Draft Guiding principles for knowledge collaborations

SwedBio, 2016-02-16
This a living document that will be continuously updated over time, in consultation with SwedBio partners under the Collaborative Programme, SRC researcher, and others.

Introduction

The aim of SwedBio, as a "knowledge interface" is to facilitate connections across knowledge systems and cultures, such as local, indigenous, policy makers and scientific knowledge. This role involves bridging between scientists, practitioners, and policy makers, with the intention to contribute to improved understanding, knowledge generation, management and good governance of social-ecological systems. One of SwedBio's intentions is thus to contribute to an improved dialogue culture in the field of SwedBio's work. In this endeavor, it is important to have a clear framework and transparent principles and procedures to guide the motivation, character, and intent of the various collaborative initiatives undertaken between SwedBio, its partners under the collaborative programme, research scientists, indigenous peoples and local communities as rights holders and knowledge holders, as well as other actors that are involved in interactions with SwedBio. The document is a work in progress, and it is anticipated to be continuously revised over time. These guiding principles are applicable in all SwedBio's collaborations, under the Thematic and Functional Focal Areas, for the Component 1, Knowledge Interface, as well as Component 2, Collaborative Programme.

All sharing of knowledge has to be based on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), through the whole Process. Existing frameworks and guidelines that are important starting points in SwedBio's work are e.g.; the international human rights framework, including the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[i]; the CBD Tkarihwaié:ri Code of Ethical Conduct[ii]; the Akwé: Kon guidelines for impact assessment[iii] as well as relevant guidance from the Nagoya protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing[iv]. IPBES is in the process of developing its own rules and procedures for how to create synergies across knowledge systems, and how to use ILK in assessments[v]. This is also a process where SwedBio is involved and that is contributing to our learning.

In successful knowledge collaborations across knowledge systems and cultures the attitudes framing the exchange are essential. Some primary principles are *respect* for diversity, *trust*, *reciprocity* and *equal sharing.*[vi]

Transparent open communication and mutual sharing and learning are important, and should integrate emancipatory processes. The collaborators should consider how they might wish to manage:

- Expectations - for example, through reflection and evaluation at different stages to ensure expectations are realistic and attainable;
- Timeframes - for example, by planning for necessary financial and human resources, time required to engage with relevant actors, and adapting to changing circumstances;
- Information - including process documentation and safeguarding sensitive or restricted information which includes an understanding on which information is sensitive and which should not be included in the collaboration, or disseminated further, in cases where physical integrity of collaborators may be at stake always prioritise their security;
- Mutual learning and mutual sharing – usually in SwedBio's collaborations there is a mutual learning taking place but if that is not so clear, for example when taking up actors time - consider to give something back at the immediate occasion, it can be in economic terms, or to share knowledge of use, as agreed with actors, such as sharing of literature, a seminar, teaching in schools or institutions.

Keeping these general management considerations in mind, SwedBio focuses on some of the following principles for knowledge collaborations:

Participation & Representation

Collaborations should create space for meaningful and culturally appropriate participation of representatives of social groups. All collaborations should begin with clarity on how to manage who should be involved and for what purpose in the collaborations[vii]. It is important to have a transparent process and manage expectations.

Women & Gender

Women and men have different roles in many aspects of life. Integrating a gender 'lens' or 'dimension' in the entirety of the collaborative process will better enable the facilitation and support team and other key actors to understand, accommodate and support the specific rights, roles, needs, and aspirations of more marginalised groups (which often includes women)[viii]. SwedBio refers to various guidelines and tools for mainstreaming gender, see for example: The Gender website of the Convention on Biological Diversity[ix] and "Women and men in development, Analysing gender", Sida 2003[x].

The Multiple Evidence Base approach (MEB)[xi]

The MEB approach emphasizes complementarity and equitable and transparent processes for connecting across knowledge systems. Fundamental values such as respect, trust, reciprocity, and equal sharing need to characterize all interactions at all scales. MEB emphasizes that it is important to establish frameworks to promote and enable equal and transparent connections between knowledge systems, to level any power dynamics, to empower communities, in order to fulfil the potential of knowledge synergies for equitable ecosystem governance. To enable successful synergies across knowledge systems, there is a need for intercultural dialogues, which promote credibility and legitimacy. The MEB is an approach for generating the levels of trust and respect required for dialogues leading to changing mental models and widened perceptions of how knowledge systems can cross-fertilize among all knowledge holders. The development of procedures concerning problem definition, assessment processes, and the evaluation of findings needs to involve co-design, co-generation and collaboration with relevant actors from the onset.[xii]

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' Rights, including the Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent

Knowledge collaborations need to have respect for and realisation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including their right to provide or deny free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) regarding activities that take place on their lands and territories, or otherwise affect them. The decision to provide or withhold FPIC is an on going process, not a single moment or one - off event. At any stage of engagement with external actors, a community has a right to seek more information, say "no", or withdraw entirely. Customary means of consensus-building or other forms of decision-making can be used as the basis for culturally appropriate FPIC processes. By definition, FPIC processes must respect the community's timelines and self - determined processes and must not be driven or influenced by project proponents.[xiii] Furthermore, knowledge collaborations should consider a rights-based approach identifying how these collaborations can contribute to indigenous peoples' and local communities' individual and collective rights such as rights to information and rights to a healthy environment.

Indigenous & Community Ownership

Knowledge collaborations should preferably be driven and created by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, or in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). If created by others, the principles specified here are important to follow. Power relations between Indigenous

peoples and local communities and dominant societies are often highly imbalanced and inequitable. Collaborations should aim to be emancipatory, participatory, and representative of local realities. It recognises that indigenous peoples' and local communities' relationships with their territories and areas are an integral source of their identities, cultures and well-being. The emphasis on Indigenous methodologies and approaches lays the foundations for bridging complementary systems of traditional indigenous and mainstream knowledge (as in the MEB Approach above). Since often knowledge generation through for example collaborations between scientists and practitioner lead to new knowledge, data or information, it should be made clear at the beginning of any collaboration who owns any information or data generated from the collaboration.[xiv]

[i] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

[ii] http://www.cbd.int/traditional/code.shtml

[iii] http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/akwe-brochure-en.pdf

[iv] http://www.cbd.int/abs/

[v] http://www.ipbes.net/images/documents/plenary/third/information/INF_2/IPBES_3_INF_2.pdf

[vi] Tengo, M., and P. Malmer (eds). 2012. Dialogue workshop on knowledge for the 21st century: Indigenous knowledge, traditional knowledge, science and connecting diverse knowledge systems. Usdub, Guna Yala, Panama, April 10–13, 2012. Workshop Report. http://www.stockholmresilience.org/21/policy--practice/swedbio/dialogues/guna-yala-dialogue.html

[vii] Natural Justice Biocultural Community Protocols: A toolkit for community facilitators. www.community-protocols.org

[viii] Developed from The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative Methodology, May, 2014, http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/New-Last-CCR-Initiative-methodology_May-2014.pdf

[ix] http://www.cbd.int/gender/; http://www.cbd.int/doc/pa/tools/In%20Search%20of%20the%20Lost%20Gender.pdf

[x] http://www.sida.se/contentassets/bd6dd050fca742ab8c5689fea5b5adc8/analysing-gender_939.pdf

[xi] http://www.stockholmresilience.org/21/policy--practice/swedbio/dialogues/guna-yala-dialogue/multiple-evidence-base.html

[xii] Tengö et al. Connecting Diverse Knowledge Systems for Enhanced Ecosystem Governance: The Multiple Evidence Base Approach, AMBIO 2014, 43:579–591

[xiii] Developed from The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative Methodology, May, 2014, http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/New-Last-CCR-Initiative-methodology_May-2014.pdf

[xiv] Developed from The Community Conservation Resilience Initiative Methodology, May, 2014, http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/New-Last-CCR-Initiative-methodology_May-2014.pdf