

Outcome Mapping Approach for Monitoring

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Tool factsheet

IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON FRAMEWORK ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (CD) FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS (AIS)

This factsheet is part of a series outlining tools and approaches to promote more effective capacity development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS). These tools and approaches put to use the principles of the Common Framework of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), a G20 initiative. Some of these tools are applied through the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project, funded by the EU and jointly implemented by Agrinatura and FAO in collaboration with national partners in Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Laos, Rwanda. New tools are proposed to be used at different stages of the CD for AIS cycle in similar CD for AIS projects. Since 2018 FAO implements a Capacity Development for AIS project in El Salvador, funded by the Italian Government.

Background

Monitoring the progress towards the achievements of the desired results of capacity development (CD) interventions is crucial to provide direct feedback to participating stakeholders, recommend improvements and adjustments and stimulate reflection and learning among them. It is therefore important to observe, analyse, reflect on the changes in the behavior, knowledge and skills of participating stakeholders (i.e. "what" result is to be achieved) and the process (i.e. "how" the result will be achieved).

Monitoring capacities is not a straightforward exercise and research mostly relied on qualitative approaches: in the context of capacity development for innovation, the outcome mapping (OM) approach is proposed as a monitoring tool for planning and assessing projects/programmes that is oriented towards change and social transformation.

The actual transformation which is expected to happen through the capacity development process is the strengthening of functional capacities of actors (individuals), the organizations and the enabling environment to engage in the innovation process. CD interventions include effective trainings, coaching, assessing and optimizing organizational structures, coordination, multi-stakeholder innovation platforms, policy dialogue etc [see [CD interventions tool](#)]. The actual development or progress towards the achievement of functional capacities development is measured by Progress Markers.

OM provides a set of tools to gather information on the outcomes of the process initiated by capacity development for agricultural innovation. OM helps a project or program to learn about its influence on the progression of change among direct partners.

¹ Developed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), OM focuses on identifying, engaging and influencing key stakeholders to change their behavior (IDRC: 2001)

² These capacities are needed for an individual or organization to work effectively. Examples for developing functional capacities are provided in the **Guidance note on Operationalization** of the TAP Common Framework, page 19, Table 4.1.



Therefore, OM helps those in the assessment process to think more systematically about what they are doing and to promote any necessary adjustment in the implementation. OM puts people and learning at the centre of development and accepts unanticipated changes as potential for innovation³.

Purpose

The Outcome mapping is a methodology to:

- Identify individuals, groups or organizations with whom you will work directly to influence behavioral change.
- Plan and monitor behavioral change and the strategies to support those changes.
- Monitor internal practices of the project or program to remain effective.

How to use it

The original methodology for outcome mapping includes 3 stages and 12 steps. The process is shaped through a facilitated workshop where the facilitator adapts the material to the group.

A simplified version (three stages and 10 steps) is proposed, based on the original IDRC methodology and experiences from the application in the CDAIS project.

Stage 1. Intentional Design

Define the Vision (WHY). The team should clearly express the long term, development changes that they are working towards, bearing in mind that the project alone will not achieve them. In the innovation partnership, the vision answers to the question “Why would the innovation partnership exist? What is the goal for the next 5 years?” For example, in the CDAIS project, the long term change might be to establish a sustainable and profitable value chain. This corresponds to the Visioning stage of the CD for AIS cycle.

Define the Actors (WHO). In this stage, the project team defines the “boundary partners” (the actors): these are individuals, groups or organizations with which the program interacts directly and which the program hopes to influence.

Define the outcome challenges/priority objectives (WHAT). An outcome challenge statement describes the desired changes in the behavior, relationships, activities, actions (professional practices) of the boundary partner. It is the ideal behavioral change of each type of boundary partner for it to contribute to the ultimate goals (vision) of the programme. For example “To strengthen the innovation partnership for an effective multi-stakeholder collaboration in the value chain”.

Define the Progress Markers (WHAT). The behavioral change is expressed through Progress Markers (PMs). Progress Markers are a set of statements describing a gradual progression of changed behavior in the boundary partner leading to the ideal outcome challenge. They can be adjusted during the implementation process, can include unintended results, and do not contain percentages or deadlines. In CD for AIS contexts, progress markers are achieved if, through the CD process, the functional capacities of the actors in the innovation partnerships evolve, based on knowledge, change in attitude or practice and the partnership moves towards its innovation objectives/ vision.

³<https://www.outcomemapping.ca/about/faqs.php#faq1>

WHY?	HOW?	WHO?	WHAT?
Vision statement	Mission Strategy maps Organizational practices	Boundary partners	Outcome challenges Progress markers

Source: ILAC Brief 7, Terry Smulyo.



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Complete a Strategy Map for Each Outcome Challenge (HOW). After clarifying the changes the program intends to influence, the team should select activities that maximize the likelihood of success. Questions the facilitator could ask are: how will the program achieve the outcome challenge in the next “x” months? What needs to be done to produce “x” outputs? In the innovation partnerships, CD activities are the different interventions the project will support: these can be identified during the Capacity Needs Assessment workshop. A menu of possible CD interventions is provided in the [CD intervention tool](#).



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Articulate Organizational Practices (HOW). Organizational practices reveal an organization that has the potential to perform well. Focusing on data concerning organizational practices allows to reflect on the process that are going on internally and also on the unintended results that might occur. A facilitation question can be: What should the organization do to contribute to achieve the expected and wished changes in the boundary partners?

Stage 2. Outcome and performance monitoring

Monitoring priorities provides a process for establishing the areas of the project to be monitored. Facilitation questions that can help setting monitoring priorities are: who will use the information? What is the purpose of the information? When is the information needed?



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The monitoring stage involves three data collection tools:

Strategy Journal. A strategy journal is meant to track the strategies developed to foster the expected changes in the boundary partners. Questions that the facilitator could ask are: Which resources have been allocated? Which activities have been undertaken? What are their outputs? How can the implemented strategies be improved?

Performance Journal. A performance journal deals with data concerning the way in which the organization is operating to achieve the expected outcomes. A performance journal which records the practices developed by the organization to make the program effective should be created for each program. Facilitation questions can be: Which activities need to be changed or improved? Who is responsible for them?

Outcome Journals. Outcome journals are a tool for collecting data about the progress markers over time. Facilitation questions can be: Has the change occurred at a low, medium or high level? What is the reason for the change? Who are the people or the context responsible for the change?

Stage 3. Evaluation planning

Develop an Evaluation Plan. An evaluation plan is meant to describe the main elements of the evaluation to be conducted. It provides information on who will use the evaluation, how and when; who will carry out the evaluation process; the information's sources; the evaluation methods; cost and timing.



Definition of Progress Markers and examples

PMs are statements (subject+ verb+ object), that describe how the actors might move from where they are right now to the achievement of the Outcome Challenge. PMs entail different degree of realism and are preferably time-bounded: expect-to-see are immediate responses that will be expected during the project itself, like-to-see are long-term responses that one would expect by the end of the project, and love-to-see are responses that one might expect after a number of months or years after the project came to an end.

In CD for AIS projects, the first set of progress markers are identified ideally at the beginning of the Capacity Development process and they are reviewed and readjusted as the CD unfolds.

Participants are asked to look at the Outcome Challenge (Priority Objective) and reflect on each major behavioral change described in the OC. Participants (in pairs or in group) are asked to formulate 3 observable intermediate outcomes/milestones for each single OC statement, i.e. one expect to see progress marker, one like to see progress marker, one love to see progress marker.

This more systematic approach generates lots of possible progress markers. After this process, the facilitators brings all the progress markers together and a process of discussion, deleting overlaps, combining similar ideas and prioritization of the most relevant progress markers is done.

Examples of PMs:

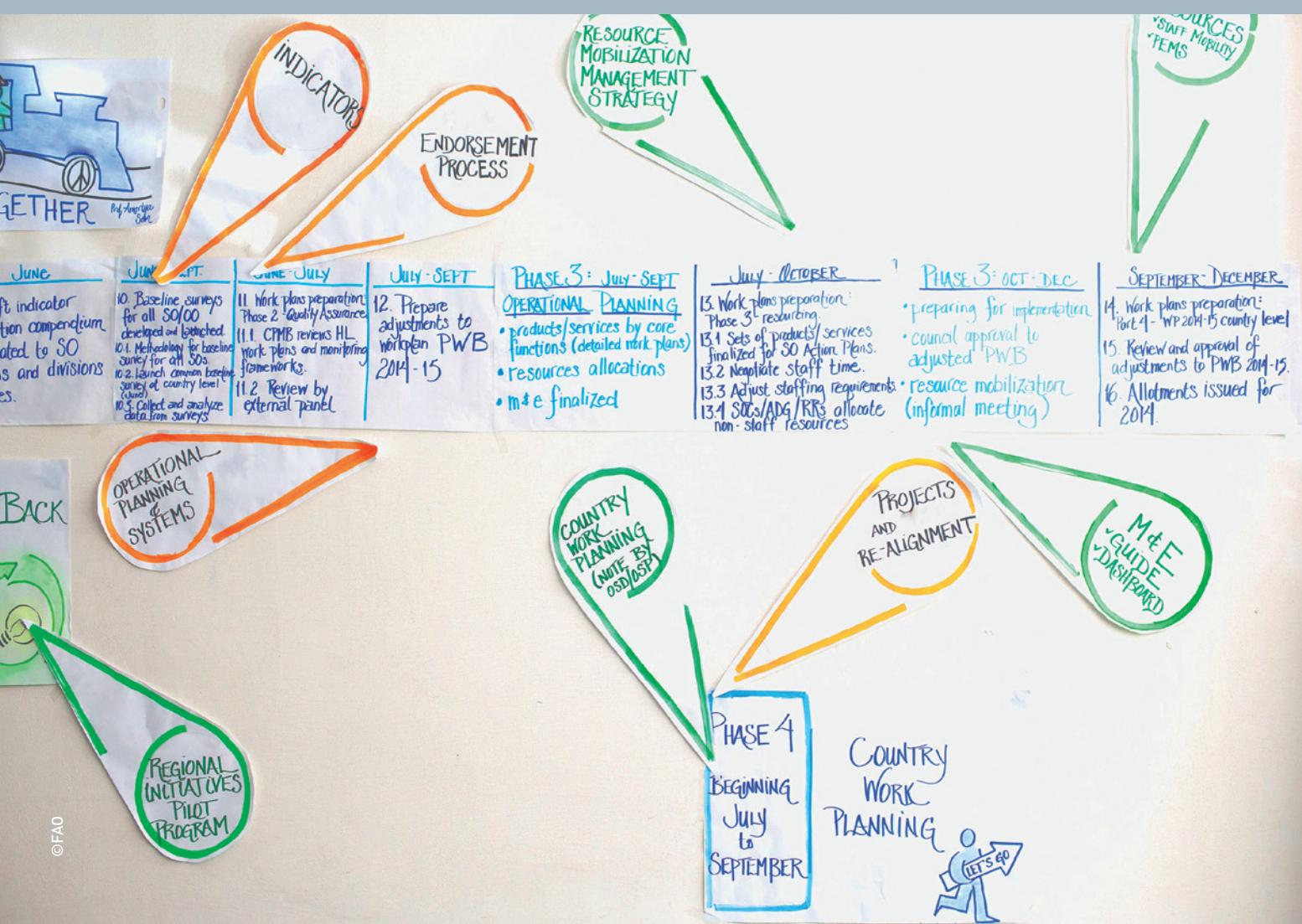
- Actors give higher attention to seed quality production than previous years;
- Actors are aware of other organizations able to provide innovation service support services;
- Actors showed concern for quality of beans seeds;
- Veterinary services communicate better with farmers;
- Actors link with policy makers.

Source: Examples from CDAIS



Some Lessons from application

- It is important that the full set of PMs as a whole makes sense for the participants that developed it. People should afterwards have the feeling that the set of PMs is something that is achievable, realistic and that motivates them – something they want go for. Only after a first CD cycle and reflection actors are realistically able to formulate PMs that are behavioral changes and not expected results.
- During the process of developing relevant progress markers, it might happen that elements of the original Outcome Challenge are moved as a progress marker because the level of change was too low and vice versa. Outcomes appear most of the time unexpectedly and without any possible expectation on the progress in the 4+1 capacities. Therefore it is often difficult to properly define and word outcome challenges.
- PMs evolve in time. They are affected by the degree of understanding and the dynamics of actors in the partnerships.
- The application of the outcome mapping approach in the CDAIS project shows that this monitoring and learning methodology requires significant time and human resources. A dedicated staff member should be appointed as main responsible to collect the information through participatory workshops. Regular training to the facilitators are needed given the complex nature of strengthening functional capacities at the three dimensions.





For further information

Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP):

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/tropical-agriculture-platform/en>
Email: Tropagplatform@fao.org

TAPipedia: <http://tapipedia.org>

Email: info@tapipedia.org

Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation

Systems Project (CDAIS): <http://cdais.net>
Email: info@cdais.net

Common Framework products:



Conceptual
Background



Guidance Note on
Operationalization



Synthesis
Document

The implementation of the TAP Action Plan is supported by the EU-funded project Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS).

The Common Framework documents are also available in French and Spanish on the Common Framework pages of TAPipedia.



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