### Case Study Name:
Managing natural resources in face of evolving conditions: A social learning perspective

### Author:
Maarleveld, M. & Dangbegnon, C.

### Document Type:
Conference paper

### Year:
1998

### Language:
English

### Document Location:
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### Full Citation:

### Region:
Europe, Africa

### Country:
Netherlands, Benin

### Ecosystem Type:
Lake; lagoon; mangroves

### Social Characteristics:
Other

### Scale of Study:
District, municipality

### Resource Type:
Fisheries; watershed; surface water

### Type of Initiative:
Development project, Government initiative;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Based Work:</th>
<th>Resource management</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keywords:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summary:</strong></td>
<td>In many natural resource systems, people find themselves to be increasingly interdependent as the number of resource users and types of uses multiply. Analyses which make use of the prisoner’s dilemma, tragedy of the commons and logic of collective action effectively illustrate how certain types of interdependence can trap us in resource use patterns which inevitably lead to destruction of a resource system. However, these analyses are challenged by numerous others which indicate that people are capable of coordinating decisions and actions to overcome such destructive patterns of resource use. Resource management practice indicates a great diversity in ways in which individual choices and action are coordinated to balance needs and interests of users with the capacity of the resource system. Coordinated decision making arrangements and actions vary from quite simple rules of thumb, for example, restricting fishing in spawning seasons, to complex social-economic arrangements such as the Balinese water management. Nonetheless, the conclusion that sustainable resource management is simply a question of reaching everlasting optimal equilibria by getting the right institutional arrangement should not be drawn to hastily. This would neglect the dynamic nature of managing natural resources. After all, human use changes resource systems; resource systems themselves entail change processes; and, human needs and interests regarding resource systems change. From the interplay of these changes new, often unforeseen interdependencies of actors and (collective) consequences of decisions and actions can emerge. Consequently, continuous adaptations of existing management practices are required to ensure sustainably managed resource systems.</td>
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