

# Methodological and analytical considerations

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To finalise Part III, it is important to provide some reflections on methodological and analytical considerations. To begin with, attention must be focused once more on the diversity of cases included in this volume. This diversity is invaluable for understanding how SFM has been and is being pursued in extremely different socio-economic and biophysical contexts around the world. It also introduces some difficulties in analysing the cases in a collective fashion, even when the authors for each case study were provided with a common analytical framework.

One important issue relates to the availability of information corresponding to the different prerequisite conditions and other topics of interest. Not surprisingly, this information varies notably across the case studies. When information sought was not readily available, time and resource constraints did not permit the realisation of new studies to generate more information to fill in potential gaps.

It is also apparent that in some cases, information on specific aspects is much more comprehensive than on other aspects included in the analytical framework. Gaps in the information, may, in some cases, relate more to the lack of readily available information than to a lack of efforts associated with one or more of the prerequisite conditions.

Information provided on each prerequisite condition is necessarily quite concise because of the broad, interdisciplinary focus of the case studies. In

reality, many of the topics included in the analytical framework could be the topic of lengthy reports, if not books. Thus, mandatory brevity might, in some cases, have led to important aspects being excluded from the analysis.

While the authors did report, as requested, on aspects like capacity-building programmes, it is not possible to gain a clear sense of the quality of these interventions. One can envision cases in which efforts are made associated with many of the prerequisite conditions included in the analytical framework, but unless the quality and continuity of these efforts are adequate, little can be inferred about their importance and effectiveness in contributing to SFM.

Finally, more attention could have been focused on cultural aspects and their importance in efforts to further SFM. Although some cases do make considerable references to the importance of aligning SFM with local cultures and traditional values (e.g. Acre, Brazil [1], Latin America [8], India [13], BIH [23], Spain [25]), this perspective is somewhat limited in other cases. Closely linked to cultural considerations are historical precedents that contribute to shaping the present situation and perceived trends in important outcomes related to SFM. More attention to these aspects would enrich future studies of this type and provide additional insights into the outcomes of SFM.