

# Fostering innovative dialogue to meet future challenges

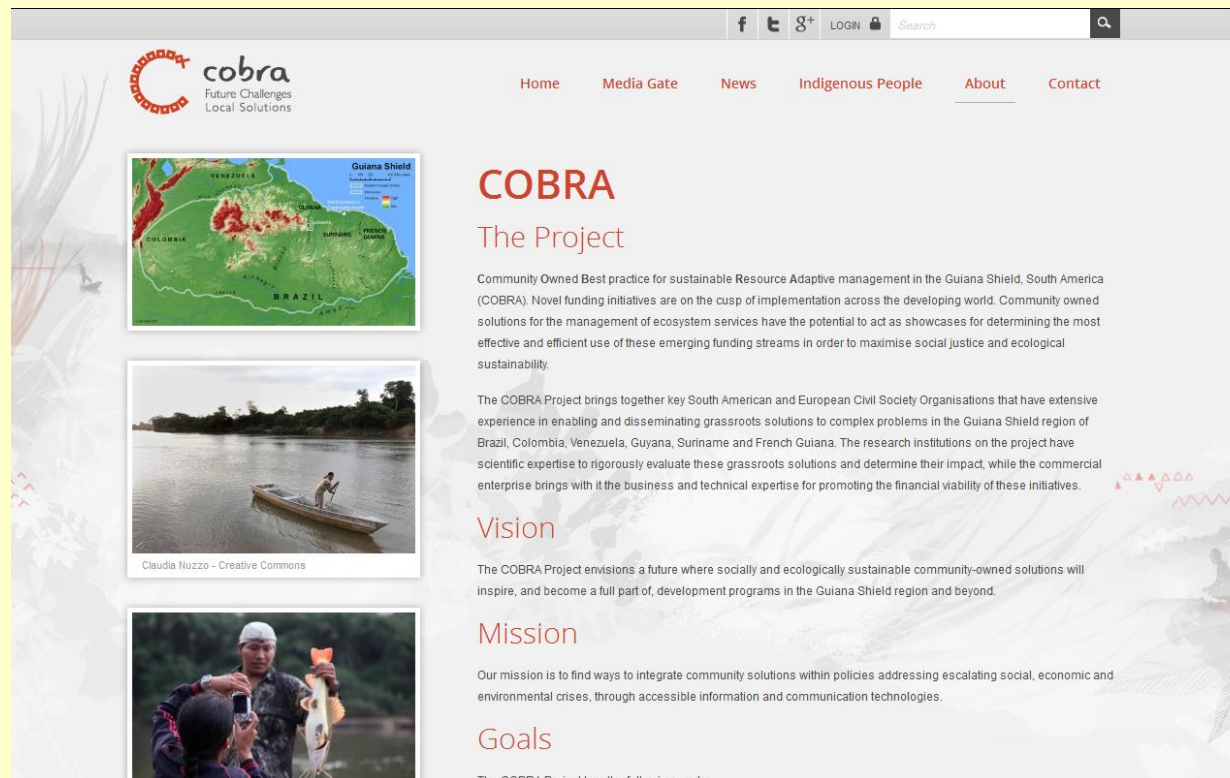
## Brussels Workshop, 10-11th June 2013

Community-based  
resource management:  
lessons from the  
COBRA project

[www.projectcobra.org](http://www.projectcobra.org)

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**COBRA**  
The Project

Community Owned Best practice for sustainable Resource Adaptive management in the Guiana Shield, South America (COBRA). Novel funding initiatives are on the cusp of implementation across the developing world. Community owned solutions for the management of ecosystem services have the potential to act as showcases for determining the most effective and efficient use of these emerging funding streams in order to maximise social justice and ecological sustainability.

The COBRA Project brings together key South American and European Civil Society Organisations that have extensive experience in enabling and disseminating grassroots solutions to complex problems in the Guiana Shield region of Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. The research institutions on the project have scientific expertise to rigorously evaluate these grassroots solutions and determine their impact, while the commercial enterprise brings with it the business and technical expertise for promoting the financial viability of these initiatives.

**Vision**

The COBRA Project envisions a future where socially and ecologically sustainable community-owned solutions will inspire, and become a full part of, development programs in the Guiana Shield region and beyond.

**Mission**

Our mission is to find ways to integrate community solutions within policies addressing escalating social, economic and environmental crises, through accessible information and communication technologies.

**Goals**

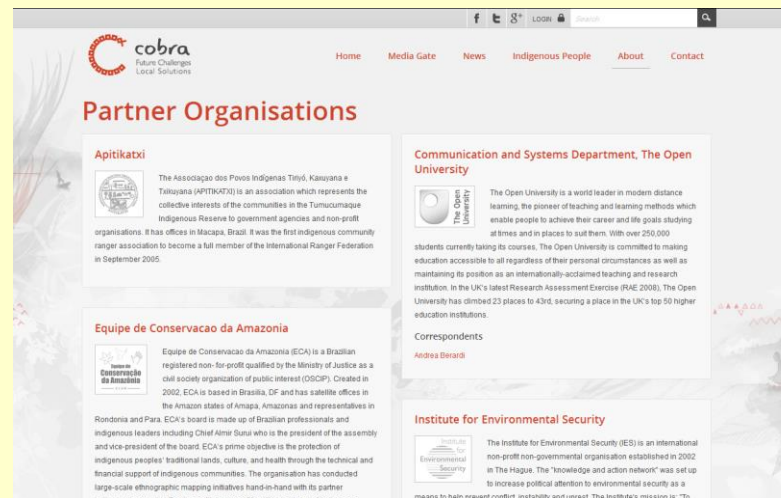
The COBRA Project has the following goals:

“Community Owned  
Best practice for  
sustainable resource  
Adaptive management  
in the Guiana Shield,  
South America”  
(COBRA)

Total EU Contribution:  
€1,895,048.60



# The COBRA consortium



## Vision

A future where socially and ecologically sustainable **community owned solutions** will inspire, and become a full part of, development programs in the Guiana Shield region and beyond.



## Mission

To find ways to integrate **community solutions** within policies addressing escalating social, economic and environmental crises, through accessible information and communication technologies.



# Community owned?

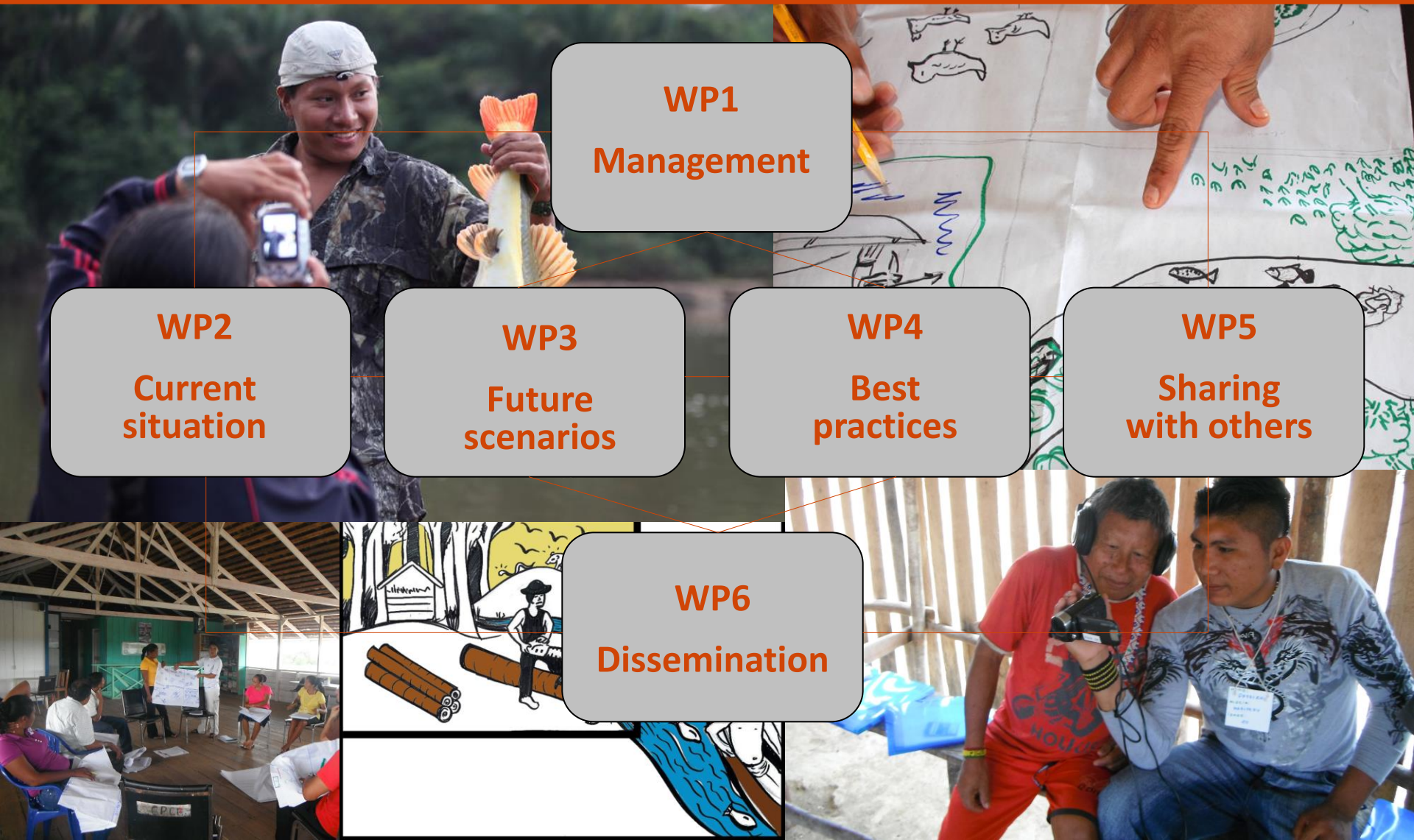
- ❖ Community demand - activities originate locally;
- ❖ Community action- activities are executed locally by local actors;
- ❖ Community institution - local civil society organization is involved in activity;
- ❖ Community benefits- substantial benefits accrue to local actors.

# Goals of the project

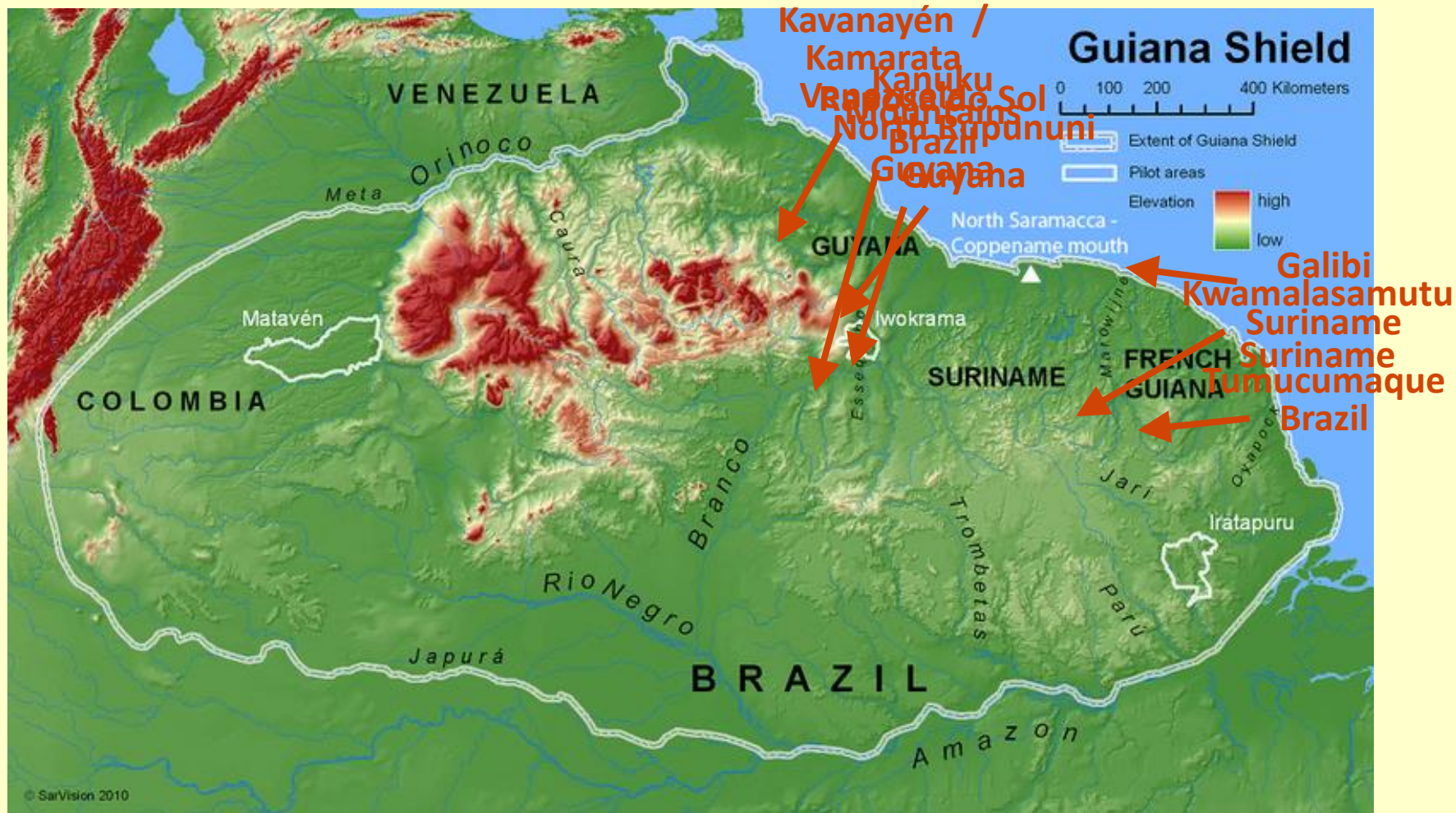
- ❖ To build capacity in visual methods amongst indigenous communities;
- ❖ To strengthen indigenous communities by exchanging stories;
- ❖ To investigate how policies support or undermine community owned solutions;
- ❖ To encourage decision-makers to support and promote community owned solutions;
- ❖ To establish an enduring web-based platform for communication;
- ❖ To investigate the potential for a self-sustaining social enterprise.



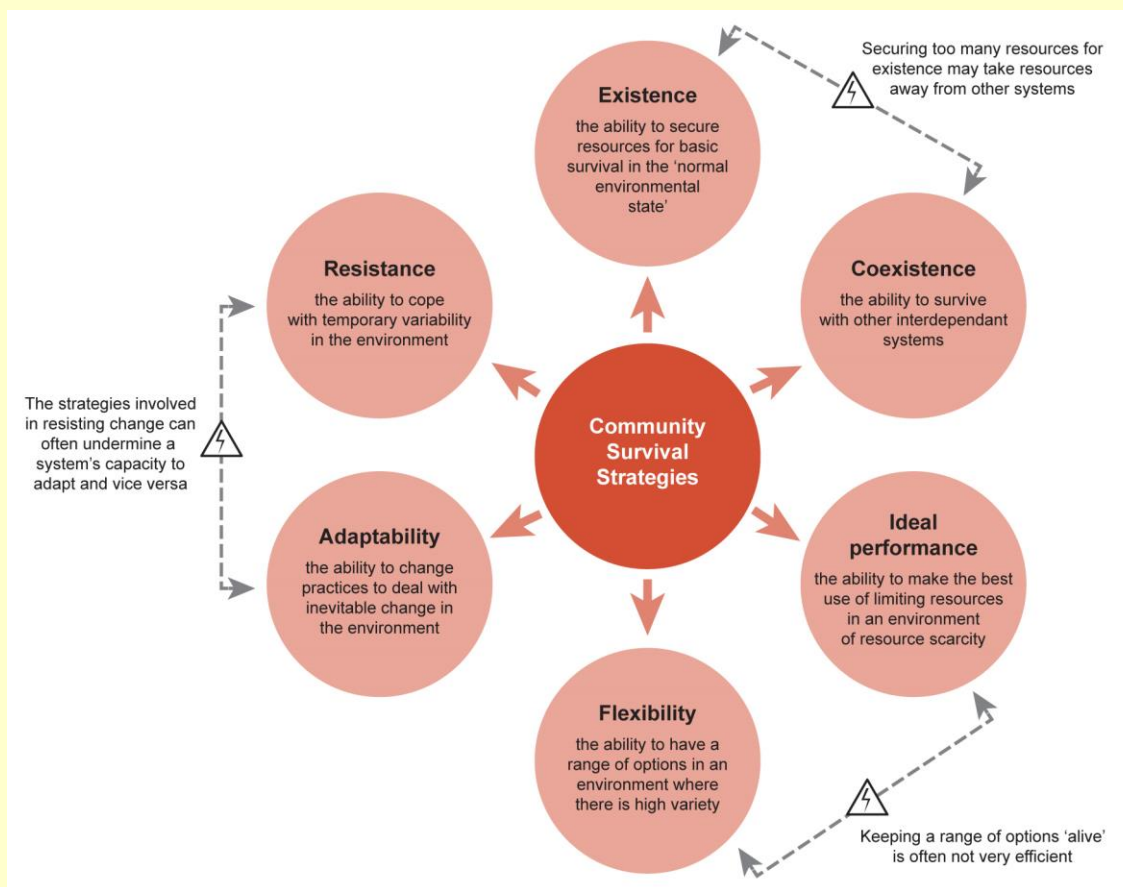
# Our research activities



# Case studies



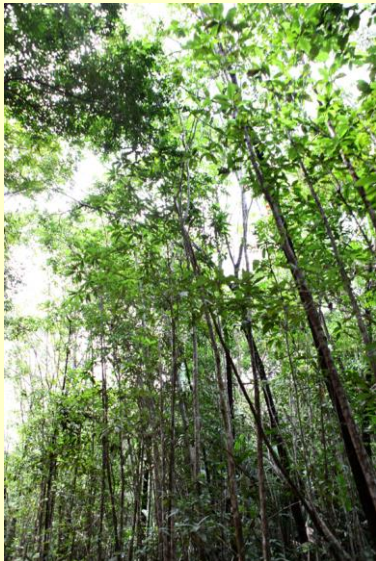
## System Viability – comprehensive, grassroots framework for assessing community owned solutions



Visual research methods, aligned more closely with traditional communication, reveal more than conventional text-based research approaches.

More appropriate indicators of community sustainability – visual shows the relational

Cycles of filming, editing and screening show the priorities of the communities and encourages action learning.



E.g. Indicator threshold for sustainable timber use:

“The majority of people in the village have traditional knowledge and modern equipment to extract timber”



Visual ‘performances’ can provide the evidence base highlighting synergies and tensions between local needs and national/global aims and policies

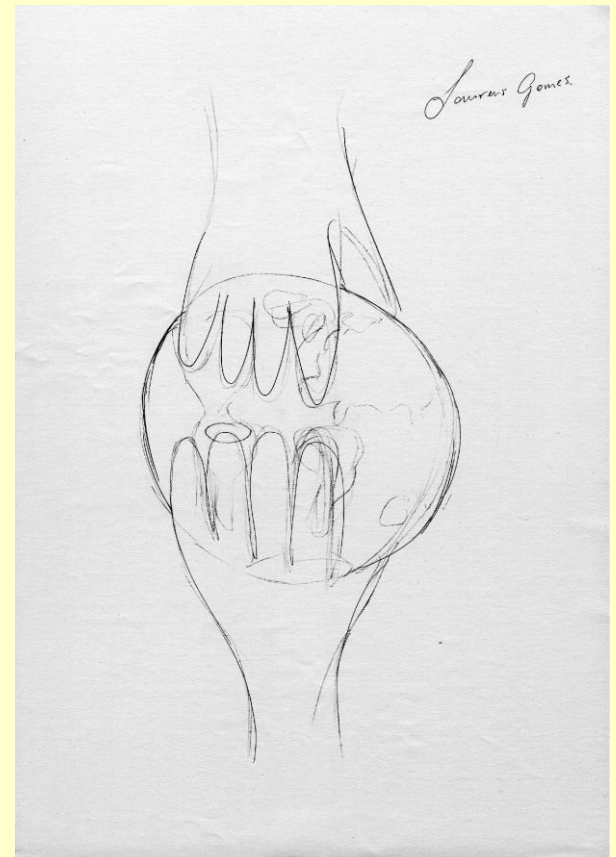
# Preliminary findings

Cross-scalar analysis reveals that many international and national policies fail to directly engage with the concerns and needs of communities at the local level.

Failure to recognize and incorporate indigenous aspirations and perspectives.

Market-based management options have potential negative repercussions on community coherence and equity.

Global, regional and national levels focus on short term interventions, e.g. technology, demographics, institutions, contrasts with local level focus on long-term drivers that shape society and the human experience.



## Local communities

- Empowering community CSOs / members
- Increasing community participation in decision-making

Primary target  
audience

## National and international CSOs

- Giving input into policy issues
- Contributing to other development initiatives

## National and international CSO researchers

- Engaging the wider research community

## Funding, policy-making and legislative bodies

- Bringing across lessons learned
- Raising profile of community owned solutions

Secondary  
target  
audiences



## Project levels

**Challenges** - the challenges communities are facing and their needs.

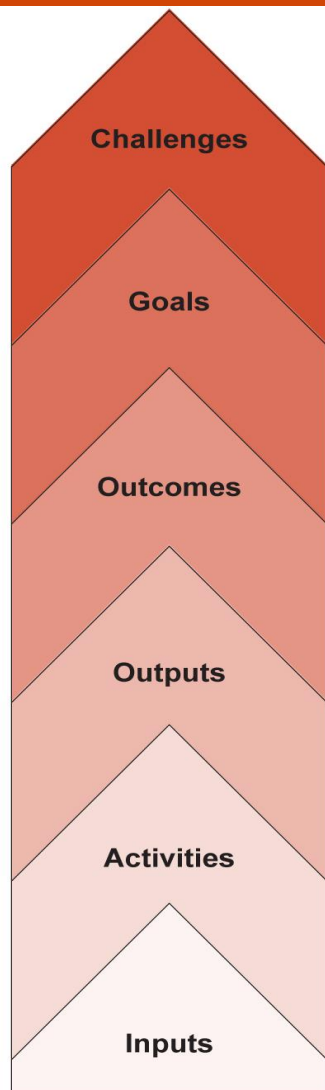
**Goals** - the long-term effects, or end results of the project. These may sometimes only be realised after the lifetime of the project.

**Outcomes** - the intermediate changes as a result of project activities. Outcomes can usually be measured during the lifetime of the project.

**Outputs** - the immediate results of the project activities.

**Activities** - the work undertaken by the project to bring about a result.

**Inputs** - the resources the project uses (e.g. funds, staff, materials) to bring about a result.



## Evaluation framework

### Audience

- Who are the different groups of beneficiaries?

### Impact

- What changes did the project bring about?
- Were there any unplanned or intended changes?

- Deadweight - would the impact have happened anyway?
- Displacement - did the project displace resources/attention from other areas of concern? Did the project address the beneficiaries needs?
- Attribution - did the impact come about solely as a result of the project?
- Drop off - are the benefits likely to be maintained for an extended period after the project ends?

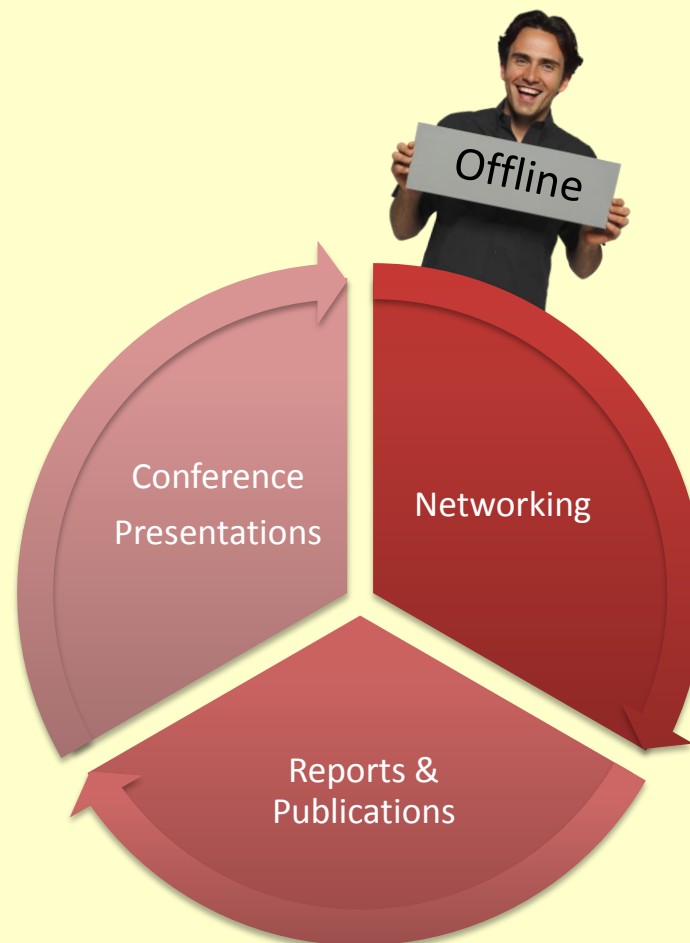
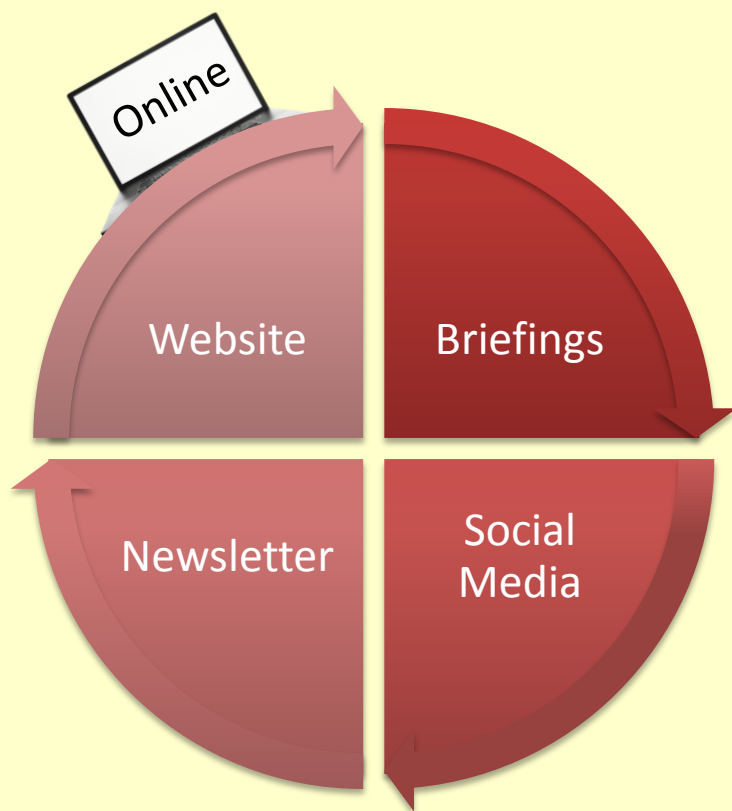
### Effectiveness

- Were the projects objectives achieved?
- Did the outputs lead to the intended outcomes?

### Efficiency

- Were resources available on time and in the right quantities and qualities?
- Were activities implemented on schedule and within budget?
- Were outputs delivered economically and ethically?

# Dissemination strategy



Publicly available output in June 2013	Total produced
News posts	31
Newsletters	9
Field reports	10

Participatory outputs	Total
Videos	15
Photostories	23

Publications	Total
Brochure	1
Briefings	13
Academic reports and papers	7
Opinions	2



# Who's talking about COBRA?

Events	Total
Science Open Day, Royal Holloway	2
Conference presentations	6, + Attendance at Rio+20
Stakeholder fora	2
New funded PhDs and interns	6

Website	Total	Last month (May 2013)
Unique visitors (source: Statpress)	7817	932

Newsletter	Subscribers
Online Newsletter	91
North Rupununi News	1500



In discussions with our partners and stakeholders, we see the following areas as critical for future research:

- 1) How do you measure the 'unmeasurable'? – e.g. community cohesion, values, leadership
- 2) What are the links between food security, land rights, market-based mechanisms and forest/savanna management?
- 3) What is transferability of community owned solutions and their long-term impacts?
- 4) How can you make visual communication more accessible to and self-sustaining for communities? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a technocentric approach?

For more information



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