

Capacity-focused Problem Tree



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.

During the capacity needs assessment, it is important to pinpoint the core “**capacity issue**” and understand its causes and effects.

The capacity-focused problem tree is an adaptation of the more commonly used problem-tree tool (also called situational analysis or, simply, problem analysis). The problem tree is a tool for discovering solutions by uncovering the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue. It is analogous to a mind map, but more structured.

The capacity-focused problem tree pinpoints a core capacity issue, along with its causes and effects. It helps clarify the precise capacity development objectives that the intervention aims to achieve. The focus should be on functional capacity, but room should be left to acknowledge technical capacity issues too.

In the capacity-focused problem tree, the problem statements (i.e. negatives) are turned into object statements (i.e. positives). Stakeholders have an opportunity to indicate their priorities.

Purpose of the tool

The capacity-focused problem tree can be used in any one of the several preliminary phases of the project – in the visioning exercise, in the capacity needs assessment, or in the drafting of the CD strategy. It is also useful when developing or revising a logframe, and leads to clarity about which outputs need to be monitored.



This tool:

- Leads to a collective understanding of the chief (capacity-related) problems;
- Encourages the participants to think about multiple causes and effects;
- Serves as a springboard to the capacity needs assessment process, and as a guide to capacity development planning.

Step-by-step guide to using the tool

Step 1: Start by brainstorming about all major capacity problems discovered during the context analysis or capacity needs assessment. Within the group, decide on the core capacity problems relating to the enabling environment, organizations and individuals. Most technical capacity needs can be “transformed” into functional capacity needs by thinking about what stakeholders can do differently. For example, a close analysis of the problem of a shortage of disease-free planting material might reveal the need for more effective stakeholder collaboration on the matter and for improved lobbying of industry and local government for better planting materials.

Step 2: Draw a “tree” and write the key capacity problem on the trunk. If you think there is more than one key capacity problem, you need to draw one tree per problem.

Step 3: Encourage the stakeholders to brainstorm on the causes of the key capacity problem and write them on cards. Prioritize the causes.

Step 4: Discuss the factors that are possible contributory causes of the key capacity problem. Focus on the factors that are potential drivers of change and write them on the roots of the tree.

Step 5: Look at the effects/impacts of the capacity problem, and write down the primary effects on the branches of the tree.

Step 6: The diagram generated in this exercise provides a basis for discussion and can be converted into a capacity-objectives tree, turning the negative statements into positive ones.

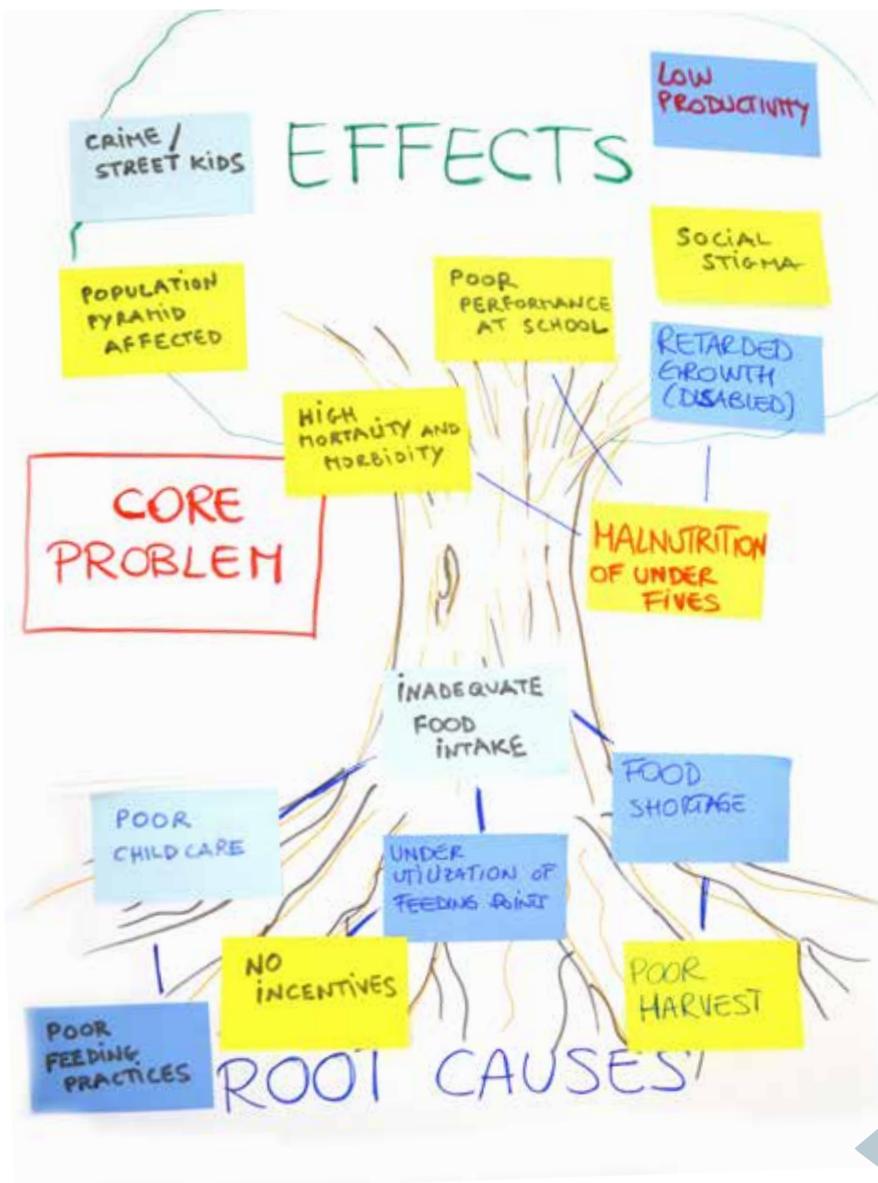
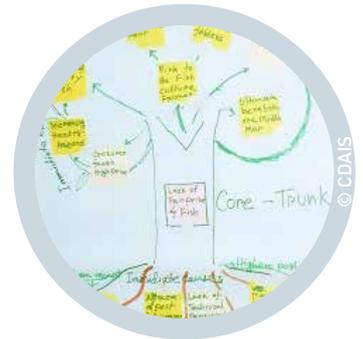


When using this tool:

- Be precise – do not use vague concepts;
- Be concrete – do not think in terms of unavailable solutions;
- Give people time to explain their feelings and reasoning;
- Write down on a separate piece of paper related ideas and points that come up, and put them under headings such as: solutions, concerns and decisions.

Questions for discussion might include:

- Does this represent the reality of the situation? Have the economic, political and sociocultural dimensions of the problem been given due consideration?
- Which causes and effects are getting better, which are getting worse, and which are staying the same?
- What are the most serious effects? Which effects are most worrisome? What criteria are important to us as we think about a way forward?
- Which causes are easiest/most difficult to address? What possible solutions or options might there be? How might a policy change address a cause or effect, or deliver a solution?
- What decisions have we made, and what actions have we agreed upon?



For more information on the *Capacity-focused Problem Tree*, see www.tapipedia.org and the *Trainer's Manual: Facilitating Capacity Needs Assessment*, S7d.



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>

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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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