Thursday, 5 September 2013

Tasman Bay Integrated Management Process

First Steps

Effective integrated management of Tasman requires an approach that brings together effective social and technical processes.

The work of NIWA, Cawthron and Massey University is leading to a situation where, in two years, the communities of Tasman Bay will have access to interactive knowledge and scenario assessment systems that will create a huge opportunity to understand the issues facing the Bay and identify practical solutions.

This opportunity will only come to fruition, however if:

1. Social processes generating mandate for decision makers are developed now;
2. Research and information management processes are sufficiently resourced to bring forward quality information in a timely way;
3. Management agencies understand the opportunity and the importance of the issues, and agree to work together for the greater good; and
4. A technical dialogue develops that fits research and its products for use by agencies and stakeholders.

An overall approach can be built on experience with other successful collaborative models. As developed in Fiordland, Kaikoura and Hauraki these approaches involve courage on behalf of administrators as the balance of power is explicitly shifted in favour of stakeholders.

An effective approach to first steps would be to:

1. Assemble a small, skilled and committed team (2 to 4people) to begin generative processes (following the approach of Scharmer as described in *Theory U* and used in the *Education Kaikoura Project* locally).

2. Begin dialogue with the range of knowledge and stakeholders to understand the opportunity identify those with the capacity to develop something effective (Scharmer recommends 50 two hour conversations).

3. The small group analyses and reflects on what has been learned and then brings together a core group of stakeholders and administrators to refine the scope and purpose of the work.

4. From the core group establish a design team that would develop a process approach for consideration of decision makers.

While one could simply try to replicate a process used elsewhere, Tasman Bay has its own unique features that will require a unique solution. First, the social and organisational complexity in Tasman Bay is high. Second, the initiation for the process is not yet clear. Third, the small population of the region means that financial resources will need to be drawn from a wider social pool than the agencies alone. Fourth, the current research projects will deliver state of the art information and decision support tools in about two years.

Looking further the overall process that would develop can be broadly defined.

Learning from the following recent and current processes could be incorporated into the design:

- **Sea Change** – Spatial Planning for the Hauraki Gulf (agency initiated, stakeholder led – very high complexity)
- **Land and Water Forum** (stakeholder initiated – high complexity)
- **Fiordland Guardians** (stakeholder initiated – low complexity)
- **Te Korowai Coastal Marine Guardians**(stakeholder initiated – moderate complexity)
- **TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership** (agency initiated – low complexity)
- **Future of Pest Management** (agency initiated – high complexity)
- **Government Industry Agreements for Biosecurity Readiness and Response** (agency initiated – moderate complexity).

The core elements of the facilitation process are shown in the diagram below. Of particular importance is to attend to developing and sustaining the capacity amongst the parties to stay working together when dealing with conflicted issues. This includes the managerial, political and expert entities as well as the stakeholders.

Second, time is required for sense making at all stages of the process. Sense making requires parties to move back from knowing the solutions to be able to learn something new.

Third, the parties need to move from debating fixed positions to engaging in dialogue where understanding the wider perspective becomes more important than “protecting patches”.

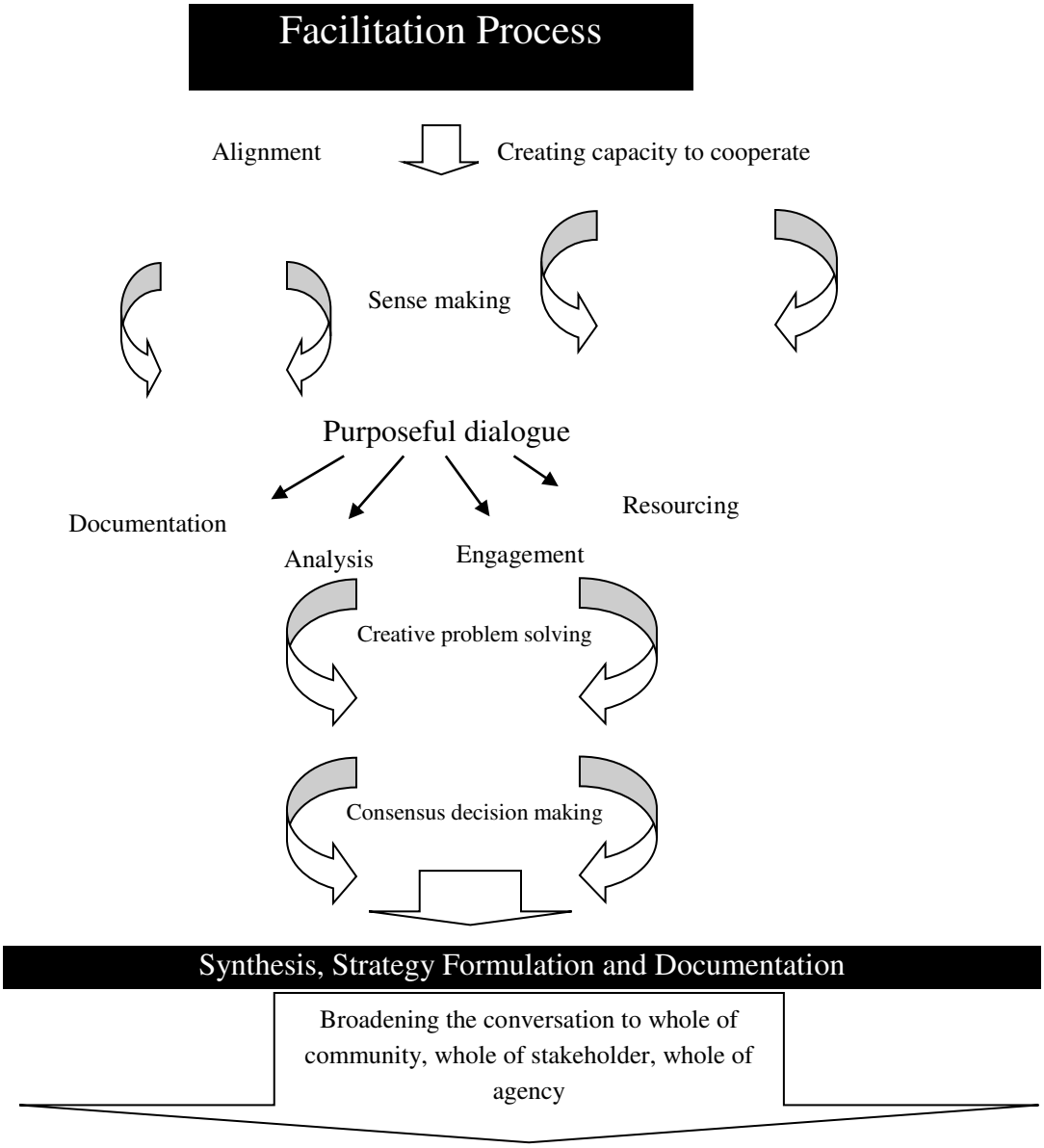
Fourth, analysis and documentation of information and data earth the process in reality and help to avoid continually going back over the same ground.

Fifth, the process has to have space for creativity so a new common ground can be discovered.

Sixth, commitment to stay in relationship needs to develop before hard issues are confronted and so that consensus can be achieved.

Seventh, the technical support needs to be available to help synthesise and express agreement in documentation.

Finally, the conversation has to cycle between a core creative team and wider communities of interest.



All such processes have a core Working Group that agrees on proposed solutions and also that functions as the process governance body.

The first steps will be effective if is generates a group that is:

- sufficiently connected in mutual relationships with the range of stakeholders; and
- Can sustain the constructive energy required to sustain effort over a period of up to a decade.

The Working Group draws in wider stakeholder representation into plenaries as required to test ideas as the process proceeds. It is also supported be expert and technical advice and processes. It would hold dialogue with political elements of central, regional and local government and governance entities as required.

The processes for generating this group are interactive and teases out the criteria for selecting good Working Group members and then resolves this into a socially mandated membership. This has to combine expertise in what is required for selecting people capable of leading the process and combining theses with stakeholder requirements for mandate. For example, the following are technical requirements for individuals capable of successful group membership:

1. Highly connected within the stakeholder communities
2. Able to work well in a consensus team environment
3. Able to stay in relationship with others while dealing with hard issues
4. Respected
5. Not attached to a fixed position - able to function as a “wise head” rather than as representing particular views
6. Capable of engaging with the whole, and in strategic conversations about the future
7. Has the time and constructive energy required to see the job through.

For the group as a whole the following criteria also matter:

- Connected with the full range of stakeholder interests
- Connected with the range of geographic communities and their component parts including tangata moana

- Includes capacity to understand social, scientific, cultural and aesthetic information and relate these to the issues at hand
- Includes: coordination capability, drive to completion, capacity to manage ambiguity, creative thinking and problem solving, capacity to monitor and evaluate group functioning and capacity to care for other team members when times are tough.

Such an approach would be low risk and have very high chance of success. It is, however, time intensive for the core group requiring 200 hours from each individual.

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