

The Africa-wide research workshop on bi-laws, their effects on natural resource management, and linkages to customary and statutory law

hosted by the World Agroforestry Centre and sponsored by the World Agroforestry Centre and the Collective Action and Property Rights Initiative (CAPRI)

November 27-29 2006

Thanks to the donors to CAPRI, the European Union support to policy research at ICRAF, and Diane Russell.

Background:

ICRAF engagement with bi-laws in many parts of Africa, with interesting site-specific and context-specific results. To date, very little cross-site learning or synthesis.

But, questions about how we organize and synthesize?

Is there a distinct theoretical base for formulating or implementing bi-laws? Is “bi-law theory” only derivative of theories of new institutional economics and political economy? Can we advance a conceptual basis for bi-laws that can help us draw generalizations from empirical evidence?

No distinct characterization of bilaws viz env policy:
an instrument of decentralization?
an instrument of CBNRM?
an instrument of “command-and-control” env policy?
an instrument in incentive or market-based environmental policy?

i) Goal

maximize the potential of ICRAF's, other CGIAR and partners', natural resource bi-laws research to contribute to current policy debates on engendering customary regulations into bi-laws.

ii) Objectives

- Provide a forum for ICRAF, and other CGIAR scientists and their partners dealing with bi-laws research in the region to share knowledge, lessons and experiences;
- Scope and synthesize the work of ICRAF's, broader CGIAR and partners on the evolution of bi-laws and effects on NRM in Africa with cross-learning from Asia;
- Interface ICRAF's work with the broader bi-laws research within the CGIAR system;
- Produce one special journal issue, policy brief for circulation among policy-makers and shapers and at least five papers in peer reviewed journals; and
- Provide a framework and the basis for developing a joint proposal for broader collaborative research on bi-laws and NRM in Africa

i) Outputs

- i) workshop proceedings;
- ii) a policy document for circulation amongst policy influencers and decision makers;
- iii) working papers, a subset of which might be suitable for CAPRI or CAPRI / ICRAF / AHI working papers;
- iv) a special issue of a journal or a book with the best contributions; and
- v) a proposal for collaborative research (as a long-term output).

ii) Beneficiaries and impacts

- critical review and quality improvement of individual work
- a peer group of scientists who have been undertaking bi-laws research in different parts of Africa benefit
- possibilities to link that peer group to other groups
- a wider group of bi-law researchers
- policymakers will benefit from the outputs and it is expected to influence policy formulation through the integration of bi-laws elements into statutory regulations
- future research agendas of ICRAF, partners and broader bi-laws research in the CGIAR.
- CAPRI's work on accommodating multiple uses and users of natural resources and structuring devolution.