

Chapter 4

Finding the Entry Points and Making the Case



Coverage

- Provides guidance on assessing poverty-environment linkages (section 4.1)
- Discusses assessments of a country's governmental, institutional and political contexts (section 4.2)
- Reviews awareness-raising and partnership-building (section 4.3)
- Introduces institutional and capacity needs assessments (section 4.4)
- Highlights working arrangements for a sustained mainstreaming effort (section 4.5)

Key Messages

- Identify pro-poor environmental outcomes on which to focus and entry points for mainstreaming poverty-environment issues in national development planning
- Raise awareness and develop partnerships with a view to making the case for mainstreaming
- Engage from the outset with the finance and planning ministries and bring environmental institutions into national development planning processes
- Understand which institutional actors have key roles and may be willing to champion poverty-environment mainstreaming

4.1 Preliminary Assessments: Understanding the Poverty-Environment Linkages

Typically, the first step of a poverty-environment mainstreaming effort is to undertake a preliminary assessment of the country's environmental and socio-economic situation. The objective is to determine the nature of poverty-environment linkages in the country. Another aim is to define pro-poor environmental outcomes on which to focus the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort and to develop arguments to start making the case for such an initiative. Through this assessment, the actors engaged in the mainstreaming initiative begin to refine their understanding—from the perspective of their own sector or subnational organization—of the country's environmental challenges, poverty-environment linkages and the relevance of these to national priorities.

Approach

These preliminary assessments of poverty-environment linkages are based primarily on existing information. Their conduct thus includes collecting information from existing sources and mobilizing local expertise. The following are among the elements to consider:

- **State of the environment.** Review and gather information on the state of the environment and on current and emerging environmental challenges such as climate change.
- **Socio-economic situation.** Review baseline data on poverty and population's socio-economic status, including data disaggregated by demographics such as age, sex and geographical location.
- **Poverty-environment linkages.** Identify the linkages between poverty and the environment (e.g. main ecosystem services, food security, vulnerability to effects of climate change, deforestation, livelihoods of men and of women), focusing on national development priorities (box 4.1).
- **Poverty-environment sector linkages.** Understand the relevance of the environment to human well-being and pro-poor economic growth and development sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, water and sanitation, industrial development, health, trade, transport, energy, education and tourism.
- **Pro-poor environmental outcomes.** Build on the above findings and make use of methodologies such as problem and stakeholder analysis to define possible pro-poor environmental outcomes that can guide the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort. Link the pro-poor environmental outcomes to national priority development issues and existing efforts in the field

Examples: The Strength of Sectoral Poverty-Environment Linkages

- **Agriculture.** Information on soil erosion and its negative impact on agricultural productivity can foster interest from the agricultural sector and concerned communities.
- **Tourism.** Documenting the potential incomes or savings generated by ecotourism and protected areas can help make the case for poverty-environment mainstreaming.
- **Waste management.** Understanding how integrated waste management reduces the impacts of unsuitable waste disposal on human health and land and water resources can inform sector policymaking and budgeting.

Box 4.1 Importance of Ecosystem Services for Human Well-Being and Pro-Poor Economic Growth: Examples from Selected Countries

- **Cameroon.** Located in a dry area of erratic rainfall, the Waza Logone flood plain is a highly productive ecosystem and a critical area for biodiversity. Some 130,000 people rely on the flood plain and its wetland resources for their basic income and subsistence. However, the flood plain has been degraded through major irrigation schemes implemented without due consideration of the impacts on wetland ecosystems. Pilot efforts to restore the ecosystem services provided by the flood plain have been carried out. Based on the results, experts estimate that full restoration of natural inundation patterns would yield incremental economic benefits ranging from \$1.1 million to \$2.3 million per year. This translates into \$50 of added economic value each year for each member of the local population dependent on the flood plain for livelihood (Emerton 2005).
- **Kenya.** The Aberdare mountain range of central Kenya provides a wide range of ecosystem goods and services essential to the livelihoods and well-being of millions. The livelihood of one in three Kenyans depends in some way on the rainfall, rivers, forests and wildlife of the Aberdares. Five of Kenya's seven largest rivers originate in the Aberdares, providing water and hydroelectric power to millions of farmers and several major towns downstream. Over 30 per cent of the nation's tea production and 70 per cent of its coffee are grown on the slopes and foothills of the Aberdares. The city of Nairobi and its 3 million inhabitants depend entirely on water from the mountain range. More than 350,000 people visit the Aberdares National Park and Forest Reserve annually, generating some 3.8 billion Kenya shillings (close to \$50 million) in revenue (UNDP-UNEP PEI Kenya 2008).
- **Nepal.** About a third of the world's population lives in countries with moderate to high water stress, with disproportionate impacts on the poor. With current projected human population growth, industrial development and expansion of irrigated agriculture in the next two decades, water demand will rise to levels that will make the task of providing water for human sustenance more difficult. In Nepal, low-cost drip irrigation has proven to be a win-win solution for resource-poor farmers and the environment. For as little as \$13 per drip irrigation kit, farmers can expect improvements in yield of 20–70 per cent by delivering the right amount of water to crops at the right time while saving water for other purposes. Over a three-year period, a farmer's investment can generate incremental gains worth \$570 (SIWI 2005).

of poverty-environment in the country. The pro-poor environmental outcomes identified here will be built on when setting up working arrangements for sustained mainstreaming (see section 4.5).

- **Benefits and costs of action and inaction.** Estimate the benefits of investment in better environmental management for the poor and for the economy overall. Estimate the costs incurred due to poor environmental management and resulting environmental degradation. Estimate the benefit-cost ratio for investments in environmental management or the return on investment, and estimate the loss of revenue to the government.

Practitioners working on mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages should rely on existing analytical work, such as environmental assessments and available facts, figures and studies. They should build on the knowledge of national stakeholders, non-governmental actors and local communities (box 4.2). Practitioners can also commission additional work (e.g. problem analysis) or studies targeted at potential areas of economic contribution to make the case for a national poverty-environment mainstreaming effort.

Box 4.2 Understanding Poverty-Environment Linkages: Voices from the Community

Participants in community-based planning sessions in three districts of Kenya bear witness to the impact of poverty-environment linkages at the local level:

I lost the whole of my farm to sand harvesters. All the fertile soil was removed and washed into the lake causing me to abandon the farm, and I have only returned to it now when the district environment officer has stopped sand mining in the area. I can now grow some crops although I have lost all the fertile soil. Female farmer, Bondo District

I wish I had never uprooted the coffee trees from my farm. They had soil retention capacity that I don't see with the food crops and exotic trees that we have now planted. Elderly male farmer, Murang'a North District

We resort to illegal logging, honey harvesting and farming in the forest to make ends meet. We find farming along the river bank much easier because water is near. Villager, Meru South District

I'm a fisherman. I used to go out and in six hours my boat was full. Now you catch nothing or maybe 1 kilogram of fish that is worth 50 Kenya shillings or so [less than \$1]. Our daily expenses are over 100 Kenya shillings. You are here now and I am embarrassed that I cannot even give you a fish as a gift. Fisherman, Bondo District

Source: UNDP-UNEP PEI Kenya 2007.

Further Guidance: Questions

A number of guiding questions can help government actors assess and understand poverty-environment linkages (box 4.3).

Box 4.3 Guiding Questions for Assessing Poverty-Environment Linkages

Livelihoods and Health

- What is the size of the **population depending for their livelihoods on natural resources and ecosystem services**? How many employment or informal income-earning opportunities do natural resource sectors (e.g. forestry and fisheries) and other productive sectors relying on the environment (e.g. hydropower, agriculture and tourism) provide, particularly to the poorest?
- What are the **direct health and productivity impacts of air, soil and water pollution** and the associated costs of inaction? What needs to be done to reduce these costs? What would be the investments required to undertake action?

Environmental Risks and Climate Change

- Are the **country's people and economy vulnerable to environmental risks** such as floods, droughts and climate change? What are the effects and costs of environmental hazards (such as floods or pollution) in terms of health, livelihoods and vulnerability?
- How **vulnerable is the country to the effects of climate change**? Do the country and people have the capacity to adapt to environmental changes that could accompany climate change? What work (if any) has been done to assess potential impacts and adapt to climate change? Does the country have a disaster risk reduction policy that incorporates climate change concerns?

Economic Development

- How much do the country's main **natural resource sectors contribute to growth**? How do natural resources contribute as inputs into other productive sectors? What percentage do these sectors represent in terms of gross domestic product? Does this take into account informal markets, and how large are these?
- Are country growth and **poverty reduction targets at risk from the impacts of persistent and insidious environmental degradation**? This could include, for instance, the long-term decline of crop productivity from soil erosion.

Overall Understanding of the Linkages

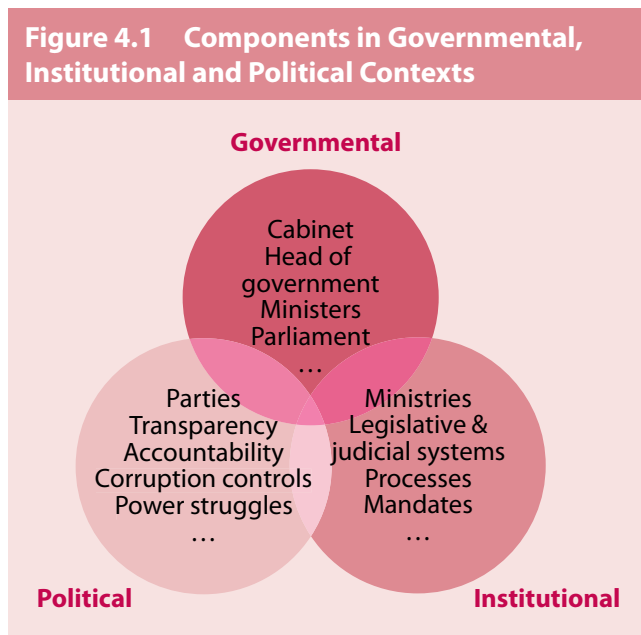
- Is there an **explicit understanding of poverty-environment linkages** (such as in terms of food security or access to fuelwood, shelter and clean water) within the country?
- How do various **demographic groups** (men and women, different age groups, different income-level groups) benefit from, or how are they affected by, these questions and linkages (in terms of their health, resilience, livelihoods, income opportunities, employment)?

Source: Adapted from DFID 2004a.

4.2 Preliminary Assessments: Understanding the Governmental, Institutional and Political Contexts

The preliminary assessments also entail looking at the governmental, institutional and political contexts in the country (figure 4.1). This assessment helps develop a thorough, shared understanding of the situation, which in turn provides the basis for finding the most effective entry points for mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages in national development planning. It also enables countries to identify potential partners and champions for poverty-environment mainstreaming.

Without the understanding gained through such preliminary assessments of the context, government actors leading a poverty-environment mainstreaming effort could seriously misjudge the country's readiness to engage in the process.



Approach

The assessment begins with identifying and understanding the various processes, institutions, actors, mandates, existing policies and other factors that affect the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort.

- **Planning processes.** Understanding the planning processes that shape a country's development and environmental priorities is a vital aspect of the assessment. Relevant processes might include strategies (PRSPs, national development plans, national sustainable development strategies, MDG strategies, sector strategies), action plans (national environmental action plans, national adaptation programmes of action) and budget processes (medium-term expenditure framework, public expenditure review).
- **Institutions and actors.** Also vital in the assessment is identifying the various institutions and actors in government, the non-governmental sector and the broader development community and understanding their activities. Identifying partners that can provide technical, financial and political support to the mainstreaming effort is crucial. Options for engaging these partners should be developed at this stage.
- **Mandates and decision-making processes.** It is critical to have a thorough knowledge of how the government develops and approves policies, budgets and related measures. In particular, it is important to know the extent to which the environment ministry can be involved in the development of policies initiated by other ministries that have significant environmental implications (the agricultural sector plan is one such policy). Understanding informal power relations is also central to the mainstreaming effort.

- **Existing policies and initiatives.** It is important to take stock of major existing national and sector (e.g. agriculture, health, trade, education, industrial development, cleaner production and environment) development policies, programmes and projects, and climate change-related initiatives that are relevant to the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort, and to identify possible conflicting priorities.
- **Governance and political situation.** Natural resources typically are important sources of national wealth, and different institutions and actors often have conflicting priorities concerning access to or control of their use. It is critical to be aware of and understand the political factors that may affect the mainstreaming effort either positively or negatively. These factors include the transparency and accountability of decision-making concerning natural resource management and the resulting distributional impacts (WRI 2005). It also entails assessing the quality of the legislative and judicial systems, the rule of law and corruption control in the country. In addition, countries should take account of short-term political drivers such as upcoming elections, changes in mandates or roles, possible competition among agencies or ministries and other governance factors.

Example: Attention to Environmental Governance in the United Republic of Tanzania

Like many other developing countries rich in natural resources, the United Republic of Tanzania has faced environmental governance issues in regulating access to and use of these resources. For instance, a recent report estimated that only 4–15 per cent of public revenues due from logging operations districts in the south of the country were actually being collected (Milledge, Gelvas and Ahrends 2007). This report, together with newspaper headlines on illegal logging, has galvanized government and donor efforts to address the problem of uncollected forest revenues. The attention has also shed light on other areas of weak environmental governance, including lack of effective controls on destructive methods of fishing (e.g. dynamite fishing) and hunting. Attention to these problem areas of environmental governance has allowed the United Republic of Tanzania to better mainstream poverty-environment linkages in its poverty reduction strategy and general budget support, for which sector-specific targets have been developed.

Information Analysis

The preliminary assessment is based on analysis of existing information from sources such as planning and budgeting guidelines, national and sector policies, strategies of in-country development actors and reform agendas. Gaps in information should be identified and noted.

Preliminary assessments require interaction with a wide range of stakeholders; this includes targeted discussions and workshops with government institutions and officials at various levels, non-governmental actors and the development community.

The collected information can take the form of a SWOT—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats—analysis, identifying and assessing the country’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to poverty-environment mainstreaming. The results of this exercise can be translated into a short report to guide and inform subsequent activities in poverty-environment mainstreaming.

Identification of Entry Points and Potential Champions

The analysis described above enables government actors to understand the positioning of poverty-environment issues within the public agenda and to identify the most effective entry points and opportunities for mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages in national development planning. Table 4.1 presents examples of possible entry points.

| Planning level | Entry points |
|---|--|
| National government and cross-sector ministries | Poverty reduction strategy paper |
| | National development plan |
| | MDG-based national development strategy |
| | National budget allocation process or review (e.g. medium-term expenditure framework, public expenditure review) |
| Sector ministries | Sector strategies, plans and policies (e.g. agricultural sector plan) |
| | Preparation of sector budgets |
| | Public expenditure reviews |
| Subnational authorities | Decentralization policies |
| | District plans |
| | Preparation of subnational budgets |

The assessment also helps in identifying and engaging with actors who may champion the poverty-environment effort. Examples of potential champions follow:

- Lead government bodies such as the head of state's office and planning and finance ministries
- Sector ministries, subnational bodies and parliament
- Non-governmental actors, including the media and women's groups
- Development actors
- Key individuals, including ministers and permanent secretaries

The experience of the United Republic of Tanzania described in box 4.4 illustrates how including government actors and civil society, and engaging with the media, can make a big difference in raising the profile of poverty-environment issues in the national development agenda.

The preliminary assessments carried out should remain limited in scope, depth and time frame, allowing the government to achieve in the short term the objectives of finding the entry points and making the case. Later in the mainstreaming effort, the preliminary assessments will be complemented by extensive analytical work aimed at influencing the policy process at stake (see sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

Box 4.4 Importance of Stakeholder Involvement: National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, United Republic of Tanzania

The National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty of the United Republic of Tanzania, known by its Kiswahili acronym MKUKUTA, serves as the country's national development framework. The key entry point for mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages in MKUKUTA was provided by the 2004 public expenditure review, which highlighted the economic value of the environment.

Championing poverty-environment mainstreaming. In the United Republic of Tanzania, champions have been critical drivers of political discourse on the environment and of partnerships for action. In the early 1990s, a multi-stakeholder group of intellectuals felt that environmental issues had to be put directly on the mainstream political agenda. By 1995 the group had crafted an environmental manifesto which it used to lobby all political parties. Some credit this manifesto with influencing the creation of a new, high-profile Department of Environment within the Office of the Vice-President and subsequent political discussions.

- **The media** drew attention to the potential environmental impacts of significant projects, stressing the implications for people's livelihoods and encouraging increased public involvement. As the media increased the extent and quality of their coverage of poverty-environment linkages, environmental concern began to permeate to the grass roots. For example, the media highlighted excessive logging, making clear the likely impoverishment of forest-dependent local communities and losses to national income.
- **The Vice-President's Office** coordinated and championed environmental concerns at a high, non-sector level. Its involvement persuaded the Ministry of Finance to take responsibility for bringing poverty-environment issues into the core government agenda. During the policy process, the Vice-President's Office established and chaired the Environmental Sector Working Group, in line with its mandate to ensure that government policy processes be well informed on environmental matters.
- **The parliamentarians** were regularly briefed to ensure that they retained ownership of the project and remained accountable for its success.
- **Local organizations** have focused on the environment and its linkages to people's livelihoods, while the more established environmental NGOs, which in the past had tended to focus on self-contained environmental issues, have engaged on development and poverty reduction issues. These have served to increase public attention to the environment and its linkages to poverty.
- **A broad range of sectors** within government, along with civil society and ordinary citizens, were continually asked to provide inputs.
- **Partnerships** with development agencies were driven to a great extent by the government.

Lessons learned. Among the lessons emerging from this experience were the following:

- Using an approach based on widespread consultation proved effective in expanding ownership of poverty-environment mainstreaming across every level of society. The involvement of civil society also ensured that gender-related issues were integrated at all stages.
- The success of poverty-environment mainstreaming was proportionate to stakeholders' ability to work in a coordinated way with each other and with outside interests.
- Poverty-environment mainstreaming is largely a political and institutional process and thus unlikely to be achieved by solely technical means or through a single project or initiative.

Source: Adapted from Assey et al. 2007.

Further Guidance: Questions and Sources

Box 4.5 lays out several questions that countries should try to address as part of the preliminary assessment of the governmental, institutional and political contexts.

Box 4.5 Guiding Questions for Assessing the Governmental, Institutional and Political Contexts

Processes

- What are the **possible entry points** to influence national and sector development processes? How can these entry points be fully leveraged in trying to influence national development planning processes later in the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort?
- What are the **components** of the relevant national and sector development planning processes?
- What are the **timetable and working arrangements** for revising or drafting the relevant development planning processes? When and how are objectives and priorities set or revised, policy measures developed, costing and budgeting accomplished and the monitoring framework developed?
- How are the national planning processes **linked** to sector and subnational planning processes?

Institutions and Actors

- Which **government institutions** are leading the national and sector planning processes? How is their work organized?
- What are the mechanisms (e.g. working groups, consultations, development assistance coordination mechanisms) through which **other government institutions** participate? What about non-governmental actors? Is there a need to help mobilize other actors?
- How effective are the existing **mechanisms**? Is there a need to further develop or improve these?
- Does the **environment ministry** have a mandate to be involved in the development of policy with environmental implications initiated by other government institutions (e.g. the agriculture ministry)?
- Who are the potential **in-country development partners**? How could they contribute to poverty-environment mainstreaming?

Governance

- What is the **governance and political situation** in the country, and how might it affect the mainstreaming effort? Are there tensions or conflicts over natural resources? Is there freedom of the press? Do the poorest have a voice?
- Are the policy- and decision-making **processes effective and transparent**? Are there accountability mechanisms? What is the quality of the legislative and judicial systems? How is the rule of law enforced? How is corruption controlled?

In conducting this preliminary assessment of the governmental, institutional and political contexts, countries can draw on existing sources of information and analysis, including the following:

- **World Bank Country Environmental Analysis** is an upstream analytic tool that includes institutional and governance analysis, which aims to integrate environmental considerations into PRSPs and country assistance strategies.
- **European Commission Country Environmental Profiles** include reviews of environmental policy, legislative and institutional frameworks.
- **World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators** are available for 212 countries and territories for 1996–2006; these cover six dimensions of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption.
- **Other Internet-based portals**, such as the UNEP Country Environmental Profile Information System and the World Resources Institute Country Profiles, also provide useful information for understanding a country’s governmental, institutional and political contexts.

4.3 Raising Awareness and Building Partnerships

The preliminary assessments provide a solid basis from which to raise awareness—within the government and among non-governmental actors, the general public and the development community at large. The objective here is to build national consensus and commitment, and partnerships for poverty-environment mainstreaming.

Approach

The approach to raising awareness and building partnerships is based on sharing the findings of the two preliminary assessments—both the assessment of poverty-environment linkages and the assessment of the governmental, institutional and political contexts—as illustrated by the case of Bhutan.

Example: Bhutan Embraces the Contribution of the Environment to National Development

The UNDP-UNEP PEI has supported efforts to mainstream poverty-environment linkages into both national planning and sectors critical to Bhutan’s economy. To achieve this, the PEI team engaged with key government officials to create awareness of these linkages and their relationship to economic development. The government prepared guidelines and conducted workshops as part of this effort. Complementing these activities, the Australian government implemented a capacity-building programme to train a team of officers from selected government agencies on mainstreaming concepts. A significant result is that Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness Commission (the national body in charge of planning and development at the highest level) is now a strong proponent of mainstreaming and has embraced the task of integrating poverty-environment considerations into all sector development plans. A senior officer noted, “It has been unfortunate that environment has been seen as a sector issue in Bhutan so far. But it is no longer treated that way.”

Source: UNDP-UNEP PEI 2008a.

Sharing the Findings of the Preliminary Assessments

Assessment findings should be disseminated broadly within the government, including to the head of state's office, environment, finance and planning bodies, sector and subnational bodies, political parties and parliament, national statistics office and judicial system.

National workshops or consultations can be held to raise awareness among various audiences, including civil society, academia, business and industry, the general public and local communities, and the media, as well as government actors. Another effective method of raising awareness is to organize field visits illustrating the importance of poverty-environment linkages. Exchange programmes with neighbouring countries that have experience with successful poverty-environment mainstreaming can also be a useful approach (see section 5.5).

Involving the Media

The involvement of the media often deserves special attention, and advantage can be gained from a specific approach designed to increase journalists' knowledge of poverty-environment linkages and to encourage them to report on poverty-environment issues. The mass media (press, radio and television) can be effective tools in reaching out to target audiences, including communities at the grass-roots level. Gender should be considered when developing the messages delivered in order to communicate them through the most appropriate and culturally sensitive channels. Country experiences demonstrate the importance of the media in raising awareness of poverty-environment issues (box 4.6).

Box 4.6 Innovative Engagement of Media to Raise Awareness: Viet Nam's "No Early Spray" Campaign

The case of Viet Nam's "No Early Spray" campaign represents an innovative use of communications techniques to raise awareness of issues related to the environment and poverty reduction. In 1994, Viet Nam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the International Rice Research Institute launched a campaign aimed at achieving large-scale reductions in pesticide use by rice farmers in the Mekong delta. Targeting 2 million rural households, the campaign worked to increase farmers' awareness of pesticide-related issues, including associated health and environmental problems.

The campaign used radio drama clips, leaflets and posters combined with on-the-ground activities to encourage responsible use of pesticides by farmers. Follow-up surveys indicate that as a result of the campaign, insecticide use had fallen by half. Key to this success was the rigorous qualitative and quantitative research undertaken prior to setting communications objectives. This research helped campaign organizers successfully develop innovative messages and select media tools appropriate to the target audience.

The radio campaign has since been developed into a long-running drama series broadcast on two networks. It uses an entertainment-education approach, which has been successfully applied in other fields, such as HIV/AIDS awareness and social change.

In 2003, the partners decided to build upon their success by expanding the campaign to include information to help farmers optimize their seed and fertilizer use.

Source: UNEP and Futerra Sustainability Communications 2005.

Following the initial involvement of the media, their engagement needs to be maintained throughout the mainstreaming effort (e.g. through regular press releases and radio programmes).

Involving Potential Partners

A successful, sustained poverty-environment mainstreaming effort requires partnerships with the development community, including international funding institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, and international and national NGOs. Partnerships with development actors are important for their substantive contributions and for generating joint initiatives and leveraging in-country funding for poverty-environment mainstreaming.

In building partnerships, it is critical to go beyond simply informing the various stakeholders. Special efforts should be made to cultivate the attention of potential partners, using arguments that are targeted to the specific partners and to their particular interests in order to make the case for poverty-environment mainstreaming. The information developed in the preliminary assessments of poverty-environment linkages should be helpful in this regard.

Further Guidance: Sources

Countries interested in raising awareness and building partnerships can rely on several existing methodologies and tools as well as the past experiences of others.

A number of countries have been successful in using media communications and other tools to raise awareness among various audiences. These methods include policy briefs, national and regional newsletters and radio programmes.

Further guidance can be found in *Communicating Sustainability: How to Produce Effective Public Campaigns* (UNEP and Futerra Sustainability Communications 2005), a guide targeted at policymakers and communication specialists. Available in English, French and Spanish, the guide provides a range of tips, ideas and case studies from around the world that can be adapted to the communications needs of specific countries.

Example: Ministries Partner to Halt Environmental Degradation in Mozambique

In Mozambique, the ministries responsible for the environment and for planning jointly contributed to poverty reduction by enabling a community to halt environmental degradation at the local level. As part of PEI support to the Ministry of Planning and Development and to the Ministry for Coordination of Environmental Affairs, a pilot project was initiated to address specific environmental problems identified by a local community in the town of Madal. During the rainy season, homes and roads were often washed away, severely affecting livelihoods. The PEI team helped the local community identify the root cause of the problem—soil erosion—and then supported the community in taking remedial action. By planting trees and stabilizing the banks of the river, soil erosion was significantly reduced. On seeing the results, the PEI project coordinator in the environment ministry noted, “Communities can solve their environmental problems with local initiatives if people are well informed and trained because they then have a positive, proactive attitude and can see the benefits to their well-being.” A project beneficiary observed: “The initiative awoke awareness among villagers on environmental protection and a better perception of how environmental degradation can affect income generation.”

Source: UNDP-UNEP PEI 2008a.

With regard to partnerships, *The Partnering Toolkit* (Tennyson 2003) builds on the experience of those who have been at the forefront of innovative partnerships. It offers a concise overview of the essential elements that make for effective partnering and is available in six languages.

4.4 Evaluating Institutional and Capacity Needs

To design a poverty-environment mainstreaming initiative that is rooted in national and local institutional capabilities, it is essential to evaluate institutional and capacity needs through a needs assessment. This assessment focuses attention on existing capabilities and their associated strengths and weaknesses in relation to poverty-environment mainstreaming. The objective is to take institutional and capacity needs into account in the mainstreaming initiative and ensure effective involvement of all national actors. The needs assessment should consider both the challenges at hand and those to come in later stages of the mainstreaming effort.

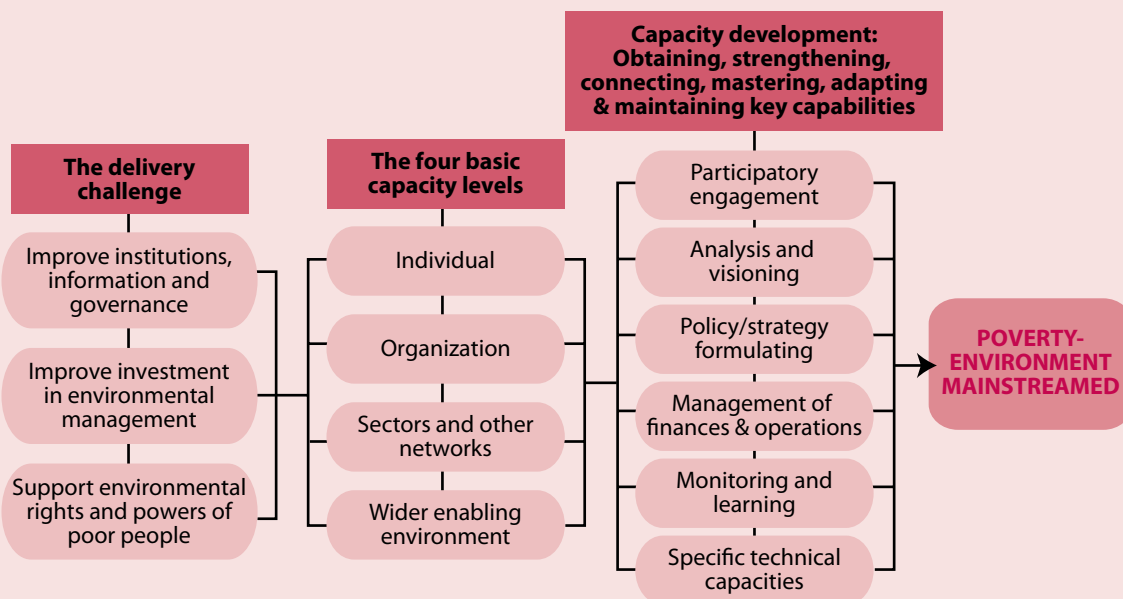
Approach

The needs assessment focuses first on identifying the level of understanding among the national actors with regard to poverty-environment linkages and evaluating the extent to which there is a basic, shared understanding to help the various governmental and non-governmental institutions form—and sustain—successful working relationships for poverty-environment mainstreaming. This shared understanding should encompass gender dimensions as well as sector-specific aspects. Based on the results, the needs assessment can then highlight options to strengthen and improve the understanding of poverty-environment issues in specific contexts. After assessing the levels of understanding of poverty-environment linkages, the evaluation should move on to examine capacities at all stages of the planning cycle.

The assessment should focus on capacities and needs at the level of organizations—notably the environment, planning, finance and key sector ministries—along with the wider institutional and societal levels, rather than the level of the individual. For example, the capacity within a country to adapt to impacts of climate change should be assessed by examining the capacities in a variety of institutions, the level of information and resources available, the political will to address the problem and the knowledge of potential risks. Institutions and capacities should also be assessed in relation to future activities of the poverty-environment mainstreaming process, including participatory engagement, analysis and visioning, policy formulation, operational management and poverty-environment monitoring. These concepts are illustrated in figure 4.2.

Initially, the needs assessment should build on the preliminary assessments of the poverty-environment linkages and the governmental, institutional and political contexts (see sections 4.1 and 4.2). It should also rely on existing institutional and capacity needs, as well as any existing environmentally focused institutional strengthening programmes, including those carried out by development actors such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank, the European Commission and the United Nations. Based on this initial review, additional targeted assessments may be carried out as needed, with special attention to the environment, finance and planning bodies. Poverty-environment champions can opt for a self-assessment, which may or may not be independently facilitated, or seek external support to assess their institutional and capacity needs from organizations that specialize in this area.

Figure 4.2 Dimensions of Capacity Development



Source: Steve Bass, Senior Fellow, International Institute for Environment and Development 2008.

Further Guidance: Sources

A number of methodologies and tools have proven to be effective in assessing institution-level capacity and can be used as sources in designing an assessment to best suit the country.

- **The UNDP *Capacity Assessment Methodology User's Guide*** provides interested practitioners with an overview of UNDP's approach to capacity development and capacity assessment and step-by-step guidance for conducting a capacity assessment using UNDP's Capacity Assessment Framework and Supporting Tool (UNDP 2007).
- **The *Resource Kit for National Capacity Self-Assessment*** introduces a step-by-step approach for national teams to conduct their national capacity self-assessment using a variety of tools. It was developed to assist project teams that are undertaking national capacity self-assessments with support from the GEF, but is of wider utility. The kit provides a framework of possible steps, tasks and tools that countries can adapt to fit their own priorities and resources (GEF Global Support Programme 2005).
- **The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Task Team on Governance and Capacity Development for Natural Resources and Environmental Management** is developing a new methodology for capacity assessments. This tool will identify several parameters for evaluating the capacity of governmental bodies to carry out core tasks of environmental management, including political, legal and organizational preconditions; capacity for problem analysis and evidence-based policymaking; capacity for strategic planning and law-making; capacity for policy implementation; capacity for facilitating cooperation and public participation; capacity for delivering services and managing environmental infrastructure; and capacity for performing administrative functions (OECD 2008b).

4.5 Setting Up Working Mechanisms for Sustained Mainstreaming

The objective of this activity is to enable the environmental institutions and the finance and planning ministries to engage effectively with each other and with key sector ministries, subnational bodies, non-governmental actors and the development community.

Approach

This activity involves clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various government institutions and actors, and defining institutional and management arrangements for continuation of the effort.

Institutional Arrangements at Political and Technical Levels

The concerned government actors should first define the institutional arrangements needed to carry out a poverty-environment mainstreaming effort and decide which institution(s) will lead the initiative. In general, the ministry of planning or finance is the most suitable entity to lead the effort, in close collaboration with environmental institutions.

The government can also establish a **steering committee**—including high-level representatives from the environmental institutions, planning and finance ministries, sector ministries, subnational bodies and non-governmental actors—to provide strategic and political guidance to the process. This function could be attached to an existing mechanism, such as an environmental sector working group or equivalent. One drawback to this approach is the fact that existing bodies may be more narrowly focused and fail to represent the broader, participatory approaches that characterize current practice in poverty-environment mainstreaming.

At the technical level, the government can establish a **technical committee or task team** responsible for carrying out the activities and tasks involved in a poverty-environment mainstreaming effort. The operational modalities (frequency of meetings, terms of

Example: Non-Governmental Actors Involved in Committees and Working Groups

Argentina. The country embarked on a process to develop a sustainable consumption and production plan, which was to form the basis for the mainstreaming of this issue. Initially, three working groups from government, industry and NGOs and academia were established to help identify the priority areas. From these working groups, an advisory committee was established to guide the development and implementation of the plan within the country. Later, the advisory committee was institutionalized by a resolution signed by the Ministry of the Environment; Argentina has since established a Sustainable Consumption and Production Division under that ministry.

Mauritius. When developing its national sustainable consumption and production programme, Mauritius recognized the important role of the media in promoting environmental management. Journalists who regularly cover environment issues in the two most popular newspapers in Mauritius were made part of the advisory committees or working groups during the establishment of the programme. Their inclusion has resulted in the journalists publishing regularly on the subject, thus contributing to raising the profile of the issue in the country. The press has also been extensively engaged in the promotion of pilot activities.

reference, composition, incentives for participation) for this committee or team should be clearly defined from the outset.

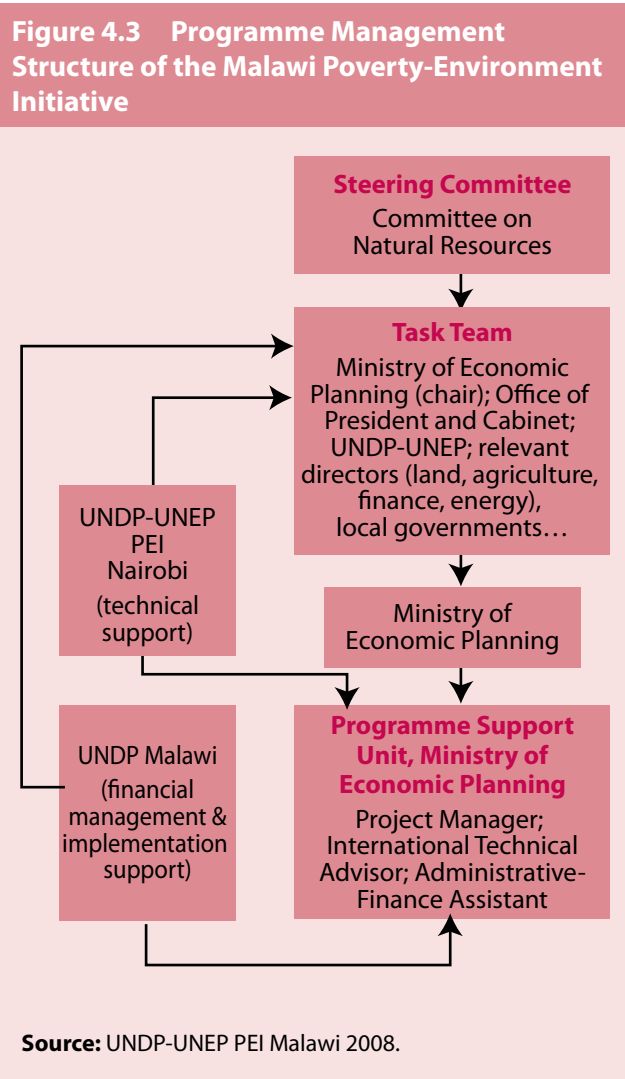
The committees can then put in place working arrangements for how they will contribute to the national development planning process, such as thematic working groups, stakeholder meetings, donor coordination mechanisms, preparation of working papers or policy briefs, or liaison with the drafting team of a national development policy or strategy.

Management Framework

The government, in close collaboration with development actors, should design a common management framework (see figure 4.3 for an example from Malawi). This can include an agreement on the lead governmental institution(s), human resources to be devoted to the mainstreaming effort (e.g. person in charge, team to establish) and financial arrangements (e.g. budget, accountability mechanisms, sources of funds). Other relevant arrangements, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and access to technical assistance, may also be specified in the management framework.

It is essential to allocate sufficient human resources for the day-to-day implementation of the mainstreaming effort. Experience has shown that a successful mainstreaming initiative often requires a three-person team based in the lead governmental institution(s)—consisting of a manager or coordinator, a technical adviser (international or national) and an administrative assistant—who are dedicated to the effort on a full-time basis.

These various working mechanisms help complement or strengthen the current institutions and capacities and the related processes. Later in the mainstreaming effort, lessons can be drawn upon in order to establish poverty-environment mainstreaming as standard practice in government and institutional processes, practices, procedures and systems (see section 6.4).



Workplan

The lead governmental institution(s) and its partners should jointly review and discuss key findings of the assessments and activities carried out earlier and their implications for the national poverty-environment mainstreaming effort. They should agree on pro-poor environmental outcomes and entry points and on the outputs, activities, responsibilities, timetable and budget for the remainder of the effort. The resulting workplan should take stock of existing efforts in the field of poverty-environment mainstreaming in the country and possible partners and reflect priority environmental and development issues, including poverty reduction, income generation and sustainable growth.

Further Guidance: Questions

The institutional and management arrangements established largely depend on national circumstances, including the governmental, institutional and political contexts, the stakeholders and the sources of funds. The answers to the guiding questions for assessing the governmental, institutional and political contexts set forth in box 4.5 should help frame these arrangements. In addition, the lead governmental institution(s) should answer the questions listed in box 4.7.

Box 4.7 Guiding Questions for Setting Up Working Mechanisms

Institutional Arrangements

- Are the **existing institutional and working arrangements** of national development planning processes adequate for the tasks of poverty-environment mainstreaming (e.g. working groups, consultations, development assistance coordination mechanisms)? Is there a need to further develop, complement or improve working arrangements for that purpose? How? For example, who should be part of a steering or technical committee for poverty-environment mainstreaming, and what should be the operational modalities of such a committee?
- Is there a need to help **mobilize additional actors** beyond those currently involved in the national development planning process? Which ones?
- What **new arrangements** are needed to contribute to and influence national development planning processes (e.g. thematic working groups, stakeholder meetings, development assistance coordination mechanisms, preparation of working papers or policy briefs, liaison with the drafting team of a national development paper or strategy)?

Management Framework

- Which **government institution(s) will lead** the effort? Who is responsible? How will the work be organized and coordinated on a daily basis?
- What are the **management arrangements** needed to successfully carry out a sustained poverty-environment mainstreaming effort (e.g. human resources, finance and resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation)?

Workplan

- What are the **pro-poor environmental outcomes** and environmental and development issues on which to focus?
- What are the **entry points, outputs and activities**? Who is responsible for each activity? What is the **time frame**?
- What is the **budget**?

Table 4.2 Summary: What Does “Finding the Entry Points and Making the Case” Encompass?

| Achievement | Examples |
|--|--|
| Overall awareness and common understanding of poverty-environment linkages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution of environmental sectors (e.g. forestry, fisheries and tourism) to economic growth • Sectoral poverty-environment linkages analysis (see, for example, Borchers and Annecke 2005) • Level of income of the poor directly related to the environment |
| Overall and common understanding of the governmental, institutional and political contexts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governmental, institutional and political mapping or report (see, for example, UNDP-UNEP PEI Rwanda 2006b) |
| Entry points into the planning process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRSP • National energy policy • Public expenditure review |
| Consensus and ownership of the poverty-environment effort | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of planning taking a lead role in the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort |
| Positioning of the poverty-environment effort within related initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty-environment effort supported by existing in-country donor programmes |
| Initiation of collaboration and partnerships at the country level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-ministerial task team responsible for carrying out the activities and tasks involved in a poverty-environment mainstreaming effort |
| Poverty-environment champions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of state's office • Permanent secretaries of sector ministries |
| Overall understanding of institutional and capacity needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity self-assessment report |
| Institutional and management arrangements for a mainstreaming initiative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human and financial resources allocated to the effort |
| Involvement of stakeholders and development community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty-environment mainstreaming part of the donor coordination group's agenda |