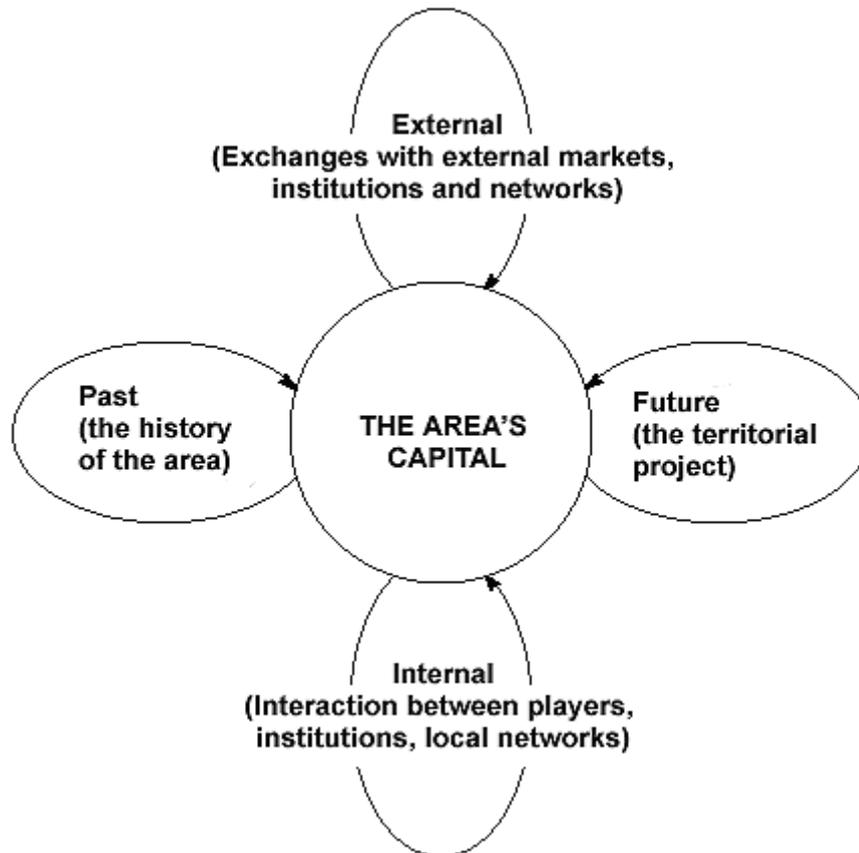
The actors' representation of the territory
New actors contribute to changes in the regional territorial system and, in some cases, to the exploitation/development of the territory and its resources, thus increasing competition over land and social tensions. The results are new responsibilities and challenges in the management of local resources, which make the question of the active participation of local communities a key issue.

It is important to see the territory as a systemic concept, more holistic than the concept of space and physical support for human activities. It becomes a complex system in which environmental, economic, social, political and cultural factors interact. It is thus understood as a multi-dimensional territory. A territory exists as a social construction made by actors, but also has a specific value that depends on the social and cultural groups that utilize it and progressively transform it.

Several actors may define different territories in the same space. This is why, for example, the territory of the local population might be different from that defined by juridical-administrative authorities, with the two territorial visions not necessarily coinciding. In spatial-temporal terms, the territory is a projection that will be assessed by examining the past, present and future continuity.

Various angles to analyse the territory
From a methodological point of view, different perspectives on the analysis of the territory can be adopted:

- A sectoral dimension that will focus on locating in space the physical-spatial, socio-economic and technical/productive components. These components describe the territory through a zoning of homogeneous areas based on the highlighted problems;
- A historical and systemic dimension based on the visions of the actors concerned. In this dynamic dimension the territory is neither polygonal nor composed of neighbouring blocks of homogenous zones, but is defined by poles and pathways. The territory is thus represented as a network;
- The territorial analysis should also take into consideration the economic and political set-up at macro level (national or international). It is also necessary to identify the changes that have occurred over time on the territory and in its uses, while not losing sight of any structural change or the economic and political decisions adopted by the country under study, that are often conditioned by international constraints.

The territory and the territorial system analysis are closely linked to the governance system. The administrative limit as a constant represents a fundamental element in the local development process. The commitment of local bodies is sine qua non to any intervention. A systemic analysis cannot limit its assessment to such artificial boundaries. The functioning of the territory is not limited by administrative boundaries, and the intermediary levels of governance constitute an opportunity to widen the potentials of management of local development.

5.2. Phase 2 – Horizons. Dialogue and Proposals

The objective of this phase is to open a discussion among the actors over the development of their territory. Once the actors have accepted the different views of the situation and the preconditions for dialogue are met concrete proposals for development can be elaborated. These proposals should include alternative scenarios that, through the establishment of common ground, will eventually ease the consensus building process.

Participation is a continuous and iterative process. Accompanying this process with concrete activities is not limited to one phase in time, but will be implemented along the overall process. The main objective of the participatory process is to strengthen the sustainability of actions, building credibility, strengthening social cohesion, and integrating the territorial system into the overall governance system.

Outlining coherent and feasible proposals for territorial development
The diagnostics result in a coherent understanding of the functioning of the territorial system, its assets, and their historical interrelationships and interdependencies within and between territories. In this phase the facilitator will help draw the conclusion about the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the existing system, the causes of the problems identified and the territorial tendencies. These results will assist in the formulation of feasible proposals for territorial development.

Validation of the diagnostics by the actors of the territory
When the degree of complexity and the uncertainties in the analysis increase significantly, the role of the facilitator is central in helping the actors cope with systems as a whole, and for taking into account their internal dynamics and external driving forces. The facilitator has the responsibility of joining the threads of the analysis, adding elements to the reflections on the territorial system, and to initiate the dialogue. In fact, she/he has the task of organizing and examining key information to ensure the analysis is consistent and adequate to the context.

At the end of the diagnostic phase the facilitator and the PNTD team should assist with the prioritisation of problems and the vulnerabilities of territory as well as the importance of preservation, rehabilitation, valorisation of resources and local potentials. This actor based coherent reconstruction should show potential ways to reinforce or create new territorial identities and to solve conflicts between different visions.

Reconstruction of a framework of options and socio-technical alternatives
The PNTD team will propose a set of methods and tools to guide the discussion towards the formulation of possible strategic options. Participatory management is not the same as confronting local actors with the simple choice between different options formulated externally, it is the management of internal negotiation within the community in order, for the latter, to formulate their own options. Based on real objectives, clear information, available resources, existing constraints and opportunities and capacities, participatory management explores the possibility of elaborating a new territorial project to be discussed at the negotiation table toward a social territorial agreement.

The facilitator should have the responsibility of sharing information transparently and linking the actors, depending on their margins of flexibility. He/she should be able to create bridges between actors with convergent concerns or interests to start discussing jointly. They will play a major role by getting involved in the joint formulation of proposals.

Subsequently, the technical, social, economic and political feasibility of these proposals has to be analysed and the actors themselves have to weigh the various proposals on the basis of the potential risks and benefits of each of them. The results of this activity clearly depend on the specific context and the problems being considered. The final proposal for negotiation should include requests to other groups, higher administrative levels or development agencies including the specific questions for which assistance is needed.

For the final evaluation of the proposals, socio-cultural, environmental, economic criteria have to be defined to assess alternatives or scenarios elaborated, which should be designed to reflect the actors' way of understanding. The facilitator might have to integrate the local data with other information collected by him to suggest a common ground for negotiation.

Willingness to initiate a dialogue
At first, actors could have voiced some scepticism about the objectives and conditions for participation into an open dialogue and negotiation. Many times, people are

engaged in relatively passive position, observing their own participation. However the actors' willingness to participate is also related to their perceptions and experiences of the obstacles and limitations of such a process.

Nevertheless, participatory processes should provide a forum for joint decision-making, leading to more ownership. Commitment and ownership as we know are keys to success. For this reason from the beginning it is important to verify and / or encourage the willingness to enter into the dialogue and to stimulate the understanding of benefits achieved by participation.

In order to involve all the actors, to assure the ownership of the process, the sustainability of the dialogue and the continuous renegotiation on different issues and at different levels, it might be necessary to put in evidence the possible direct and indirect benefits (private or collective) the actors (both weak and powerful) will receive, in terms of:
• Reinforcement of social capital and changes in power relationships;
• Involvement in decision-making;
• Recognition and realization of rights (e.g. cultural rights, health and environmental security, land tenure security);
• Improvement of the local productive and economic situation.

How can powerful actors be convinced to share part of their power?
One of the keys for the success of the dialogue process is to find ways to counteract the elites' maintenance of the status quo, which means the protection of an historical privileged position, and to motivate them towards a change. It is necessary to show those involved the benefits of participating in the process. Indeed, benefits can be seen in terms of products, services, income, power or other stakes. The identification and communication of immediate benefits for all the actors must be based on an adequate understanding of their interests. These interests are clearly both in the substance under discussion and in the relation with the other actors involved. It should never be forgotten that the most powerful interests are basic human needs such as security, economic well-being, a sense of belonging, recognition, and control over one's life.

Ability to enter into dialogue
One of the preconditions to enter in dialogue is the strengthening of the bargaining power of marginalized and less powerful actors, such as women. It is clear that the dialogue as a bargaining process could be complicated or even impossible due to the existent asymmetries in power relationships.
Weak and marginalized actors have much more to lose in a negotiation process: they risk being manipulated and controlled by the dominant group. The process has to be flexible and iterative to consider the existing power disparities before, during, and after the negotiation. For this reason, all the methods and tools to accompany a participatory process will have to be used facing the inequalities of power, supporting weak actors to enter into the dialogue process, and opening them to the possibility of negotiation.

Identification of common ground
The first step to open negotiation should be a synthesis of common point for discussion, of desirable objectives and of proposals to evaluate.

Through the actors' analysis, the positions and interests of each actor, their distance and relationships are visualized, in order to explore conflictive situations and possible alliances. First of all, the aim of this analysis is to develop a common understanding of constraints and problems, their origin and dynamics.

The facilitator may assist the actors in discussing their divergences and convergences, using some specific tools and methods in order to develop common goals as an effective way of helping parties to focus on their interests, rather than their positions, and to explore similarities instead of differences. According to the basic principles of the PNTD approach this should happen well before the formal gathering around the negotiation table.

Accompanying the participatory process and supporting social dialogue
The key issue in the proposed process is the understanding of existing asymmetries of power. The lack or weakness of social and human capital constitutes the challenge for the sustainable use of local resources and for the establishment of a constructive dialogue and debate among the different actors.

The role of capacity building, constant communication at all levels, the use of participatory methods and tools, the integration between scientific and local knowledge, are means to raise awareness of weak groups and socialize knowledge and information. These means are also keys to stimulating actors' effective involvement in the setting-up and functioning of the negotiation table.

To promote the sensitisation of and joint analysis by the actors of local issues networks should be established between FAO and other international agencies of development, governments, national NGOs and CSOs. This collaboration and networking at different level is necessary to carry out the needed awareness raising, empowerment and capacity building activities.

Adoption of an action-research strategy
The way to organize participation should be adapted to each context involving the actors actively in each stage of the training-action process, through the adoption of an action-research strategy. The main objectives of participatory action-research are the following:
- To generate social awareness of existing territorial problems and dynamics;
- To promote and highlight the value of local know-how and traditions;
- To support the contribution of local knowledge systems to the process of social and political change, which is initiated by the local populations based on their own perception of reality.

Access to and exchange of information
The lack of access to reliable information is profoundly disempowering. It undermines people's capacity to take decisions and defend their own interests, and it leaves them as easy prey to deliberate manipulation. Assuring the transparency and sharing of the information throughout the process is a basic principle to guarantee its quality. Indeed, all the data and information collected, as well as all the studies elaborated should be accountable to the public involved for peer reviewing. Transparent communication and good relationships are also keys to the actors' comfort in sharing their worries and their interests, and give them the courage to explore possible options on how their

goals can be met at the same time with the goals of others. An atmosphere of mutual trust is the basis for constructive co-operation and the reaching of a compromise. Transparency will help to avoid hidden agendas and suspicion amongst the different parties and thus to prevent situations in which all the actors try to protect solely their own interests rather than finding the most suitable compromise for all the parties involved.

Soft and hard methods and tools
A combination of sources of information and the integration between "soft" and "hard" methods for data collection, treatment, analysis and visualization is necessary for establishing a dialogue between different forms of knowledge and epistemologies, optimising available resources and creating ownership of the process. The principle of triangulation is central in fieldwork to continuously crosscheck the data collected and assess their coherence with one another.

There is no blueprint on how to facilitate participatory processes. Methods and tools should not be used mechanically and their selection should also be determined by the specific characteristics of the concerned society/community/group.

There are many qualitative methods (e.g. participant observation, unstructured, focused observations, participatory methods, and focus groups) commonly used, referred to as soft ways. The qualitative methods are process oriented. They can be crucial for understanding systems and evolutions

Several approaches for participatory researches have been used since the 1970s-80s (from Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal to Participatory Learning and Action and Linked Local Learning), which represented various and progressive attempts to support active involvement, commitment and control by the actors over the process and the tools.

Hard methods refers to the use of quantitative (technical and natural scientific) methods and tools to manage the information collected. Obviously, the methods used and the organization of the information will be specific of each context depending on the existing databases and available technology (e.g. statistics, actualised maps).

In quantitative research, the researcher is ideally an objective observer that neither participates in nor influences what is being studied. In qualitative research, however, it is thought that the researcher can learn the most about a situation by participating and/or being immersed in it.

Communication strategies
Communication between actors at all levels is a fundamental factor in the promotion of community participation, through sensitisation and the building of confidence and skills, in order to promote the active involvement and commitment of actors to participate in the negotiation table. For this reason communication for development is the planned and systematic use of communication approaches, methods and tools for participatory planning and implementation of communication in support of development initiatives.

The aim is to use multiple channels and tools of communication to create effective and open-ended links between communicators. The communicators can be the PNTD team, but more importantly the communicators are actors involved in the process. The communication needs one can address with a Communication for Development approach range from merely information sharing and awareness-raising to participatory decision-making, conflict management and negotiation. Communication is obviously central to the fulfilment of the basic principles for PNTD and in the phase-to-phase practical implementation, to ensure pertinence, interactivity and effective learning throughout the process.

Capacity Building. What is it? Whose capacities?
Capacity building programs will be organized looking at which capacities are needed, by whom, and to do what. Specific objectives depending on the target actors and scale or level of intervention will be formulated. The capacity building program should be principally oriented to the less influencing or excluded actors, strengthening their ability to become conscious of their basic rights and to overcome the causes of exclusion. The capacity building program should offer training on technology and practical skills, with due attention to give appropriate value to traditional technologies and practices (e. g. farmer to farmer programmes). In some cases the basic skills of weak actors need to be developed (e.g. literacy courses) to strengthen the ability of the actors to enter dialogue. Governmental institutions and political, economical, social organizations should take active role in the design and implementation of specific activities of support.

Capacity building is also an important precondition for the successful use of Communication for Development tools and can include:
- Creating opportunities for legitimised, committed and informed leadership;
- Strengthening local organizations (local communities, local Civil Society Organizations) in conceptual, socio-political, practical, financial and entrepreneurial issues;
- Supporting technical administration of local/regional/national governments;
- Transferring knowledge on available legal and institutional resources (to the local actors but also local governments and technical agencies);
- Building peoples awareness about their rights, responsibilities, obligations, limitations and accountability;
- Reinforcing networking and mutual trust.

Building organizational capacity
An organization may offer cultural or occupational identity and peer support. Or, it may be a channel for action in social and economic issues. The most common Civil Society Organizations are: traditional or informal associations; membership-based models, which include among others labour unions, political parties, research networks, producers' and consumers' cooperatives; and those associations that are sponsored by third parties and NGOs.

During the whole process, particular attention will be paid to strengthening people's ability to create and maintain organizations that represent them and are accountable. These organizations will be in charge of directing future actions and assure that the process of dialogue remains open even after the external support has ended.

Organizational capacity building focuses on strengthening practical, analytical, and managerial skills, which are essential if organizations are to function effectively and democratically. Among others, the program should include the strengthening of self-appraisal and assessment capacities as well as the planning, monitoring, evaluation and financial management skills, in addition to developing networking abilities. Special consideration should be given to the most vulnerable groups and their organizations.

Capacity building of leaders and/or local government representatives
Capacity building should be interpreted as a means to enable institutions to perform specified activities, but also as a process of awareness, attitudinal change, creation of leadership, fostering communication and as end in itself, (e.g. strengthening the quality of representation and decision making within local organizations and their involvement in socio-political processes). Two specific areas of capacity building can be leadership and strategic planning.

Building technical skills of government administration
Following decentralization processes, local governments are progressively made responsible for designing and carrying out development interventions, yet, their decision-making powers, their capacity to assume new responsibilities and to propose and conduct actions on the territory, as well as their financial autonomy, remain very limited. Thus, their technical, financial and human resources need to be strengthened.

Institutions not only face financial constraints for staff and equipment, they also often lack the expertise to anticipate conflicts, or to handle conflicts that arise in the course of their activities related to land and natural resource management. At higher political and administrative levels appropriate institutional mechanisms are required to establish user rights and facilitate the access to rural resources (land, water, trees and wild fauna), which are a necessary precondition for agricultural development and food security.

Who can stimulate participation? Key figures, local champions, the facilitator
In order to stimulate the active participation of relevant actors, a key issue is to involve some social forces (powerful actors) in the dialogue or negotiation process. In this sense it should be important to find the key figures or champions, at national or regional or local level, with deep knowledge of the reality and access to available information, but also open views and sensibility for listening to understand and communicate with the different actors.

In many cases the key figures will possess traditional mediation skills. Natural leaders might already exist who are committed to the issues at hand, and he/she will be recognized, respected, known for a good reputation of independence of judgement, and legitimised by the actors as a figure of confidence able to assume some or all of the following roles: information channel between the actors; engine driver for the participation; and articulator for the creation of territorial spaces for dialogue.

Partnerships and strategic alliances: The role of civil society organizations, NGOs
In order to encourage broad participation, to accompany communication and training programs along the process and to reinforce horizontal and vertical trust, it is essential to stimulate the creation of alliances among agencies, governmental institutions, civil

society and their representatives – farmers' organizations, research institutes, trade unions, etc.

Synergies with NGO/CSO will permit making better use of existing resources and mobilizing additional ones. Furthermore, as a result of the synergies, the cooperation with NGOs will have the following advantages:
- The provision of technical and institutional support for civil society actors;
- The replication of NGOs experiences elsewhere;
- Increased civil society access to information;
- Increased decision-making capacities of public officials and project managers.

Throughout the implementation of the participatory approach proposed here, it is necessary to invest in reinforcing cooperation as a means for strengthening information flows and communication both vertically (among professionals, authorities/institutions and civil society), and horizontally (among the different civil society representatives or directly among the different actors concerned).

NGOs play the major role in information analysis, dissemination and exchange, while FAO, as an institution, is called to facilitate and act as a mediator in the dialogue with governments (national, but also regional as well as local institutions) and in inter-governmental arenas. The involvement of local NGOs (CSOs) helps ensure the feasibility and sustainability of the interventions. In its interventions, FAO main attitude should be that of the 'honest broker'.

5.3 Phase 3 - The negotiation process. Seeking consensus for the development of the territory

Dialogue is an essential part of governing and programming in the pursuit of sustainable territorial development, which is able to respond to actual needs and visions of the actors that operate and interact on the territory.

The negotiation table represents here the main leading institution and forum in which the largest possible local partnerships will materialize (among local communities, public officials, local representatives of various categories, private individuals, etc.) as well as the arena where local actors, in a spirit of participation and cooperation, can jointly examine the problems and potentials of the territory.

Articulating a continuous multi-level multi-actors dialogue on territorial issues
In the PNTD approach, investing in confidence building is one of the main objectives of the process. The building of trust both among the actors involved and in collaborative decision-making processes will influence the willingness by them to participate in dialogue. Trust is both a means to open dialogue and an end to it.

The alternative approach to development proposed in this document is not project oriented. Furthermore, the PNTD applies not only to rural or urban areas, nor it is only local or national in scope. In fact this approach integrates the multiple dimensions of development processes: dealing with various issues and involving different government levels in the attempt to establish conducive environments for bottom-up and negotiated territorial development. The focus of the PNTD approach is primarily on women and men and their lack of trust in the institutions in charge of fostering

"development". As a result the PNTD process can translate into projects and programmes but this is only one of its possible outcomes, the major being a situation in which the different actors, playing on a more levelled field, resort to dialogue and foster informed participation when facing development challenges.

Dialogue among the actors might be opened on preliminary and relatively minor issues over which an agreement can be reached relatively easily. The first round of negotiations will not necessarily endeavour to address actors' core interests or the most critical issues at stake. A common ground for dialogue among the actors might be found on the base of any of the many interests they share. Nevertheless, the mutual trust created or re-established among the actors during the process of preparing this first agreement, and thanks to the consensus achieved, might represent the catalytic force for a continuation of dialogue, which gradually creates the space for addressing deeper social fractures. Trust in the facilitator is another important precondition for the negotiation process to continue to be chosen by the actors involved as a decision making instrument, towards addressing more critical interests.

During the negotiation phase actors will confront their view and proposals in a collaborative and consensual process towards a socially legitimised agreement. The proposals for territorial development highlight the common ground on which negotiation can start. It is essential in this phase that a wide array of actors is represented to assess the proposals for negotiation. All the actors should be convinced that negotiation is the best way to pursue their interests. To accommodate or combine different proposals in a win-win solution, appropriate ground rules should be set up for neutralizing as much as possible the asymmetries in bargaining power, capacities and skills which the previous stages of the PNTD process could not completely balance.

Negotiation at different levels and around various themes
In the PNTD approach the very heart of the process is its iterative and systemic nature by which different and various tables of discussion are set up on specific issues or themes and at different levels and scales, in the search for appropriate solutions defined through consensus. A clear connection must be established between local actors who express their views and concerns and provide information about the territorial system, the meso, and macro levels of the governance system in order to find viable solutions and define appropriate regional and national strategies.

The key element of the PNTD approach is an accurate analysis of the territorial system stimulating the discussion around territorial development issues and feeding it with the main concerns and information arising from the territorial diagnostics, to provide a bottom-up flow of information and proposals useful for policy formulation.

Basic principles of interest-based negotiation
The new negotiation approaches centred on problem resolution have, in recent years, received much attention from the side of the theoreticians of collective negotiation. This is because such approaches abandon the obsession for a 'win-win' solution result, emphasizing more on the process than on the outcome.

In interest-based negotiation, the first principle is to deal separately with the demands of the individuals and the issues debated by the parties. The process requires mutual respect and confidence by the participants to the negotiation. Frank and open

discussions and recognition of the legitimacy of each party to defend their interests are essential.

The second principle that constitutes the cornerstone of interest based negotiation processes consists in focusing on the interests at stake instead of concentrating on the positions. Multiple interests lie behind each of the actors' positions. It is the actors' interests that define the problem and open the way for its solution.

The third basic principle of interest-based negotiations consists in formulating a vast range of options prior to making a decision. It is necessary to have brainstorming sessions, which implies that the parties have previously expressed and discussed their respective points of view on the problem, and thus possess all the information needed to elaborate different scenarios of possible solutions, while taking into account the interests of each of the parties.

Finally, the fourth principle relates to the evaluation of options feasibility based on objective criteria defined by the parties (laws, regulations, costs, etc.) in order to avoid conflicts in the implementation of the agreed solutions.

An interest-based negotiation process for conflict management has three main stages:
- The identification and discussion of the issues at stake;
- The examination of the identified possible solutions;
- The elaboration of a comprehensive set of decisions that may materialize in the form of a Social Territorial Agreement.

Focusing on interests instead of positions
External interventions must necessarily start by choosing an issue or subject to focus project work on. This subject area should be viewed as the entry point for an intervention that looks beyond the sectoral implications, and takes a systemic view of the social, economic and political dimensions surrounding it.
It is the interests that define the problem. Actors have multiple interests. This diversity is at the heart of any opportunity for the facilitating team to find a common interest over which dialogue among the actors can start.

The consensus building process
As an outcome of the diagnostics, and the parallel efforts in reducing the asymmetries in actors' bargaining power, a common ground might have been identified from where the negotiation can start.

It is essential at this point that all relevant actors take an active part in the consensus building process. This means that the process should be opened to include all those actors whose involvement is key for reaching a sustainable agreement or any agreement at all. This includes those actors who might not yet be organized or empowered, or those who might not reside in the area but whose involvement and consent is a precondition for the enactment of any agreement on territorial development. Empowerment is a long-term process where the opportunity of learning by doing is a precondition of success. Thus, when negotiations start actors might not be playing on a level playing field, yet they will have recognized the legitimate interests of all other actors and accept to abide by jointly agreed ground rules for multiparty decision making.

Identification of immediate benefits for all actors
It is important to clearly translate the potential positive outcomes of a negotiated solution into immediate benefits (economic benefits, mobilization of funds for development projects, improvement of the peace and order situation as a precondition for a good business environment and general well-being, security of tenure rights, etc.) and costs that the achievement of a negotiated solution would avoid. Key questions that can be asked are:

- What would the likely cost of achieving your interest in a unilateral way be?
- For how long and paying what price can your interest be achieved without the cooperation of the other actors?
- Which are the risks of a unilateral solution (short-term and long-term)?

Groups have to be based on a voluntary membership that attracts its members because they have compatible interests or potential synergies.

Negotiating implementable territorial development projects
The actors involved, with the help of the facilitator, will agree on the appropriate type of negotiation process to adopt. Appropriate rules, agreed upon by all parties will define the process of dialogue and procedures for reaching an agreement (assisted or unassisted process), the role of the third party and the meeting format. The availability of alternative options to all parties is essential to maintain dialogue.

The final compromise not only contains the activities to be undertaken but also has to assess the resources needed for the enactment of the agreement and outline clear roles and responsibilities for its implementation.

Facilitating consensus building
External support plays a key role in the process of capacity-building at all levels of the governance system for transforming conflicts into forces that promote positive social change towards the achievement of socially legitimised agreements. This implies activating a continued process of communication and information sharing among social actors, building trust and credibility as preconditions for collaboration and increasing the capacity of the weaker actors to take active role in decision making processes.

The role of the facilitator
In cases where the third party's neutrality is a key prerequisite for any agreement to be reached, a legitimate mediator who is credible to all parties and has sufficient knowledge of the local sociology should be appointed. This is most likely in the case of conflicts where the dispute is characterized by a sustained intensity, a long duration at the time of intervention, and powerful interests as well as basic human needs at the heart of the dispute.

Mediation is a process of assisted negotiation. The mediator assures that the different stakeholders agree on the process and logistics and support the participants to establish adequate ground rules. Key ground rules are those that neutralize the effect of power asymmetries during the course of the negotiation process to support actors' active participation towards the reaching of an agreement which truly satisfies the interests of all the parties involved.

Roles of religious leaders and other influential figures (local notables)
Religious leaders or other influential figures at the local level are key actors in bridging the project and the local community and in opening the way for dialogue between external and local expertise. Without the guidance and mediation of these local key figures no external support would be effective both in carrying out a systemic analysis of the local setting and in winning credibility in the eyes of the local community.

Because of their deep understanding of the local setting and because they are a repository of historical knowledge local influential people might play a key role in decision-making. They might also act as mediators in conflicts at local level, because of their charisma or because of a customary conflict management role they play.

Ground rules to guarantee a fair negotiation process
The ground rules define roles, tasks, competencies and responsibilities, the negotiation objectives, mechanisms to ensure the participation by all parties and an agreement on the rules for communication. In particular, parties will have to find an agreement over the type of process they want to set up (whether a direct person-to-person or a third party), the preferred status of the third party (whether partial or impartial and whether an outsider or an insider), the meeting format (individual and/or joint negotiations), the process of dialogue (defining who is allowed to speak, style of communication, and participation) and the process of reaching an agreement, including decision format and enforcement.

To level out persistent asymmetries in actors' capacities and bargaining power, it is essential to agree upon ground rules to guarantee a fair negotiation process. Weaker groups risk losing much from negotiations in which power differences are very acute and powerful groups often take unilateral actions refusing to negotiate or collaborate.

Sometimes the predefined rules might not be sufficient to guide the decision-making process. During this process the third party might instead find support in symbolism with subjective, emotional, cultural dimensions which may still facilitate a consensual identification of solutions and the joint formulation of an agreement.

The Social Territorial Agreement
The outcomes of the decision making process might be manifold. When referring to the idea of a Social Territorial Agreement it is not the contractual outcome that is stressed, but the fact that the decision taken by the actors together is socially legitimised thus is an open door for the process to be reactivated on new and broader issues. That is why when supporting the dialogue process the centre of the attention is not on the extent the decision taken by the actors directly addresses the deep rooted social fractures, but on the finding of a common ground for an agreement among the actors and the trust building during the process. This can form the basis for a renewed and constructive dialogue on territorial development issues.

The PNTD process might not have been successful in starting a negotiation process because common ground could not be found as a base for dialogue among the actors or because key actors could not be part of the process given weak capacities or lack of legitimisation. The need to coordinate the various components of the process might force the facilitating team to slow down some of the activities while concentrating the

effort on others. Furthermore, it might be the case that even though the actors have entered dialogue, an agreement among them on the specific issues at stake could not be reached at that time.

The Social Territorial Agreement can result, among other things, in a conflict resolution, a territorial development plan, the delimitation of territorial boundaries taking into account customary rights, a new land tenure law. In addition, it can result in strengthened and reformed rural institutions with the creation of local organizations and local funds for income generating activities.

Assessment of the needs to implement the agreement. Temporal, financial, human and social resources
The proposals formulated by the actors for the negotiation outlined the necessary financial and human resources for their implementation and requests for external assistance. Once an agreement is reached on the kind of activity or projects to carry out, the discussion between the actors moves on to cover all the aspects of the implementation phase: this includes a verification of the resources and technical capacities the actors need for carrying out all the components of the plan. This assessment is followed by the identification of the source of necessary resources and technical assistance and by a clear definition of the roles of each of the actors. All these aspects will form part of the final agreement.

Mobilization of external resources
At all stages of the formulation and enactment of the agreement the actors should look for and develop adequate instruments and mechanisms to maximize the use of local resources. This means that local resources, practices, capacities should have been identified and evaluated before attempts are made towards the mobilization of external resources.

When external resources need to be tapped, the identification of the resources needed and the potential provider should be done with an eye to encouraging forms of collaboration within the international community (donors, agencies, international NGOs).

The implementation of the agreement should be flexible and open to redirect programming and action in order to take advantage of new opportunities arising and of the lessons learned. The precondition for this ability to adjust the direction of the implementation process is a monitoring system that focuses as much on outputs as on process indicators.

6. Conclusion

The FAO has a commitment to fight against hunger and poverty. This commitment is constantly strengthened by the search for strategies that reduce the suffering of rural populations. This struggle is materialised through numerous projects implemented throughout the world to combat inequalities and strive for territorial development. The PNTD strategy can serve as a guide in the search for solutions to the challenges facing the international community.

The objective of this document is not to give yet another answer to preconceived problems but to help insert technical assistance related to agricultural production, activities for local income generation or natural resource access and management into a wider framework of development. Hence, it proposes an inclusive methodology that combines technical interventions with a systemic vision of territorial development. It supports bottom-up and participatory decision-making processes and encourages social dialogue and partnerships between the actors within a territory.

Rural development is sustainable when it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, culturally appropriate, humane and based on a proper understanding of the territorial system. These dimensions of sustainability are setting the frame for any development activity. To be sustainable, development interventions need to address the issue of power asymmetries that are determined by unequal access to and control over resources and information, as well as that of unequal capacities.

The purpose of the PNTD approach is to reduce these asymmetries in supporting a process that aims at the creation of socially legitimised agreements by involving all stakeholders and leads to actors' commitment and ownership over the development process. Rebuilding trust between social actors is a means to and an end of the PNTD process and is achieved by reducing asymmetries between the actors, while leading them to negotiate territorial development activities.

In presenting this approach, the objective has been to enable anyone who can make use of the ideas, to adapt them to their needs, to specific themes, or to a regional and local context. It is hoped that in return you will share your experiences, lessons and conclusions to initiate or continue discussions in order adapt and complement the PNTD approach.