



## Inter and Intra-Organizational Communication: The Facilitation Approaches to Strengthen and Sustain Rural Development Management in Portugal

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### Abstract

The study describes and evaluates inter-organizational communication and relationships involving rural development management of community lands within specific *perímetros florestais* in Portugal. The research design is an exploratory research study approach that collected information with a mail questionnaire, interviews and information gleaned from community land association meetings and an international seminar. The design reflects a multi-disciplinary approach to the collection and analysis of information. The seminar and meetings allowed community leaders and other agents with responsibility and concerns for these rural community territories to discuss and identify management issues and problems. The findings describe the inter-organizational concerns and arrangements in the management and governance of these rural community territories and their natural resources. The findings suggest that a facilitation process can improve the organizational management and communication with local users and other organizations in the sphere of interest. The facilitation process involves local actors and stakeholders to improve their management and communication skills and capacity to construct governmental policies for these rural territories. These local actors need to improve their social skills and abilities to construct governmental policies for these rural territories. A rural extension service can play an important role in the facilitation process for the construction of rural development and governance policies.

### Keywords:

Facilitation, inter-organizational communication, rural extension and management

### 1. Introduction

The paper addresses inter-organizational communication, relationships, networks and partnerships considering aspects such as communication, coordination, trust and cooperation between regional or local organizations involved with the territorial sphere of the common land associations in a relatively small area (about 59,000 hectares) within the districts of Vila Real and Braga. Baptista (2010) has extensively studied community lands (*Baldios*) throughout Portugal and has documented over 800 community land associations. He has stated that in the discussion over the appropriate management considerations for the utilization of the community space, one needs to consider legitimacy,

institutional efficiency and capacity, local factors and representative democracy. In this research, general aspects are analyzed based upon the results from an adapted questionnaire originally constructed by Kang (1984) and also interviews and information gathered at community territory (common lands) meetings. The exploratory case study considers the means to facilitate inter-organizational strategic planning and governance as well as ways to improve local user capacity and administrative competencies in management of rural community territories and their natural resources.

The improvement in relationships among rural organizations in the same sphere of interest is related to the integrated rural development approach

that attempts to permit organizations to mutually reinforce one another or in other words create synergy among all the institutions in management of forestry, natural resources and the landscape.

The study focuses upon the territorial space, management and communication concerns and data collection challenges. These are the considerations to be justified and defined.

*Perímetros Florestais* are lands made up of common lands, autonomous or private and are submitted to the *Regime Florestal Parcial* as defined by legislation in the year 1901 - *parte IV, artigos 26.º e 27.º, do Decreto de 24 de Dezembro de 1901*. This legislation is concerned with the conservation through silviculture and reinvestment in reforestation to protect mountainous and sandy coastline soils as well as ground water. However, the territorial space is multi-functional and has additional economic activities outside of reforestation.

Management, governance and consensus domain is discussed within the facilitation process to minimize dependent partnerships and maintain institutional resilience and robustness (Nkhata et al., 2012; Westholm et al., 1999).

The density of communication and cooperation between agencies in the same sphere of interests as well as other coordinated actions are discussed. Webb and Svakoti (2008) and Kang (1984) identify additional inter-organizational synergies such as the maintenance of linkages to the local level and local users (residents), devolution of authority through institutional overlap, conflict reduction, pre-occupation with differences in organizational performance and collective action.

The research methodology describes the 5-point rating scale used by the presidents of the associations of common lands and next a multi-disciplinary approach to gather information about the sphere of interest.

The collection of information provides direction for the discussion of mechanisms and processes to narrow social and coordination disparities in the organizational communication process.

## 2. Theoretical Organizational Background

The integrated rural development approach is concerned with a common space where tasks and activities can mutually reinforce one another and develop a complementary effect that mitigates poor management performance in one organization and also improves distribution of scarce resources. These common space objectives accelerate the process of rural development and can improve the management performance of the organizations (Kang, 1984). "A pragmatic concept - integration is also a multi-

disciplinary in approach and multi-sectorial in operation" (Kang, 1984:18). This in turn relates to the relevance of educational and informational facilitation to improve management and community involvement in rural development activities.

Organizations that have relationships in the sphere of interest require learning process approaches (Korten, 1980), capacity building (Plummer, 2002), coordination activities (Kang, 1984; Berge and Laerhoven, 2011), an assessment of organizational readiness (Start and Hovland, 2007) and concern for the minimization of conflict (Webb and Shivakoti, 2008; Kang, 1984; Mosher, 1976) in order to strengthen integrated management programs. The concern is to avoid position or power imbalances within the integrated organizational system that can permit the stronger to ignore the weaker in strategic negotiations. In addition, distrust by one organization can disrupt communication channels and the sharing of information (Kang, 1984; Plummer, 2002; Berge and Laerhoven, 2011).

The local actors can play a greater role in governance activities associated to the construction of common land policies for the preservation and management of natural resources and forestry (territory) as well as the other multi-functional economic activities in these community lands (Okhuijsen and ten Hove, 1995). The economic activities related to property rights of the local users require organizational skills that resemble voluntary human resource management (Cernea, 1988).

It is recognized that one-way communication is associated to power, authority and control and can be contributed to communication strategies using meetings and telephone calls. Two-way communication is "a process in which the participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding" (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981:63). An internal communication strategy or system needs to consider tactical tools for empowering and engaging the local users that are more active than passive. The informational process should be transparent, interactive and not one directional. The formal methods to communicate with other institutions in the sphere of interest requires active partnerships that are committed to strategic and integrated approach to local development, while reflecting local autonomy, localism and appropriate protocols resembling communication methods such as co-planning, joint programs and project partners (Westholm et al., 1999).

The sphere of interest needs to consider improving cooperation and sharing work coordination for the rural development tasks and increase the exchange of information and collective

action. Although, the inter-organizational process should also be concerned with relationship orientation and at the same time improve task orientation (Kang, 1984).

The mutual concern and cooperation involves the preservation of forestry and the natural resources as a public good, while maintaining the management system at the local level. Pretty and Ward (2001) caution that the management loss of local institutions can provoke natural resource degradation. These local level institutional structures should not be permitted to disappear. Mansuri and Rao (2004) confirm the importance of participative decision making in development for local communities so as to qualify local residents to manage a community-based and driven development.

Pretty and Ward (2001) have also recognized that constructive resource management has been associated to local level management systems that still require external agencies or individuals to strengthen the knowledge and skills of local actors or users. The facilitation processes with local groups are vital for the maintenance of a community management system. "Where possible, work with existing social capital, especially people's associations and organizations, for the design and delivery of projects. This has the potential to (a) improve beneficiary targeting, (b) reduce project costs, (c) enhance sustainability, and (d) strengthen civil society through strengthening these organizations" (Grootaert and van Basstalaer, 2002:36).

Inter-organizational communication and relationships can be improved through a facilitation process by capacity building and a strategic planning process that increases the participation and engagement of stakeholders at all levels of governance, while minimizing decision making inequalities between governmental and non-governmental institutional leaders and local residents concerned with also improving their livelihoods and sustaining the economic activities (Bouwma et al., 2010; Koehnen and Cristóvão, 2006). A facilitation process, engagement and social learning can be important tools to improve communication.

Educational programs in rural areas strengthen integrated rural development and allocative ability of human capital (Huffman, 1974). In addition, Samuelson and Nordhaus (2006/2005) explain that growth and stability of economies may require governmental investments in research and education for the qualification of human resources. "Education and special support in the form of training and mentoring is likely to be needed during the transition, so that previously excluded groups gain the capacity to interact effectively with local

governance, educational and financial institutions" (Narayan, 1999:36). These considerations are important for greater governance, management and policy construction by the users of common lands and other possible stakeholders.

And yet, rural areas in Portugal have adult and excluded populations that are not engaged in community or associational activities (Koehnen and Baptista, 2012; Koehnen et al., 2010). For this reason, facilitators need to focus educational activities and training objectives to strengthen empowerment and collective decision-making for local users of community lands. These facilitation programs need training modules that include leadership skills, civic education (understanding local government and social services), governance and social development (leadership skills and collective action). The facilitation process can promote voluntary internship activities in governmental and non-governmental organizations in these rural communities. These engagement activities would be a part of social learning and be supervised by external agencies with extension and development agents that promote group discussion sessions with local groups about their experiences.

The facilitation activities need to permit the participant to construct additional networks that reflect the vertical and horizontal relationships found in their local governmental and non-governmental organizations. The facilitation process engages local people to construct leadership capacities and social skills that should be oriented toward collective actions within their communities. Common Land Associations and governmental organizations should be concerned with engaging the local populations in organizational management to increase community decision-making and construct additional social skills through participatory activities such as representative advisory councils and voluntary internships (Koehnen and Baptista, 2012; Koehnen, 2010; Koehnen et al., 2010 and Koehnen and Cristóvão, 2006).

Rural development policies require a holistic approach to strengthen facilitation processes in rural development and rural extension education. In many cases, rural development policies need to value or support activities such as the participation in town meetings, internships in governmental or non-governmental organizations or other volunteer activities. The engagement initiatives reflect a concern to build partnerships and networks in these rural communities. The construction of the community networks and improvement in inter-organizational communication should involve the entire rural population. Those with unequal skill and socially disadvantaged require facilitation to

construct synergistic social and communication skills through a continuous rural extension educational system (Koehnen and Baptista, 2012; Koehnen et al., 2010; Koehnen, 2011; Devaux et al., 2007).

Facilitation can use the strategic planning or social action process that has been recommended as an important tool for rural development since Beal and Hobbs, (1964). The interactive steps can be associated to the recent concerns in Portugal to develop social development networks (advisory councils/municipal strategic planning) within rural municipal governments in Portugal (Koehnen and Cristovão, 2006). It also has been addressed for other types of local organizations to increase local residents in the decision-making process (Koehnen and Santos, 2009). In this paper, it is considered an approach to also improve inter-organizational communication and planning with organizations in the sphere of interests as suggested by Bouwma, et al. (2010), Beal and Hobbs, (1964) and others. The planning process should also be a facilitation instrument at the local level to improve the involvement, engagement and participation of the local residents in the governance of these associations.

This mechanism to support rural community development and organizational communication is a social learning and mobilization process for the local population to increase capacity for governance and resolution of local problems associated with "empowerment" and the territorial management of these common lands (Koehnen and Cristovão, 2006; Koehnen and Santos, 2009; Koehnen et al., 2004). Social learning and facilitation can be integrated in the strategic planning process.

Beal and Hobbs (1964) and Woods and Sloggett (1990) have identified basic reasons for using strategic planning by communities as it: promotes efficiency of the use of scarce resources by the stakeholders and local users; strengthens coordination of the work of all the entities; establishes greater consensual decision-making; gives the community a greater competitive position in rural development; constructs a participative process; mobilizes the residents, small farmers and other stakeholders and improves community communication and relationships with other entities in the sphere of interest.

Eventually, the engagement and facilitation process would lead to joint-decision making in the management of the common lands (Okhuijsen and ten Hove, 1995). Uphoff (1992:273) stated, "top-down" efforts are usually needed to introduce, sustain, and institutionalize "bottom-up" development".

Lastly, Stahl (2011) has discussed boundary and territorial conflict problems to be negotiated and

resolved. He distinctly identified types of disputes as: location, deed and title conflicts. In some cases, all these categories could be present in the dispute and each situation determines the "unique application of legal principles" and negotiation for resolution. These territorial conflicts are related to a physical area although these conflicts sometimes reflect the psychological and social territory related to the local users perspectives, local family history and memory, rights, privileges and myths associated to these common lands. These conflicts can be debated through the use of a geographic information system, the judicial system and a facilitation process.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1 Exploratory Research Methodology: Multi-Disciplinary

This exploratory research used a case study design that has been recommended by McNabb (2004), Cresswell (1994) and Isaac and Michael (1981). The purpose of the research was to describe and assess inter-organizational communication and relationships through responses to a questionnaire by the Presidents of Common Lands Associations and the collection of additional information at meetings and a community land seminar. The case study questionnaire collected qualitative and quantitative data about organizational finance, objectives, formal and non-formal communication methods and the perspective of the president of these associations on various factors and aspects related to communication, coordination, cooperation and conflict or rivalry.

The presidents of these associations were asked to rate various questions using a 5-point scale. The questions were related to various aspects of inter-organizational communication and their relationship with other rural development organizations in the region or sphere of influence. The sphere of management entities within multifunctional territories were the Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture (MA-DGDR) that has the final authority with the Forest Services or *Autoridade Florestal Nacional*, Natural Park of the *Alvão* that is guided by the *Instituto de Conservação da Natureza* (ICN) and other entities. The "Sítio Alvão/Marão" is a protected area with 59,000 hectares and includes approximately 60 to 70% of the common lands in the population study

The researcher hypothesises that the Natural Park should be considered an authority in the eyes of the presidents of these associations as it relates to conservation of natural resources. The Government Municipalities, Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) or Local Development Associations (LDA) and *Governo Civil* are also a part of the governance process in the community lands. However, at this time, the position of *Governo Civil* that represented



the Portuguese Republic administratively for each district has no nominations reflecting the on-going economic austerity process in Portugal. The questionnaire did not request the perspective of the presidents of these common lands about *Forestis* and *Secretariado dos Baldios de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro* (SBTMAD), although the questionnaire permitted the respondents to include other organizations in their assessment.

A short discussion of the two above mentioned entities relevance in the sphere of interest has been determined through contacts, meetings and discussions at the European Community Area Seminar in 2011. The meetings and seminar brought together presidents, governmental leaders, university researchers and stakeholders from the before mentioned entities and of course many organizations that responded to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was adapted from a survey research study carried out by Kang (1984) to understand the factors influencing inter-organizational relations between extension agencies and other agricultural development agencies in Asia. The adapted questionnaire has been used to describe inter-organizational relationships and communication processes between governmental and non-governmental entities, while using additional data collection tools to gather data from interviews and comments made at meetings and the international seminar.

The population for this case study research design is the *Presidentes dos Conselhos Directivos dos Baldios* or presidents of common land associations in the northern Portugal within the counties made up of the *Perímetros Florestais da Cabreira - Cabeceiras da Basto; Marão e Meia Via; Vila Real e Ordem; Montemuro; Ribeira da Pena e Barroso e Mondim de Basto*. The researcher sent a mailed questionnaire to all 44 of these associations from the above *perímetros florestais* and 25 Presidents responded and returned a questionnaire. The response rate for the return of the questionnaire is 57%.

The exploratory research case study identified clues from answers to the questionnaire and other informational sources to recommend organizational governance, social action and decision-making by the actors or stakeholders involved in the management of common lands and community territories by way of a facilitation process. In this endeavour, the paper delineates aspects associated to the following questions rated by the presidents using numerical five-point scales.

- To what extent are the goals of each of the following agencies compatible or complementary to the goal of your organization?

- How well does each of the following agencies perform their respective tasks in assisting or in carrying out rural development/reforestation/protection?

- How important is it that your organization co-ordinate its work with each of the following agencies? In other words, is it important that each of these other agencies coordinate their programs and activities with your organization?

- How much higher or lower is your position as a director in relation to the position held by the head of each of the following agencies?

- When your organization meets with the highest level representatives of each of the following agencies to discuss issues of mutual concern, how much influence does your agency have on the process and the decisions reached?

- How often does your organization have contact with each of the following agencies?

- How are the contacts made - be specific?

- There may be some competition or even conflicts between your organization and each of the following agencies over possible problem areas such as overlapping responsibilities, competition for the same scarce resources etc. Concerning these competitions or conflicts, answer the following questions?

- When there are overlapping interests between your organization and each of the following agencies, how often does each of the following agencies attempt to interfere with the attainment of your goals or claim credit for the work of your organization?

- The following agencies may distrust your organization when there are opportunities or important reasons for the agencies to work together?

The paper also presents the mean percentages that these organizations use to communicate formally and informally with other entities and organizations in the sphere of interests. Also, the manner used to finance the association is presented, along with organizational objectives.

To be redundant, the questionnaire permitted the respondent to identify other organizations in this sphere of interest outside those listed within the questionnaire. The respondents did not identify other institutions, for example, *Forestis* or the SBTMAD. Nevertheless, the SBTMAD has supported these associations in the process of decentralization and also foment common land and agricultural policies, while working for collective solutions since 1979. The SBTMAD represents more than 300 common land associations, organizations and councils in the north and centre of Portugal that link indirectly and directly to the users or small family farms in the

community territories. As to *Forestis*, the association president with little experience in forestry projects can outsource the management role to *Forestis* in order to gain technical help in reforestation, fire control, honey production, mushroom production and marketing the territorial products. In other areas with less assistance from the Forestry Service, we can find *Forestis* involved in forest projects that are not linked to the *Perímetros Florestais*.

In the result section, the paper presents the responses by the presidents to both open and closed questions surrounding organizational communication from a questionnaire. The open questions relate to organizational objectives and projects implemented in the community. Additional contextual presentations are linked to the information gathered at common land association meetings, an international common lands seminar and an interview. The analysis from the responses to the questionnaire is strengthened by the information collected from these additional sources.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Exploratory Research Study Results

In this exploratory research study, a descriptive analysis has been utilized. The findings are shown by descriptive means and in the open questions a selection of the contextual responses was determined.

The presidents contributed information as to the sources of financial support to carry out their activities involving the governance of community lands. The percentages are the result of calculating a percentage mean from the 25 returned questionnaires: Self-financing 77%, Governmental/National support 19%, Municipality support 3.3%, and European Funds 0.7%. The presidents use the collective funds for activities such as maintaining community forestry roads, reforestation, clearing brush, fire prevention and other activities. As the decisions for the use of these funds are decentralized, the funding decisions at local level are sometimes criticized at other levels if the funded activities do not relate to the forestry mission supported by these types of governmental organizations. In the perspective of SBTMAD and many presidents of these common land associations, the governmental organizations need to be reminded of the multifunctional nature of these community lands outside of forestry or preservation of natural resources. With this in mind, in one case the funds were used to support and build a community centre.

The respondents were also asked to identify their organizational (common land associations) objectives. Some responses to the open question were the following: *“to protect the common lands and administer the community forestry space, while*

*conforming to local customs and traditions”*; *“to prevent forest fires”*; *“to manage finances and community funds”*; *“to implement community projects with forestry income”*; *“to support reforestation projects and to value conservation of nature”*. Only one response established their objective as the conservation of nature. It should be noted that 60% of these common lands are part of a protected area overseen by ICN.

Table 1 shows the mean percentages of the responses to the questions related to formal and informal communication methods used by these presidents. The questionnaire listed these methods and asked them to give a percentage of their time using these methods. The predominant formal methods are meetings, followed by telephone conversations that the researcher defines as passive in comparison to information exchange, co-planning and joint programs. The more passive methods dominate in the communication with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Table 1 describes both the passive and active communication tools associated to inter-organizational communication. Are the informal methods associated more strongly to the local level contacts with the community residents? The researcher assumes these methods of contacts are with local users.

Table 1. Formal and Informal Methods to Communicate

Formal	%	Informal	%
Meetings	60%	Informal	
Telephone Calls	17%	Discussion	54%
Project Partners	8%	Informal	
Information Exchange	8%	Contacts	6%
Internet	3%		
Co-Planning	3%		
Joint Programs	1%		

To what extent are the goals of each of the following agencies compatible or complementary to the goal of your organization (1=None, 2=somewhat, 3=Compatible, 4=Very or 5=Very much)? In the perspective of these presidents, there is compatibility with some governmental and non-governmental agencies identified for this exploratory study. The question links to the exchange between these other organizations and the perception that the presidents view about the ideological or consensus domain. This measures the perceived degree that the associations identify commonalities or similarities with the other organizations (Kang, 1984). The entities fall within the same sphere of interest as defined as the preservation and use of natural resources and forestry. See Table 2.

Table 2. Compatible or Complementary Goals

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	2.3
Forest Service	3.3
Natural Park	2
Government Municipality	3
LDA/NPO	3
Governo Civil	2

How well does each of the following agencies perform their respective tasks in assisting or in carrying out rural development/ reforestation /protection (1=Very Poorly, 2=Poorly, 3=Adequately, 4=Well or 5=Very Well)? The local level stakeholders have a negative opinion concerning the assistance that they share in carrying out task with these governmental and non-governmental agencies (see Table 3). In general, these common land association presidents evaluate poorly the other organizations cooperation and coordination of tasks completed within the sphere of interest.

Table 3. Perform tasks in Rural Development/Forestation/Protection

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	1.8
Forest Service	2
Natural Park	2
Government Municipality	2
LDA/NPO	2
Governo Civil	2

How important is it that your organization coordinates its work with each of the following agencies (1=Not at all, 2=Somewhat, 3=Important, 4=Very or 5=Very much)? In other words, is it important that each of these other agencies coordinate their programs and activities with your organization? As these common lands are associated to a forestry perimeter with the objective to implement a partial forestry regime, the high coordination perspective with the Forest Services is very important, but improvement in the coordination and cooperation of the preservation of natural resources and local governance should also be considered with the other organizations instead of being only somewhat important (see Table 4).

Table 4. Coordination with other Organizations

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	2.6
Forest Service	4
Natural Park	2
Government Municipality	3
LDA/NPO	2
Governo Civil	2

How much higher or lower is your position as a director in relation to the position held by the head of each of the following agencies (1=Much lower, 2=Somewhat lower, 3=About the same, 4=Somewhat higher or 5=Much higher)? From their answers, they have an equal position with all the directors in the other agencies except for the Ministry of Agriculture where it is considered somewhat lower. One could suggest that decentralization should place them in a better position to negotiate with the regional and national entities while reflecting the collective interests of the community residents and the management, preservation and maintenance of the common lands. This question is concerned with power or the control these associations have over the other entities (Table 5).

Table 5. Position as Director

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	2
Forest Service	3
Natural Park	3
Government Municipality	3
LDA/NPO	3
Governo Civil	3

When your organization meets with the highest level representatives of each of the following agencies to discuss issues of mutual concern, how much influence does your agency have on the process and the decisions reached (1=No influence, 2=A little influence, 3=Some influence, 4=Much Influence or 5=Very much influence)? The directors responded as either a little influence or some influence. Are they in a position to negotiate and construct agricultural and rural development policies and be an equal partner in the decision-making process? The responses do not reflect a situation where there is a strong mutual reinforcement, collective action or negotiation with these governmental agencies (see Table 6).

Table 6. Influence on Process and the Decision Reached

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	2
Forest Service	3
Natural Park	2
Government Municipality	3
LDA/NPO	3
Governo Civil	2

How often does your organization have contact with each of the following agencies (1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often or 5=Always)? The Forest Service contacts the directors or presidents often. The presidents sometimes are

contacted by the Municipal Government and Local Development Associations, and seldom have contacts from Ministry of Agriculture or Natural Park Service. This question is evaluating the coordination of tasks and coordination of voluntary activities between these organizations. The Forest Service has a relatively high level of inter-organizational communication. The lower rates reflect a lower level of inter-organizational communication.

However, a follow-up question as to the method of contact (see next question) with these governmental organizations identifies passive communication methods. This question was open and allowed them to identify the method most used by the other organizations. They had contact most often by telephone (see Table 8). Do they strongly link to equal negotiation for co-planning, joint programs and partnerships? (See Table 7 and 8). The communication strategy is not an active process for these common land associations considering the communication method used. This affirmation has been confirmed by the corroborative information obtained from comments at the international seminar. How are the contacts made - be specific? (Table 8).

Table 7. Contact with Organizations

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	2.1
Forest Service	4
Natural Park	1.9
Government Municipality	3.2
LDA/NPO	3
Governo Civil	2

Table 8. Communication Methods by Percentage

Methods	%
Telephone	46%
Meetings	23%
Person to Person	18%
Letters	9%
Protocol	4%

The next question probes for rivalries between agencies. There may be some competition or even conflicts between your organization and each of the following agencies over possible problem areas such as overlapping responsibilities, competition for the same scarce resources etc. Concerning these competitions or conflicts, answer the following questions? a) When there are overlapping interests between your organization and each of the following agencies, how often does each of the following agencies attempt to interfere with the attainment of your goals or claim credit for the work of your organization (1=Never attempt, 2=Seldom attempt, 3=Sometimes attempt, 4=Often attempt or 5=Always

attempt)? In the perspective of these presidents that responded to the questionnaire, they believe that these agencies below seldom attempt to interfere with the attainment of their goals. And, it is noted that the local development associations/non-governmental organizations never attempt to interfere in organizational objectives (see Table 9).

Table 9. Overlapping Interests

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	1.6
Forest Service	2
Natural Park	2
Government Municipality	2
LDA/NPO	1
Governo Civil	1

The dimensions of conflict or a lack of overlapping interests involve not only objectives or goals, but also values and policies. At the seminar and meetings, the information ascertained from these events that the governmental organizations do not value the multi-functionality of these areas outside of the forestry domain. There can be a conflict of interest by not giving value to other economic activities for the users. The last question to be presented highlights the role of trust. There may be some competition or even conflicts between your organization and each of the following agencies over possible problem areas such as overlapping responsibilities, competition for the same scarce resources etc. Concerning these competitions or conflicts, answer the following questions. The following agencies may distrust your organization when there are opportunities or important reasons for the agencies to work together (1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often or 5=Always)? The presidents confirm to not perceive problems with distrust as defined above. They respond that the organizations or agencies such as the Natural Park and the Local Development Associations/Non-Profit Organization never distrust them when working together. Yet, they answer that the Forest Service and Municipal Government seldom distrust their organization. These continue to be important entities for mutual coordination in the management of these community lands within the area of forestry and natural resource protection (see Table 10).

Table 10. Distrust your Organization

Entity	Mean
MA-DGDR	1.3
Forest Service	2
Natural Park	1
Government Municipality	2
LDA/NPO	1
Governo Civil	1



Information from an interview, meetings and the seminar resulted in the identification of a territorial conflict among common land associations related to misunderstanding about boundaries, title of property and registrar problems between associations

The data analysis suggests that an improvement in communication, informational sharing and organizational relationships should be addressed. Participation appears to be superficial in the management of these organizations.

### 3.2 Discussion and implications

These associations are nearly self-financed and relates to their territories being multi-functional. The economic activities that contribute to the community revenue and the users with property rights to these community lands include the exploitation of community forest products such as timber, resin, nuts, hunting and fishing rights and fuel wood, while also including income from the rent received for the installations of wind power and mineral water wells. It also includes direct livelihood benefits to the residents around the community such as pasturing large and small ruminants, beekeeping and mushroom harvesting. These are the means to capture local revenue by these associations and of course the community users, members or family farms. These economic activities are multi-functional and related to the necessity for social capacities in the area of management and negotiation by the users and members of the common land association. These skills can be strengthened to reduce conflicts by the users and over exploitation of the community lands, while maintaining their sustainability.

The organizations in the same sphere of interest need to use communication methods that inspire an active social process that associates more strongly to a participative strategic planning where all stakeholders have an equal place in decision making as well as communicative methods associated to policy making. The communication contacts need to be more active, participative, empowering and involve active partnerships and these aspects could be strengthened through facilitation. There is a need to strengthen more joint programs and co-planning methods that usually are associated to methods that strengthen networks and partnerships.

The Ministry of Agriculture has a higher power position over these associations. The top-down inter-organizational relationship should be one where the government has the role of negotiator, mediator or servant to these locally managed institutions. In order to not make intervening management decisions, but assume the role of an independent adviser facilitating the decision-making process in the management of these territories.

The common land boundary issues and conflicts merit a facilitation process favouring knowledge sharing and social learning between all parties in these disputes to assist in determining or initiating a settlement to the formal right for ownership of the common land properties. These territory disputes might be negotiated and resolved with the Ministry of Agriculture, local governments and registrar offices.

The relevance of facilitation processes, communication and strategic planning is to strengthen organizational relationships as well as increase the participation, engagement and mobilization of the local residents. The social action and facilitation process can contribute to improving co-planning and joint programs by governmental and non-governmental institutions. In addition, the facilitation activities and the use of tools, processes and mechanism to change attitudes, strengthen engagement and information sharing by stakeholders and users of common lands has relevance for the sustainability of the local level management system and improving governance. The exploratory research study supports the consideration of these facilitation processes involving capacity building and strategic planning.

### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Coordination and active inter-organizational communication does not happen naturally without some type of facilitation, planning or effort by all of the organizations in the sphere of interest. Strategic planning or a social action process can improve organizational performance and thus the management of natural resources and forest areas. Additional organizational capacity building and strengthening inter and intra organizational communication requires local and regional governments to enhance educational and facilitation activities in this sphere of interests. Also cooperation implies the necessity to strengthen consultative processes for joint policy making by improving inter-organizational relationships. Facilitation should maintain the localization process for the management of these community lands by strengthening participative organizational management. Rural development facilitation activities need to strengthen the qualification of local users and leaders to actively construct policies for the preservation of natural resources and management of forest areas (Okhuijsen and ten Hove, 1995).

The facilitation process through rural extension can maintain and continuously improve linkages to the local organization for decentralized governance. These educational activities are relevant and important. Further consideration should address

the social learning process to hear and address the concerns of the local users and rural residents in these communities responsible for the community territories. The social action process directed at social groups in these communities can strengthen the involvement and active participation of the local users and residents in the decision-making process in this sphere of interest.

“As Uphoff astutely recognizes, paradoxical though it may seem, “top-down” efforts are usually needed to introduce, sustain, and institutionalize “bottom-up” development. We are commonly constrained to think in “either-or” terms—the more of one the less of the other—when both are needed in a positive-sum way to achieve our purposes” (Grootaert and Basstalaer, 2002: 273). For this reason the devolution by central government organizations to the collective and local decision-making process does not imply that national governmental leaders use this situation to cut financial support and facilitation activities involved with the management and engagement of community territories. It does assume that all organizations cooperate to foster and plan means to strengthen organizational relationships and performance for the collective objective to maintain institutional resilience and robustness (Nkhata et al., 2012, Westholm et al., 1999).

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## ارتباطات درون و برون سازمانی: رهیافت‌های تسهیل‌سازی برای پایداری و تقویت مدیریت توسعه روستایی در پرتغال

### تیموتی کوآهندن

دانشیار ترویج و توسعه روستایی دانشگاه تراس اس مونتس و آلتودرو ویلارئال، پرتغال

این مطالعه به تشریح و ارزیابی ارتباطات درون سازمانی و روابط موجود در زمینه مدیریت توسعه روستایی جامعه زمین‌داران در مناطق ویژه جنگلی در پرتغال می‌پردازد. روش تحقیق اکتشافی بوده و اطلاعات از طریق پرسشنامه و مصاحبه در جلسات انجمن جامعه زمین‌داران و سمینارهای بین‌المللی جمع‌آوری شده است. طرح تحقیق منعکس کننده یک رهیافت چند رشته‌ای برای جمع‌آوری و تحلیل اطلاعات بوده است. جلسات و سمینارها شرایطی را فراهم آورد که رهبران جامعه و دیگر افرادی که دارای مسئولیت می‌باشند برای این سرزمین‌های جامعه روستایی به بحث و تبادل نظر بپردازند و موضوعات و مسائل مدیریتی را بررسی کنند. یافته‌های تحقیق به تشریح مسائل درون‌سازمانی و موضوعات مدیریتی و حکومتی در این مناطق در جامعه روستایی می‌پردازد. بر اساس نتایج حاصل لزوم یک فرآیند تسهیل‌گری جهت بهبود مدیریت و ارتباطات سازمانی با کاربران محلی و دیگر سازمان‌ها در حوزه‌های مورد علاقه تأکید شده است. این فرآیند تسهیل‌گری، بهبود مهارت‌های ارتباطی و مدیریتی فعالان محلی و ذینفعان را مورد توجه قرار می‌دهد و بر ظرفیت‌سازی برای ایجاد سیاست‌های دولتی برای این مناطق روستایی تأکید می‌کند. خدمات ترویج روستایی یک نقش مهمی را در این فرآیند تسهیل‌گری برای طراحی توسعه روستایی و سیاست‌های دولتی می‌تواند ایفا کند.

### چکیده

کلمات کلیدی:  
کاربرد، فناوری  
اطلاعات و ارتباطات،  
کارکنان ترویج