

Action Planning



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 capacity development projects for agricultural innovation systems (AIS). The tools described in these pages are designed with a view to the practical implementation of the principles of the Common Framework of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), a G20 initiative. They have been applied in 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 and Rwanda.

Capacity development actions to favour agricultural innovation are most effective if they are backed by a clear, participatory and inclusive plan of action that allocates specific responsibilities to team members. The action plan determines who does what and when, and is therefore essential to ensuring that things get done and that the goals and visions set out in the capacity development strategy are achieved.

An action plan is a tool that formalizes commitments and plots the route to their implementation. An action plan, which needs to be supported by a facilitator, is intended for the use of the core actors, who will have been identified beforehand in the visioning phase. It should be as clear as possible, and should have a well-defined scope and definite targets.

An action plan sets out the activities to be done and designates the organization or institution that will be responsible for doing them. It also fixes a time frame and identifies the resources and sources of funding that will be needed.

Purpose of the tool

The action planning tool, which is the means by which an action plan is designed, is deployed as part of the learning processes. The collective examination of a given issue during the planning phase enables participants to reach consensus on what the issue entails, and helps them clarify their respective capacities and roles. The action planning tool is therefore a way of focusing attention on the desired outcomes. The action planning tool enables participants to:

- Identify and discuss actions to address capacity needs;
- Distribute responsibilities and partners for action;
- Acquire a clear sense of direction and a way to get there with deadline;
- Identify the resources (money/people/equipment) required for actions.



How to use the tool – Step-by-step guide

Steps

1. Form groups of two or three people

2. Discuss and clarify the goal

- Visualize the expected outcome and write it down in a few words;
- How will you know when you have reached it?
- What constraints/risks can you think of at this early stage?

3. Brainstorm the actions needed to get there and write each of them on a card

- The actions do not have to be listed in any particular order;
- Include alternatives;
- Do not judge or analyse at this stage.

4. Analyse and prioritize the actions

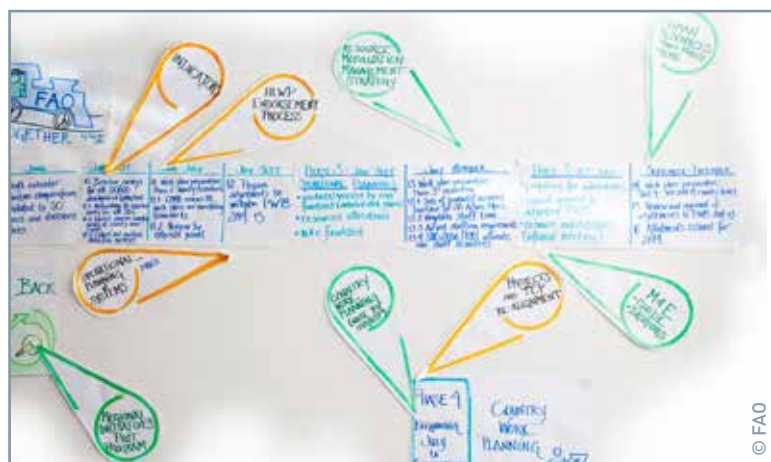
- Which are absolutely necessary?
- Which can be discarded without affecting the goal?
- Remove the cards with unnecessary actions.

5. Organize the actions

- Arrange the cards in order of task execution;
- Arrange the cards according to key actions and subactions (distinguish between field and desk actions);
- Mark the cards to show how a given action depends on what comes before it and how it determines what comes after.

6. Develop the action plan

- Make a table on a piece of flip chart paper;
- Enter each action in column 1 and then discuss and complete the other columns:
 - » Who will be the lead? (one person only)
 - » Who else should be involved? (partners)
 - » What is the deadline for completion?
 - » How will you know when the action is complete? (Indicator of completion)
 - » What resources are needed (time inputs, funding, equipment)?



A simple table/matrix can be used, as Table 1.

Table 1

EXPECTED OUTCOME					RESOURCES NEEDED		
Examples of Actions	Who is the lead?	With which partners?	By when?	Indicator of completion	Time inputs (person days)	Equipment	Funding
Formal training							
Policy support and dialogue							
Role plays							
On-the-job training							
Leadership coaching							
External advisory and technical assistance							
Study visits and exchanges							
Establish links with business development providers							
Establish links with microfinance institutions							



For more information on the different CNA Tools and Approaches, see www.tapipedia.org and the *Trainer's Manual: Facilitating Capacity Needs Assessment*, S8c.



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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