



The Role of Governance in Connecting Ecosystem Services and Livelihoods: Lessons from Bangladesh

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National legal, policy and decision-making frameworks often undervalue or ignore ecosystem services (ES) and the ways in which they can affect livelihoods, and research projects may under-estimate the role of governance in translating research effectively into practice. Better coordination of ES and livelihoods can be fatally undermined by existing institutional frameworks and through poor implementation and follow-up of policy decisions. This can have drastic impacts on resilience as the reality may be very different from the policy intentions.

The ESPA Deltas project integrates physical modelling, a multi-season social survey, scenario development and stakeholder engagement, and a governance analysis component has been incorporated into each. The project has comprehensively assessed the legal, policy and institutional context in Bangladesh, identifying barriers to legal and policy implementation through intensive stakeholder engagement and desk study at local, national and international levels. There has been a high degree of agreement in the findings from each of these independent processes and across the districts assessed.

This presentation illustrates how the governance research has been incorporated into the development of qualitative scenarios. It also demonstrates the extent to which policy implementation considerations have been factored into the biophysical modelling and social survey work. It identifies the challenges for adaptation strategies in Bangladesh, and draws on successful examples of policy implementation there (e.g. disaster management) to propose governance interventions that might enhance the resilience of delta inhabitants, especially in the light of the informal governance context. This research facilitates implementation of targeted governance interventions and supports the development of tools that can aid policy-makers in evaluating the impact of policy decisions on ecosystem services and livelihoods.