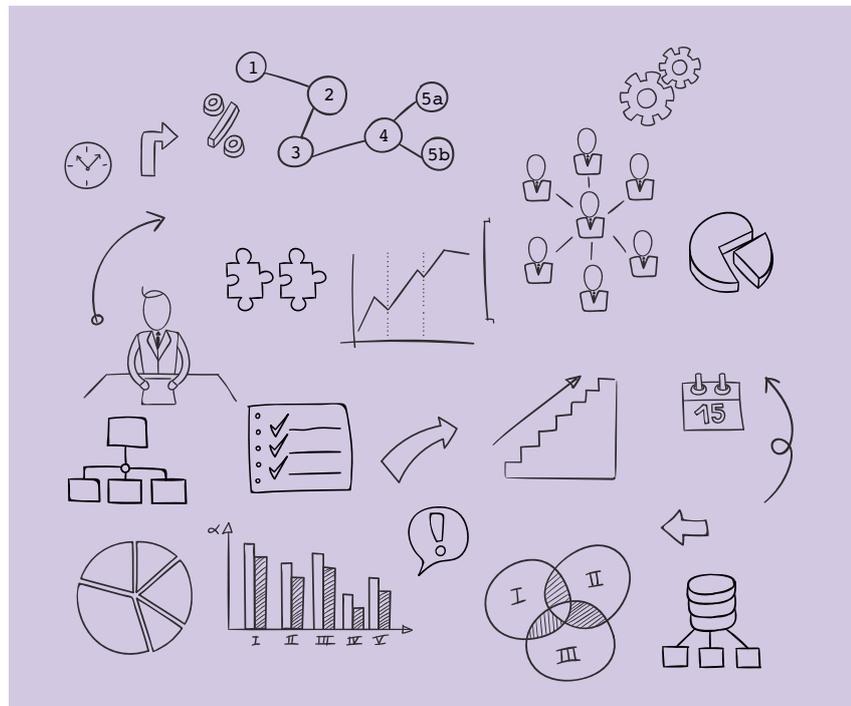**World Agroforestry Centre**

COMMUNITY VISIONING AND ACTION PLANNING
Guidelines for integrating the options by context approach

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The Drylands Development Programme (DRYDEV)

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

CAP	Community Action Plan
DGIS	Directorate General International Cooperation
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
DRYDEV	Drylands Development Programme
HH	Household
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PC	Planned Comparison
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PMEL	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
WP	Work Package

1. BACKGROUND

The Drylands Development Programme (DRYDEV) is an integrated programme designed to improve livelihoods and landscapes in semi-arid areas of selected countries in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. It is a five-year initiative (August 2013 to July 2018) that aims to support smallholder farmers in selected dryland areas of Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Niger with contextually-appropriate interventions. Thus, the programme strives to support farmers to pursue options that are informed by the realities of the local context and their own priorities. To fulfil this objective there is need to establish an optimal balance between expert knowledge and farmer priorities.

The identification and implementation of appropriate interventions in any particular community presupposes the involvement of the local people. Equally important are the principles of inclusiveness and bottom-up processes. Hence, the programme facilitates community level visioning and action planning involving all the different categories of farmers as a way of identifying options/interventions and learning priorities. In addition, the initiative has adopted a co-learning paradigm, using participatory processes to select, refine and review the contextual appropriateness and performance of various options. This means that the identified options might not be the best fit in the beginning of implementation, but could be refined and adapted or dropped as understanding of the local context increases.

2. INTRODUCING THE GUIDELINE

This guideline provides details of possible steps and tools that a facilitator could adopt in supporting a community to develop a vision and an action plan, as well as implement options within the scope of the DRYDEV programme. In summary, four key issues stand out; i) visioning (defining the desired future conditions and changes required); ii) option prioritization (strategies for effecting the change) iii) action planning (roadmap for implementing options) and iv) collaborative monitoring and learning (tracking progress and change including adaptation to the local context).

The community will develop the community action plan (CAP) facilitated by country teams working in collaboration with local extension agents and local government staff. To achieve this, a 2-phase, 8-stage approach has been proposed. This guideline has been informed by literature as detailed in the reference section,

with special attention on the handbook on visioning by Sanginga and Chitsike (2005).

The first phase comprises three stages starting with community engagement, and going up to consolidation of prioritized options/intervention and learning priorities. The second phase begins with community level feedback meetings and ends with the setting up of a collaborative monitoring system. It is important to note that these stages feed into each other during both the planning and implementation cycles of the programme.

Figure 1 presents a summary of steps involved. However, the facilitator can choose to combine some of the steps as long as the four key outputs mentioned above are realized. Country teams are encouraged to review the process and adapt it to suit the national and local context.
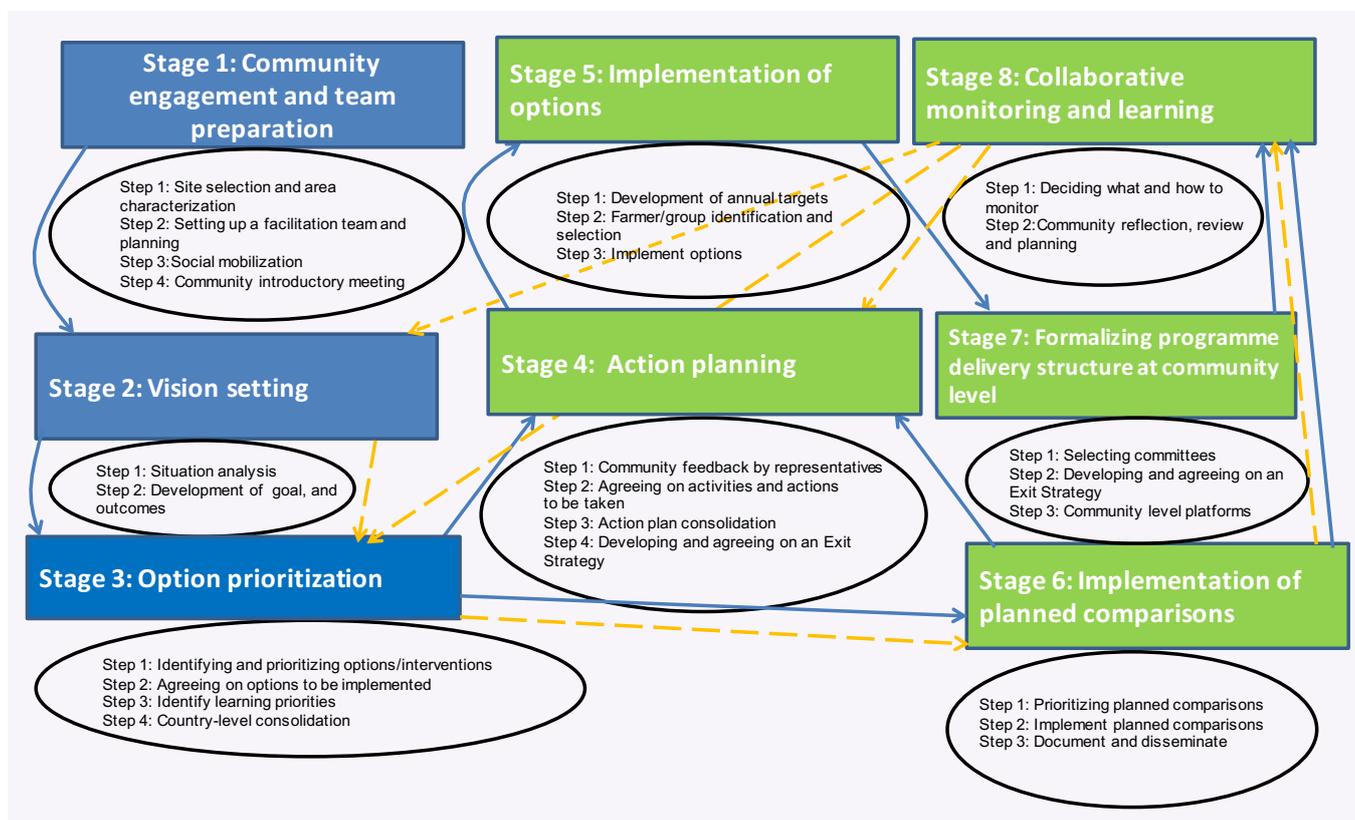
Figure 1: DRYDEV CAP process: integration of options by context. Solid/blue lines represent the initial flow of steps during planning and the dotted/orange lines are feedback loops during programme implementation

2.1 Defining terms

In this guideline options can be defined as the:

- Interventions
- Practices
- Strategies
- Alternatives
- Choices
- Approaches

The context can be defined as the:

- Situation
- Environment
- Conditions
- Specific area or household vulnerability and endowment status.

3. PHASE I: VISIONING

The aim of the first phase is to engage with the community and facilitate a bottom-up and inclusive process of situation analysis, vision setting, identification and prioritization of options/interventions, as well as the associated learning priorities.

3.1 Stage 1: Community engagement and team preparation

The objective of this stage is to engage the community, and ensure that the people are adequately informed on the DRYDEV programme and the CAP process. Second, this gives the facilitation team an opportunity to get an overview of the main biophysical, economic, cultural and socio-political aspects of the community. It is during this stage that the various categories of farmers/people are established through discussions and consultations with the general community, leadership and other stakeholders. The stage could take 3-5 days if undertaken meticulously.
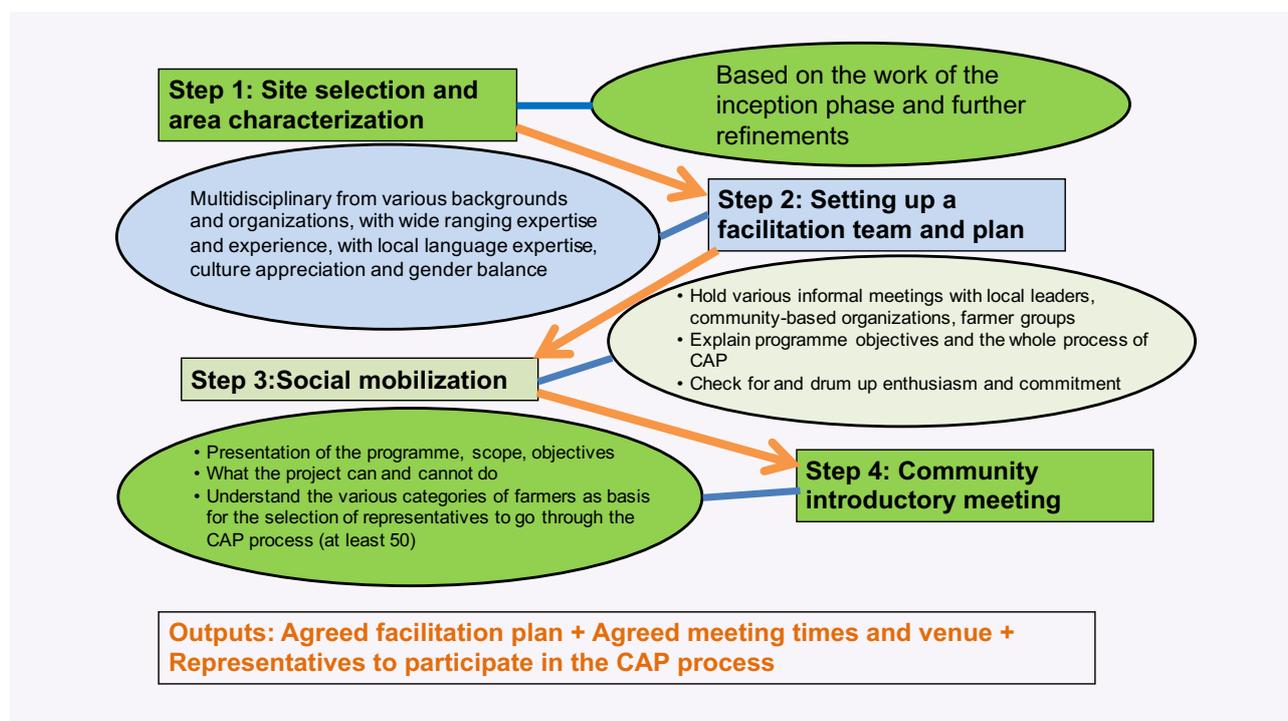
Figure 2: Community engagement and team preparation

Step 1: Site selection and area characterization

Most of the programme intervention areas were selected based on pre-set criteria focusing on rainfall, population and reliance on food aid. These were further refined based on several characterization studies, identification and prioritization of farmer innovations, intensive consolidation and discussions with farmers and other stakeholders. Therefore, this guide will not discuss site selection processes, but assume that the process has been concluded. Initially, the concept of sub-catchment was used; however this might not be applicable in all situations. Thus the action plan will be for a defined community, with known legal/traditional and geographical/hydrological boundaries.

Step 2: Setting up a facilitation team and planning

Getting organized from the onset is crucial for the success of the whole process. This includes setting up

multidisciplinary teams from various backgrounds and organizations, with wide ranging expertise and experience in the local language and cultural practices. The team must also be gender balanced (Sanginga and Chitsike, 2005) and have about 6-10 members drawn from the local level extension staff, development agents and the programme implementing staff with expertise in natural resource management (water, trees, soils), crops and livestock; group organization and marketing. Once the team is set up, a plan for facilitating the CAP detailing process and tools should be developed (Sanginga and Chitsike, 2005). It is very important to conduct induction/ training meetings for the facilitation teams so as to familiarize them with the process and the tools, as well as develop a shared understanding of the process.

Step 3: Social mobilization

To ensure that the community is part of the process from the onset, it might be useful to hold various informal meetings with local leaders, community-based organizations and farmers' groups to explain the programme objectives and the whole process of CAP. It is during these informal meetings that the facilitation team can get insights into the community structures and the various categories of people who should be represented in the CAP development process.

Step 4: Introductory community meeting

An initial community-wide meeting informing the people about the initiative and the process is always important. Since a number of activities were conducted to varying degrees in the inception year, this meeting should build on those processes. This includes presentation of the programme, scope, objectives and what the project

can support. This meeting should be used to clarify the various categories of farmers and should form the basis for the selection of representatives to go through the CAP process (at least 50 people so as to have working groups of about 6-10 people). Although representation could vary from place to place, in general it should take into consideration age (youth and adult), gender (men and women), socioeconomic status and vulnerable groups (as defined by the community) in the sub-catchment or target area. In countries where these categories are already documented it would be advisable to explore their appropriateness to the programme and adapt and/ or adopt.

3.2 Stage 2: Vision setting

While carrying out programme planning, most often practitioners begin with problem analysis, which in most cases leads to a restricted view, and forces people to dwell only on what is obvious and immediate. To ensure a wider view and inculcate a culture of learning, visioning is encouraged as it helps the community think broadly and beyond immediate needs and focuses on opportunities and the community's inherent potential (Sanginga and Chitsike, 2005). Therefore, in this guide the CAP process will start with vision setting. The community vision can be broad; however the outcomes/results and options should be within the limitations of the DRYDEV programme as stipulated by the work packages.

The vision setting process should be conducted by the community representatives from all categories of farmers with support from the facilitation team. This stage has two very involving steps which are critical for the identification of options. Ideally this would take two days.
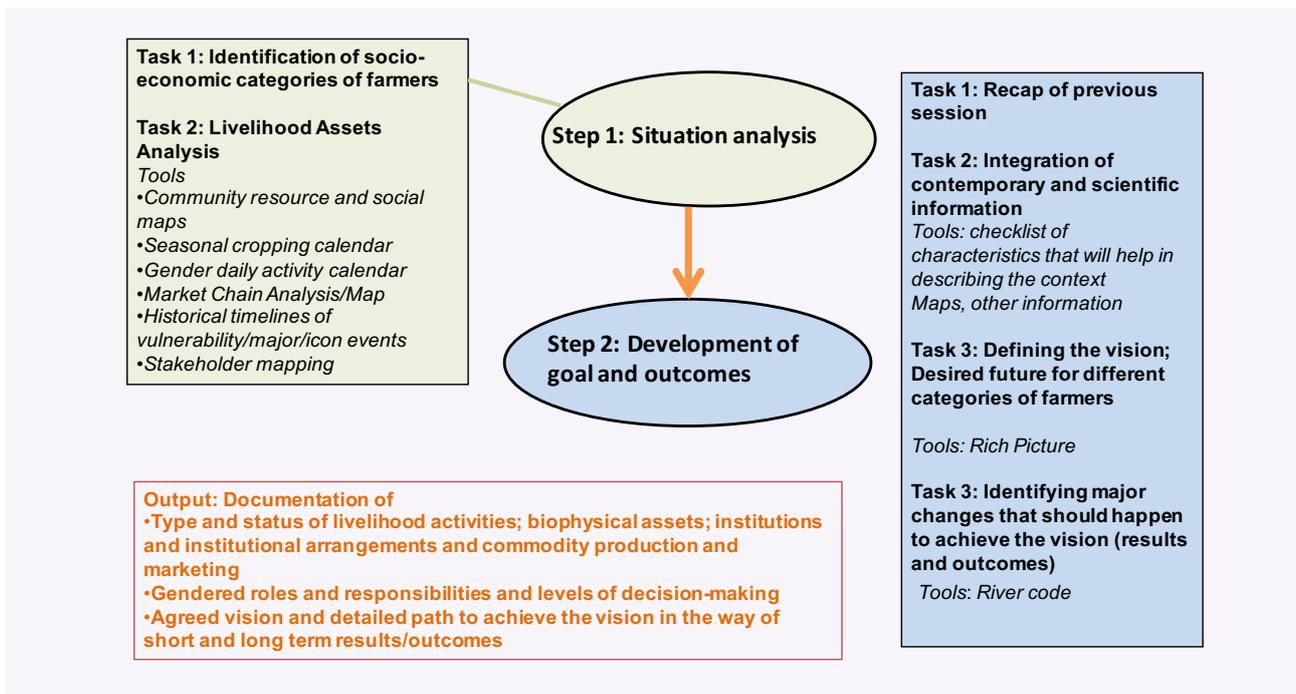
Figure 3: Vision and goal setting

Step 1: Situation analysis

This is a process of reflecting and characterizing the present landscape, natural resources, livelihoods, institutions, stakeholders, institutions and policies. The situation analysis is the basis for the identification of the existing potential of, as well as opportunities and limitations for future development. Outputs from the characterization studies conducted during the Inception phase can be used to enrich the information presented by the community.

Task 1: Identification of socio-economic categories of farmers

To ensure that this is a truly inclusive process involving all categories of farmers in the community it is crucial to identify, understand and organize participation of the representatives around these categories of age and gender, cutting across different levels of Income groups and vulnerability as defined by the community. Thus, it is advisable to divide farmers' representatives into focus groups of 6-10 people from similar backgrounds or experiences for task 2 and the vision setting activities.

Task 2: Livelihood Assets Analysis

It is important for the community to understand their current situation before setting a vision[1]. This should build an appreciation of the opportunities and challenges that they face. It involves the identification and assessment of livelihood assets which could be based on five livelihood capitals (DFID, 2009) (natural, social, physical, financial, human). A number of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools should be used for different tasks as suggested below.

Tools[2]

- Community resource and social maps: All the major features of the area; settlement pattern, natural assets (rivers, forests, woodlands) social assets (schools, churches, mosques, health centres, markets); physical assets (roads; water points) etc.

- Seasonal calendar including crop production, livestock husbandry and other NRM, and key seasonal activities

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1 In some instances the vision is developed before the situation analysis to ensure that analysing the current state does not become a constraining factor to visioning

2 Adapted from Sanginga and Chitsike, 2005

- Gender daily activity calendar: Identifying activities performed by men and women on a daily basis
- Market chain analysis/map: Crops, markets, service providers, producers, etc.
- Historical timelines of major events
- Stakeholder mapping: Identify the local organizations and institutions active in the community, their roles, activities and relationships between institutions
- Transect walk: Identifying and explaining relationships between and within biophysical topography, soils, natural vegetation and socio-economic (physical infrastructure, human settlements, cultivation and other production areas).

Step 2: Development of goals and outcomes

Stepping back from the current situation, the visioning process requires that the community representatives think of a desired future, a desired state of livelihoods and the environment (biophysical, socioeconomic and political) they live in, and what needs to be done and/or changed to get there (Sanginga and Chitsike, 2005).

Task 1: Recap of previous session

The result of the whole process of the situation analysis should be displayed on the wall or floor of the meeting hall. One or more members of the community should recap the activities and achievements of the various exercises carried out during the situation analysis.

Task 2: Integration of contemporary and scientific information

Once the community representatives have fully understood the current situation, it is equally important to integrate contemporary knowledge to complement information from the community. Thus members of the facilitating team should present maps and other data about the area that the community have no access to. This could be a good point to present results of the characterization studies to further improve understanding of the local context.

Task 3: Defining the vision: desired future for different categories of farmers

Armed with information from the previous tasks the community representatives should think beyond the immediate daily needs/problems and define the future conditions. Each one of the socioeconomic categories

should develop their own vision by responding to questions such as:

- What would the ideal future conditions be in the next 3-5 years?
- What should the land, forests, rivers/streams and farms look like?
- What should the livelihood of the community be?
- What kind of markets, policies and institutions are required to create and/or support the future conditions?

One way to describe the future is to ask participants to visualize using a Rich Picture of the future when the current situation is changed (Desalos, Kusters and Wigboldus 2012). The Rich Picture should be accompanied by a brief description of what is represented by the picture. The Rich Pictures from the different groups will be discussed and the common points and differences highlighted for further reflection. If the differences cannot be integrated, it would be useful to take note of them as they could be useful in the next steps (Desalos et al, 2012).

Task 4: Defining results and outcomes: identifying major changes that should take place to realize the vision

This session allows participants to analyse information produced in the previous session and identify the major changes they want to see to make the vision happen. The changes must be in line with DRYDEV's focus. The participants would respond to the following questions:

- What changes do you want to see or have as progress towards realizing the vision?
- What visible short-term tangible results do you want to have as you progress towards the vision?
- The River Code Role Play (Sanginga and Chitsike 2005) is one common tool that can be used to facilitate development of results and outcomes to transition from the current state to the desired future. In the River Code, one side of the river is the current situation (as presented in the situation analysis on the maps, seasonal calendars, timelines, etc.) and the other side of the river represents the desired future (as presented on the Rich Picture). Participants could respond to the following questions:

- What stepping stones could assist in crossing to the other side of the river (including changes in organizations, institutions and policies)?
- Challenges that have to be overcome (reduced, decreased).
- What potential do we have to use to move forward (enhanced, improved, increased)?
- What do we need which we currently do not have (established, introduced)?

3.3 Stage 3: Option prioritization

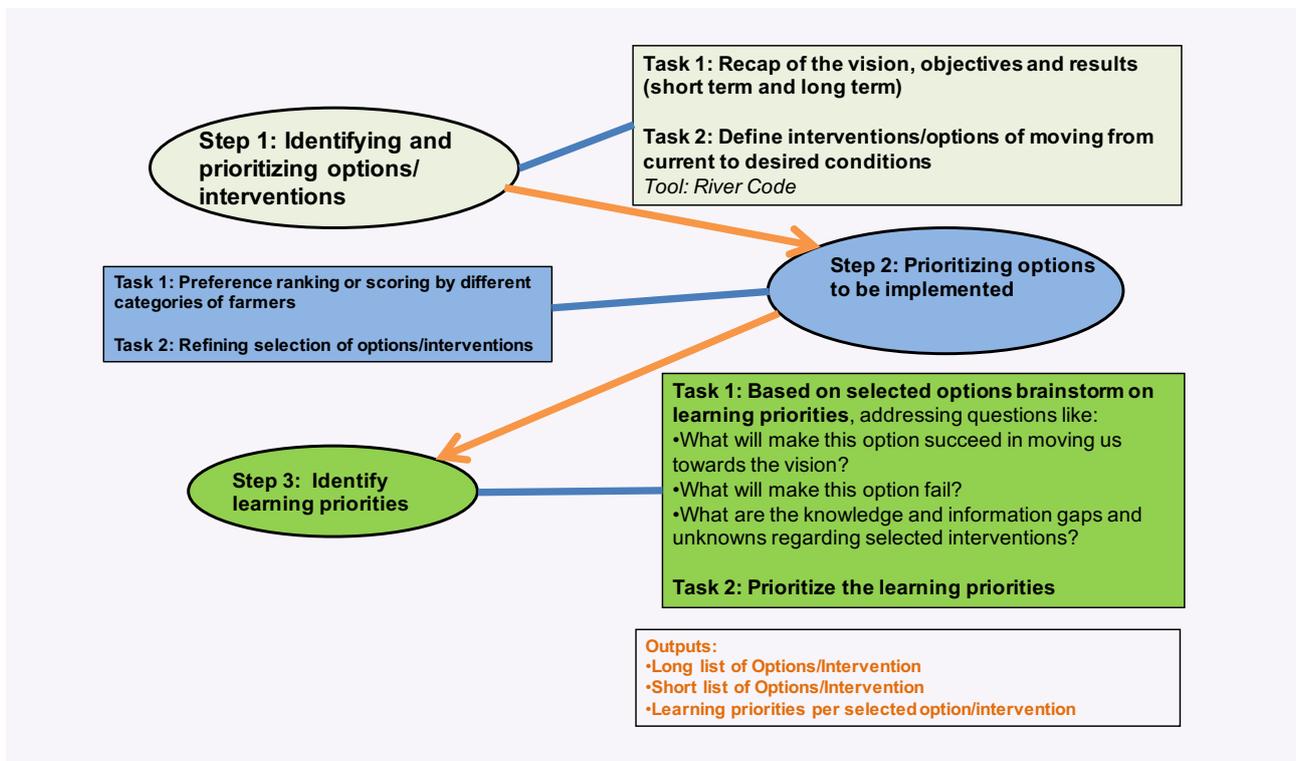Identification and prioritization of options/interventions is the core of the Options by Context approach adopted by the DRYDEV programme. Building on the results and outcomes defined in Stage 2, this stage requires that the community representatives define key intervention/options to be used in achieving the results/outcomes that contribute to the realization of the vision. The options should then be assessed and consolidated at country level and by work package in preparation for the planning and implementation stage. It is important to ensure that a wide range of options are included and cater for farmers in different socio-economic and biophysical contexts. This stage can be completed in one day.

Step 1: Identifying and prioritizing options/ interventions

Task 1: Recap of the vision, objectives and results (short term and long term)

Task 2: Define interventions/options of moving from current to desired conditions
Tool: River Code

Step 2: Prioritizing options to be implemented

Task 1: Preference ranking or scoring by different categories of farmers

Task 2: Refining selection of options/interventions

Step 3: Identify learning priorities

Task 1: Based on selected options brainstorm on learning priorities, addressing questions like:
•What will make this option succeed in moving us towards the vision?
•What will make this option fail?
•What are the knowledge and information gaps and unknowns regarding selected interventions?

Task 2: Prioritize the learning priorities

Outputs:
•Long list of Options/Intervention
•Short list of Options/Intervention
•Learning priorities per selected option/intervention

Figure 4: Option prioritization

Step 1: Identifying options/interventions

This step allows community representatives to analyse information generated in the previous tasks and identify the major options/interventions to achieve the results/outcomes. These options must be within the scope of the programme, though a few strategic options can be included with the understanding that support would be sought from other organizations to fund and/or facilitate their implementation. They should not be part of the subsequent stages on learning priorities and planned comparisons.

Task 1: Defining results/outcomes

Define activities against each outcome/result as part of moving from the current to desired conditions. Participants should work in their groups guided by the Rich Picture and outcomes documented in the previous session. They are expected to define actions to be undertaken; interventions/options of moving from the current to desired conditions. The River Code can be used as a tool for this task.

Step 2: Prioritizing options to be implemented

Step 1 will generate a long list of interventions/options and these have to be prioritized to a manageable/ achievable number for each work package, ensuring that all categories of farmers in varying contexts are covered. It is important to ascertain that in the prioritization process the preferences of some groups are not completely eliminated by ensuring that differing opinions are noted and compromises made.

Task 1: Preference ranking or scoring by different categories of farmers

Each category of farmers has to rank the identified options based on their own preference, that is, choosing options that will make a difference in their livelihoods and contribute to the achievement of results/outcomes and attainment of the vision. After each group presents its findings, it is critical to discuss the differences among the groups and arrive at a consensus so that all categories of

people are catered for. This goes beyond vote counting – preference ranking can be used where each individual ranks the options and the ranks are scored for the various socioeconomic categories and total score also enumerated.

Task 2: Refining selection of options/interventions

Once a consolidated priority list has been developed, the facilitation team should assess if the implementation of options will lead to the achievement of the results/ outcomes and if the selected option is i) within the scope of the programme; ii) appropriate, based on local and contemporary knowledge of the context (biophysical and economic, cultural and socio-political) of the particular site by completing Table 1.

If this task has been undertaken without community involvement, the results should be presented and discussed.

Table 1: Template for selecting options

Option	Alignment to programme focus and scope	Required conditions for the option to work		Appropriateness Yes/No/Not sure
		Biophysical	Socioeconomic	
1				
2				
3				

## Step 3: Identifying learning opportunities

The preceding sections of the CAP process have yielded the prioritized options. Although the identified options and interventions are likely to lead to the achievement of the outlined results/outcomes and attainment of the vision, there is still inadequate knowledge with regards to their performance as they often fail to deliver the same result in all contexts. Thus, there could be doubts, different opinions or new innovative ways of implementing these options. Since DRYDEV adopted a co-learning approach to ensure that the right option is promoted in the right context, it is important for the community representatives to identify learning priorities for each priority option

Task 1: List learning priorities

Brainstorm on possible learning priorities by responding to the following question:

Is there something the team is not absolutely confident about regarding the interventions/options selected in relation to i) applicability (Where does it work best?), ii) application (How is it implemented?) and, iii) effectiveness (Where and when does it give desired outcomes?). Figure 5 gives an illustration of how learning priorities are articulated.
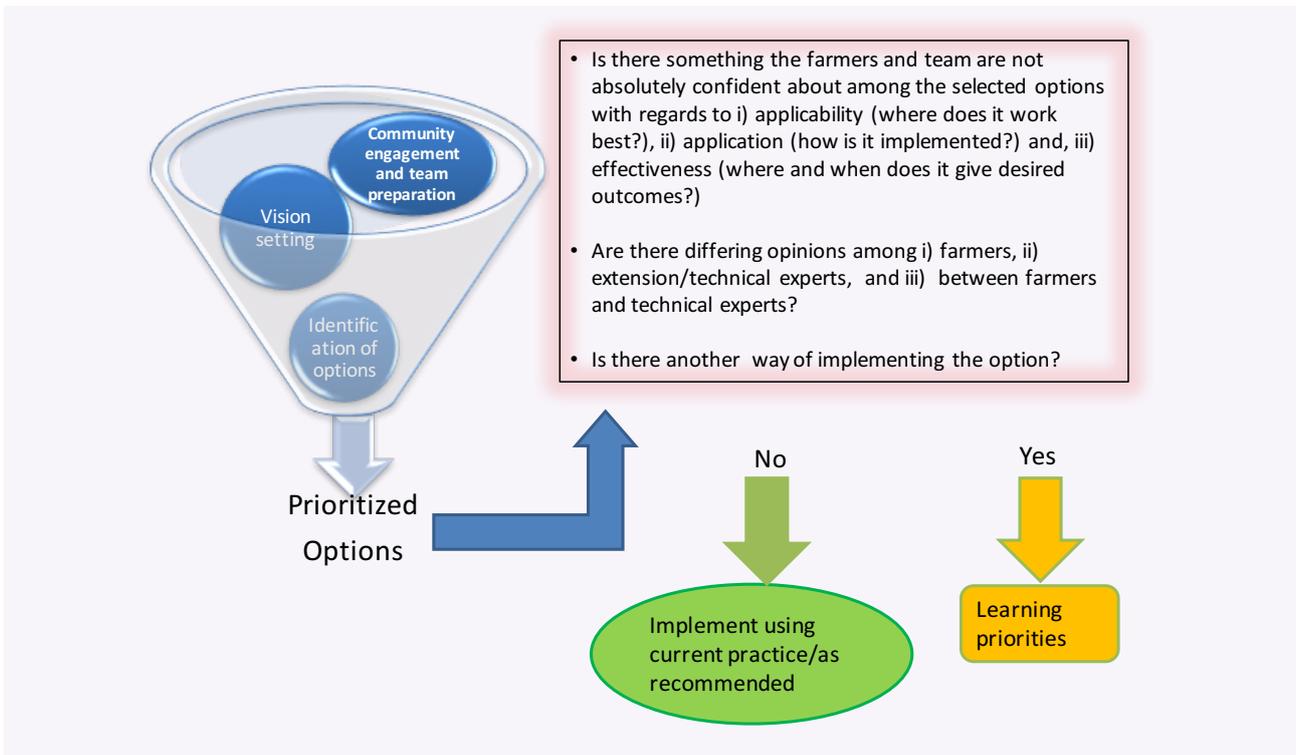
Figure 5: Identification of learning priorities

4. PHASE II: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Having set out a vision, identified options and learning priorities, the CAP facilitation team and community representatives should come together to reflect and plan the way forward. Country consolidation and the community feedback meetings are critical to ensure that the process is going as planned and that the wider community shares the vision and priorities. In this phase the action and monitoring plans are developed and implemented.
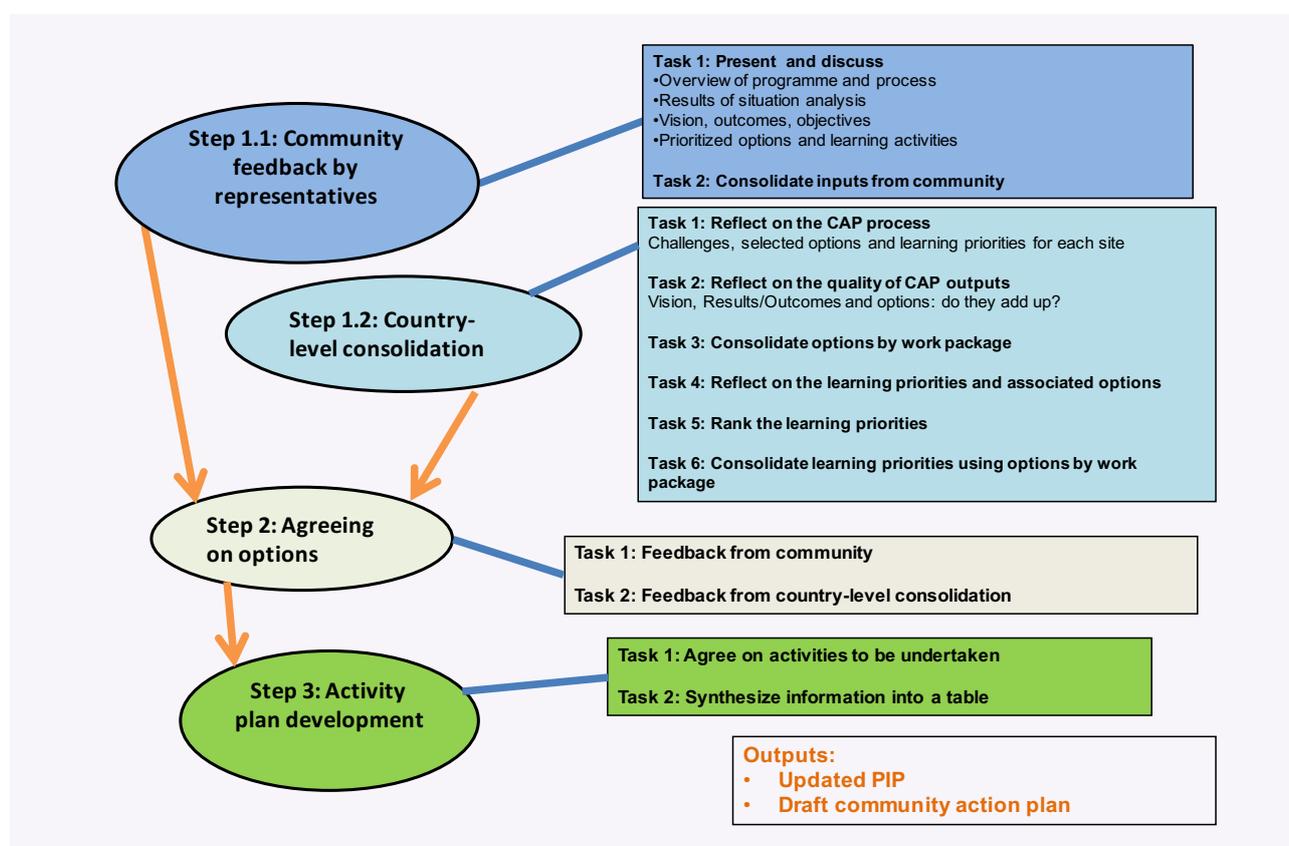

Figure 6: Action plan development

4.1 Stage 4: Action Planning

This stage is to ensure that the wider community contributes to the vision, outcomes and options developed by the representatives. Equally important is the reflection by the facilitation team to ensure the process is delivering the envisaged outputs and that most of the identified options can be undertaken with the support of the programme, whilst those beyond the programme are planned jointly with other stakeholders. This stage could take 3-5 days.

Step 1.1: Community feedback by representatives

Each representative will be tasked with presenting the feedback to the community on the outputs of the CAP process, results of the situation analysis, vision, outcomes, objectives, prioritized options and learning activities to solicit their views. These views should be consolidated for presentation to the CAP meeting.

Step 1.2: Country–level consolidation

The consolidation of CAP Phase I is a quality control stage to ensure that the process of developing the vision through to identification of learning priorities produces outputs of high standards that form a firm and credible foundation for the planning and implementation phase.

Second, the consolidation is to ensure that the identified options are within the scope of the programme, can be initiated and ideally fully implemented within the timeframe of the programme. Third, during this stage, the process is reviewed and adapted to the country and/or site-specific context. Lastly, it is for planning for the implementation stages of the CAP process.

Task 1: Reflect on the CAP process

Present the process, challenges and selected options and learning priorities for each site.

Task 2: Reflect on the quality of the CAP outputs

Reflect on the vision, results/outcomes and options: Do they add up? Will the undertaking of interventions/options contribute towards achieving the outcomes/results? What are the gaps and recommendations for the community?

Table 2: Consolidation of the CAP vision, outcomes and options: an example from sites in Kenya

Vision	Outcomes/results	List of options
Competitive dry land agricultural production with sound policies that promote agribusiness and environmental conservation.	Improved soil fertility	Tree planting
	Increased water availability (for multiple uses)	• Farm ponds • Earth dams • Sand dams
	Improved crop production	• Crops pests and disease control

Task 3: Consolidate options by work package

Insert options under the most appropriate Activity Area in PIP, taking note and making recommendations for i) options that do not squarely fit under any Activity Area, and ii) Activity Area that have no suggested options.

Task 4: Reflect on the learning priorities and associated options

Reflect on the learning priorities to ensure they are relevant to the prioritized options. Are there any gaps? How can these be improved? Make recommendations for the communities to consider including learning priorities of the facilitation team (DRYDEV implementing staff and extension agents).

Table 3: Review of learning priorities: an example from sites in Kenya

Outcomes/results	List of options	Learning priorities
Improved soil fertility	• Tree planting	• Right spacing between trees
Increased water availability (for multiple uses)	• Farm ponds • Earth dams • Sand dams	• Correct dimensions for an appropriate pond • Appropriate soil type and quality
Improved crop production	• Crops pests and disease control	• Type of chemical to use for specific pests and diseases • Timing/calendar for pest control

Step 2: Agreeing on options

Each one of the community representatives will make a brief presentation on the feedback received from the community regarding the outputs of the process (vision, outcomes, options and learning priorities) so as to ensure that it is a vision and action plan for everyone. In addition, the CAP facilitation team will provide feedback based on recommendations from the country consolidation meeting. A process to incorporate the feedback should be agreed upon. It can be done either in plenary or group work depending on the nature and extent of revisions required.

Step 3: Activity plan development

Carrying on from the agreed options/interventions in Step 4.2, community representatives should brainstorm on the activities that should be undertaken. They could respond to the following queries/issues:

- What key activities are required to implement the option?
- Where will the activities be implemented?
- Who will be involved in undertaking the selected activities?
- Timeframe for each action – annual targets.
- The resources required and where they will come from.

Table 4: Community Action plan template

Outcome/ Result	Option/ Intervention	Key Activity	Target Area	Target	Target	Timeframe				Resources	Sources
			Where will this be done?	Who will participate?	How many people or how much area?	When will this be done?				What resources/ inputs are required?	Where will the resources/ inputs come from?
						2015	2016	2017	2018		

4.2 Stage 5: Implementation of options

Once the CAP facilitating teams have produced draft community action plans containing options and learning priorities, and agreed activities have been put together, the country technical teams need to consolidate them by programme work package so as to develop programme targets for all the years. Based on the planned activities and harmonized approaches (for targeting, farmer engagement, capacity development and extension) farmers and/or farmers' groups are engaged to implement the options incorporating the associated comparisons from Stage 6.
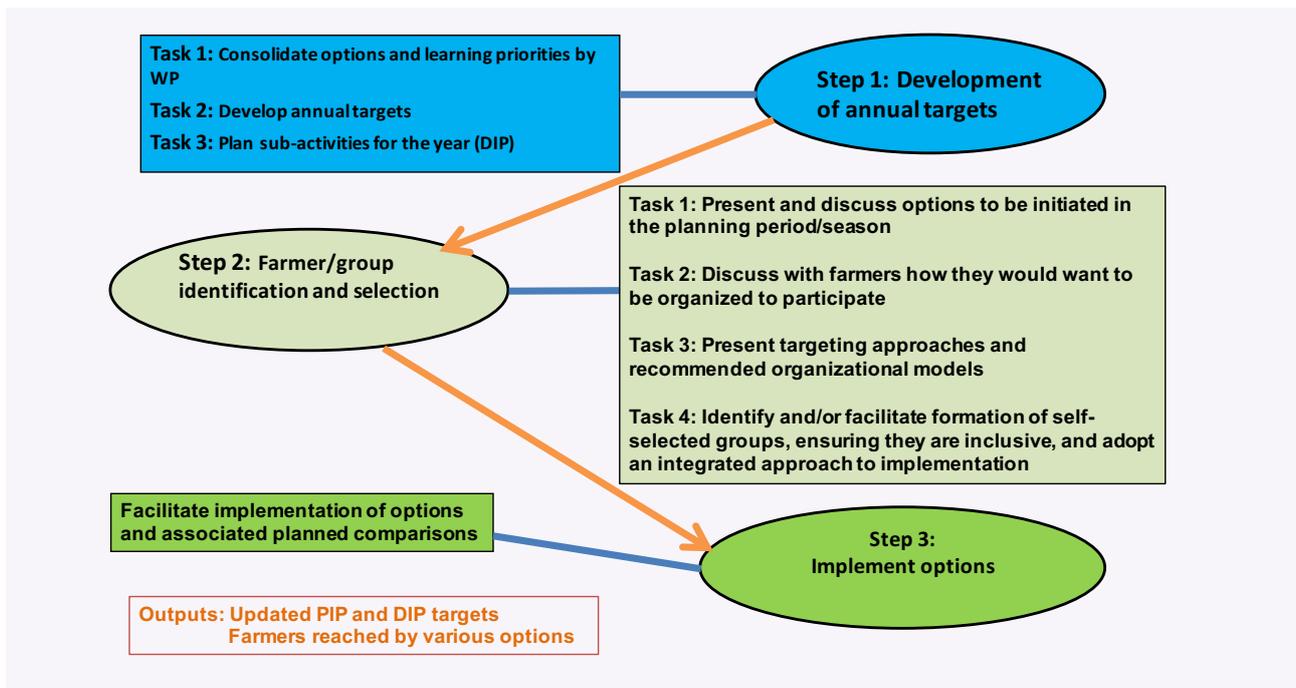
Figure 7: Implementation of options

Step 1: Development of annual targets

The objective of this step is to cement the link between the community action plans and the programme implementation plans. The CAPs should be used to detail options, targets and subactivities in the programme plans (PIP and DIP).

Task 1: Consolidate options and learning priorities by WP

Consolidate the outputs of Step 4.2 in Stage 4 from all sites and update the spreadsheet created during the country consolidation meeting.

Table 5: Template for consolidate options and learning priorities by WP

Work package	Option	Learning priorities	Sites
1	Tree planting	• Right spacing • Seedling survival • Transplanting method	

Task 2: Develop annual targets

Based on the spreadsheet and the site activity plans, update the PIP and 2015 DIP targets.

Task 3: Plan sub-activities for the year (DIP)

With the specific options and agreed learning activities (planned comparisons from Stage 6) develop a detailed annual implementation plan.

Step 2: Farmer/group identification and selection

This is the implementation roll-out step and may vary across the work packages, sites and/or countries. However, it should be guided by the overall strategies in the Inception report, PIP and the harmonized approaches. Key tasks include:

- Presenting and discussing options to be initiated in the planning period/season.
- Understanding how the community/farmers prefer to be organized.
- Presenting and discussing recommended targeting approaches and organizational models.
- Identifying and/or facilitating formation of self-selected groups, ensuring that they are inclusive and adopting an integrated approach to implementation.

Step 3: Implementing options

Facilitate implementation of options and planned comparisons as per the updated DIP.

4.3 Stage 6: Implementation of planned comparisons

Despite the above process of identifying and customizing options and interventions to local conditions, in most instances there is no conclusive evidence that they absolutely work as prescribed. Most often they do not deliver the same result in all contexts. Therefore, refining the method of application to suit the different contexts could maximize benefits and reduce risks for the majority of farmers.

Farmers have been undertaking comparisons on various technologies for decades. These have provided valuable information for plot level planning, but are not always systematic and robust enough to generate evidence that can be used to inform programming and policy formulation. Planned comparisons will be used as a tool to facilitate learning by farmers and other stakeholders. These planned comparisons will be implemented as part of co-learning – generating evidence for fine tuning options that are being implemented in a particular context (Coe et al, 2012).

However, farmers will still be encouraged to continue using and trying other techniques and practices since only a proportion of them will participate in the planned comparisons.
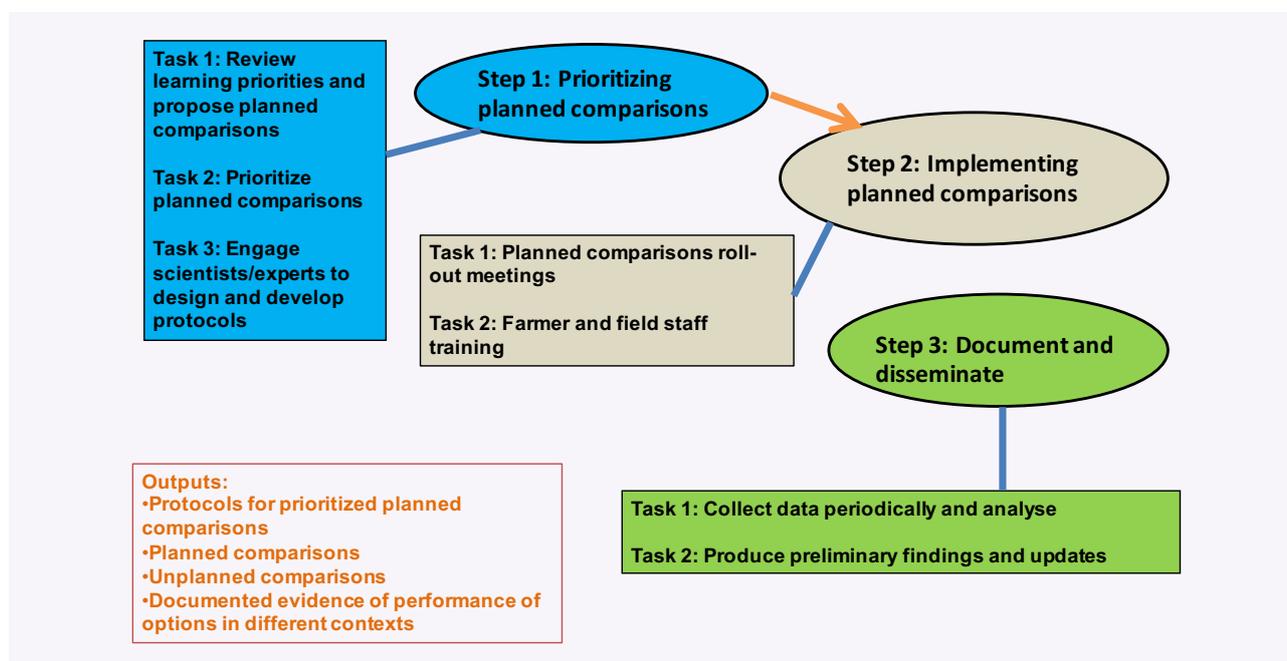

Figure 8: Implementation of planned comparisons

Step 1: Prioritizing planned comparisons

The consolidated lists of learning priorities from all the sites could be quite long and has to be re-prioritized across the years as the programme can only handle only so many per site, per extension staff and per country. The design and implementation of the planned comparisons call for rigour and systematic approach. Thus, a number of scientists and/or experts in various fields will be called upon to contribute and lead this process. At country/regional level there is need to hold a meeting to initiate this process. Ideally it should be facilitated by ICRAF and attended by representatives of the country teams.

Task 1: Review learning priorities and propose planned comparisons

Review all the learning priorities from the sites and document responses for feedback to the teams and communities based on categories 1-7 and summarize the discussions (see table 6).

1. Providing the information

Most often farmers and extension agents do not have information about certain practices and techniques yet they are known and are well documented. Thus availing this information would be the best response.

2. Connecting with other service/information providers

If the information is not readily available but the sources are well known, or the learning priorities are best handled by other service providers, farmers and extension agents should be connected to and/or advised to link up with the appropriate institutions.

3. Encouraging farmers' own comparisons

Farmers should be encouraged to continue trying alternative practices or technologies for questions that can easily be handled by them.

4. Explaining why it is not feasible

There are some genuine, justified questions that might not be feasible to answer through planned comparison due to various factors including cost involved, availability of expertise, etc. Therefore, it important to explain to the community why some learning priorities did not translate to feasible planned comparisons.

5. Conduct researchers research – trial/modelling/other investigations

Planned comparisons are not always the answer – some learning questions may require different kinds of investigations, e.g. surveys, models, etc.

6. Reflect again – further diagnosis, refine the question, etc.

Some of the questions or learning priorities might be unclear, not having enough information about what is going to be investigated. In this instance it is recommended that further reflection and refinement be undertaken.

7. Carry out a planned comparison study

When all the above are not applicable and there is need to generate new information, then planned comparisons are recommended. In principle, planned comparisons will only be carried out where there is absolute certainty that the information required is not documented and readily available for adoption or adaptation.

Table 6: Learning priorities review template

Work package	Option	Consolidated list of learning priorities	Sites	Responses to learning priorities							Proposed planned comparison
				Provide the information	Connect to other service/information providers	Farmers' own comparison	Not feasible	Conduct further research/other investigation	Planned comparison study	Reflect and refine the question	
	Zai Pits	Spacing and planting techniques, Design & layout, Benefits & maintenance, Crop appropriateness; Training on excavation and dimensions; Appropriate soil treatment for optimal production		y					y		Size, spacing, slope, micro-dosing of manure, manure vs chemical
	Market linkage (networking)	Quality and quantity; Effectiveness of different matchmaking methodologies and market engagement practices for identified value chains; How is participation/involvement of different categories of farmers and other stakeholders in identified value chains		y				y			

Task 2: Prioritizing planned comparison

Once the learning priorities which could be answered through planned comparisons are identified, the next step is to prioritize the ones that should be implemented. The following criteria could help in deciding the planned comparisons to implement:

1. Quick results (e.g. one season data)

2. Scalable/multiple locations

3. Sufficient interest and buy-in (high priority for many farmers or addressing needs of specific categories of farmers)

4. Could make a substantial difference in the programme (area in hectares, number of farmers)

5. Could make a difference beyond the programme.

Task 3: Engaging scientists/experts to design and develop protocols

- Constitute teams and assign leaders for each planned comparison.
- Design the study and develop a protocol.
- Agree on initial planned comparison design

Step 2: Implementing planned comparisons

Planned comparisons will be implemented as part of the programme activities. In a pool of farmers implementing a particular intervention, a sizeable proportion will be asked to volunteer to participate in the planned comparisons. For example, out of 300 farmers planting fertilizer trees, 50-100 could plant based on a protocol on tree spacing or screening for the appropriate tree in that area, or out of 500 farmers practising soil and moisture conservation using zai pits, 300 could plant using varying spacing and/ or sizes of the pits.

Thus, it is important for both field staff and farmers to be oriented and trained in the establishment and monitoring of the comparisons covering, the design, data to be collected, frequency of data collection, data capturing, storage and sharing.

Task 1: Planned comparisons roll-out meeting

It is important to hold meetings with the country core team to provide feedback on the outcome of the planned comparison prioritization process. This will also be an opportunity to get input and commitment. It will include:

- Presenting draft protocols.
- Agreeing on rules for the planned comparisons, e.g. famers make comparisons and keep records as part of their responsibilities in the project.
- Tailoring the planned comparisons to different contexts and working out the logistics and approaches, including costs and staffing.

Task 2: Farmer and field staff training

- Hold various sessions to train farmers, extension agents and others on the design and their roles and responsibilities in rolling out the planned comparisons.

  - Pilot approach with partner and extension staff, including deploying the form
  - Make modifications and take PCs to scale:

    a. Registration of participating farmers, including capturing basic data on farms/HHs

    b. Regular review meetings with farmers

    c. Monitoring the quality of the data captured

    d. Uploading of captured data.

Step 3: Document and disseminate

As part of the learning process it is important to collect data, analyse, document and share at strategic intervals as the comparisons are being undertaken. This information should be shared with farmers, the programme team and other stakeholders, especially the scaling stakeholders. Key activities include:

Task 1: Collecting and analysing data periodically

Farmers are required to keep records as a standard good practice. They will use the data during the reflection and review sessions. Learning facilitators at community level should work with the field staff and extension agents to monitor data quality capture and upload onto the database.

Task 2: Produce preliminary findings and updates

- Hold regular review meetings with farmers
- Produce preliminary reports for the community reflection meetings and for the country level quarterly reflection and review meetings.

4.4 Stage 7: Formalizing the programme delivery structure at community level

For a programme that is truly bottom-up and inclusive, it is critical to build leadership, capacity and forums for coordinating implementation, monitoring, as well as facilitation of platforms for learning and advocacy activities. Thus, a community level structure should be established and/or enhanced to:

- Oversee and coordinate implementation of the various actions specified in the plan.
- Communicate with community members involved in specific activities.
- Manage the collection of monitoring information.
- Report back to the wider community.
- Link up with local government structures for coordination of development activities.
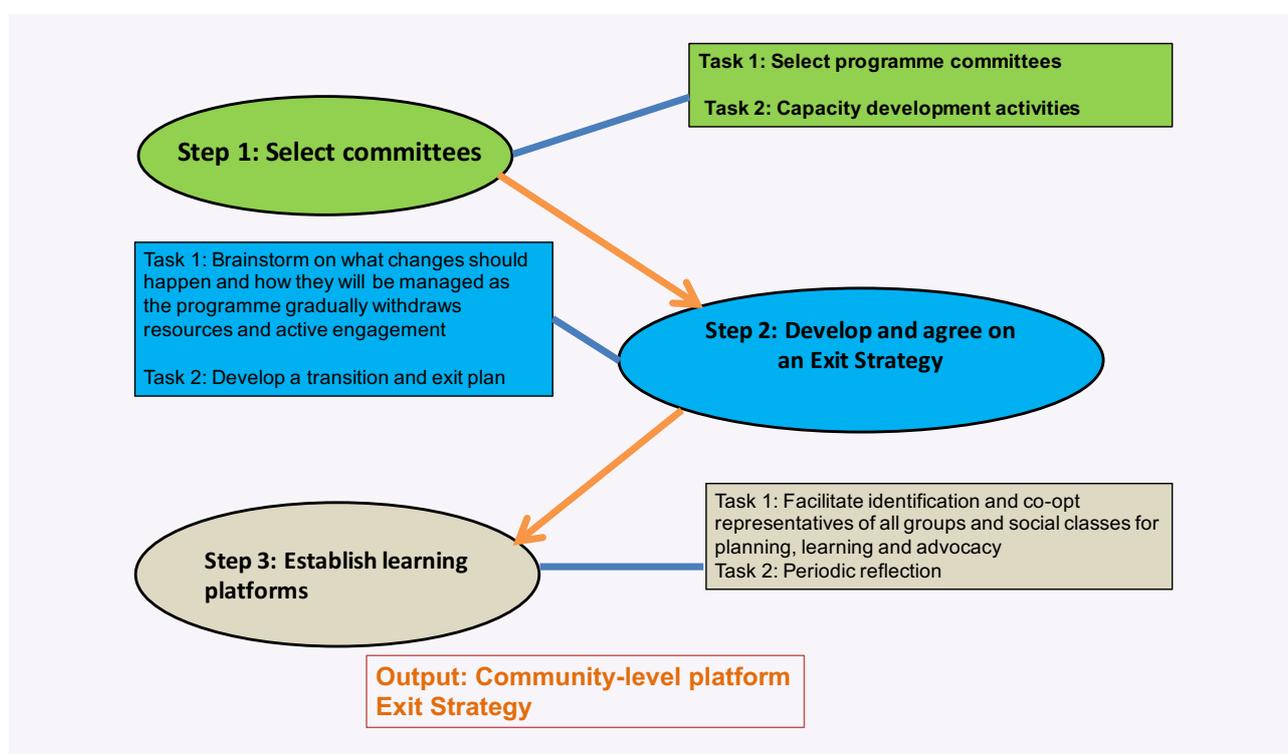

Figure 9: Formalizing the programme delivery structure at community level

Step 1: Selecting programme implementation committees

A community programme implementation committee consisting of 12-15 members representing all groups participating in the programme (either nominated by their own members or volunteers) in each target area will be established. Alternatively, in cases where there exist community institutions that have the potential to perform these tasks, it would important to; identify them, assess their mandate and strengthen them to fulfil this

role. However, the committee should strive to renew itself and form a platform, as well as continuously co-opt representatives of new groups.

Step 2: Developing and agreeing on an "exit strategy"

Once the community programme committee become functional, an exit strategy should be developed with clear milestones. In addition, periodic assessments will be carried out to ensure readiness. The transition and exit

strategy including i) criteria and indicators for readiness and ii) mechanisms for periodic assessment of progress towards reaching the milestones (Rogers and Macías, 2004).

4.5 Stage 8: Collaborative monitoring and learning

In addition to the programme level monitoring system, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL), community level systems should be established based on the vision, results/outcomes, action plans and options being implemented. At community level the institution charged with coordinating the programme should facilitate a session to develop a monitoring system based on community-derived indicators of performance and change. In addition, each farmer group participating in the programme activities should develop their own system of monitoring progress. With the systems in place, the groups and the community in general should hold periodic reflection and reviews. On a quarterly basis the programme will support and facilitate review and planning meetings where groups will share experiences in the performance of various options whilst the implementing team presents information from the planned comparisons. The information should then be used to adjust the action plan, and in the long term revisit the vision, results and outcomes.
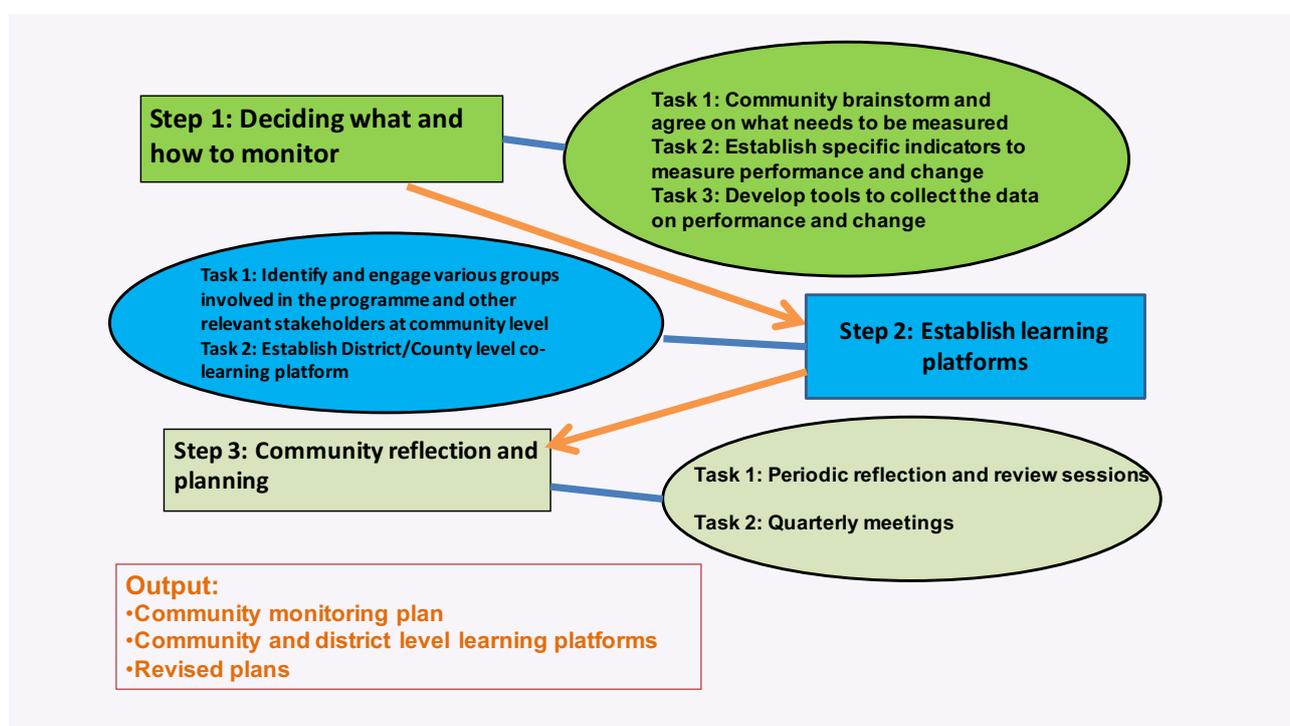

Figure 10: Collaborative monitoring and learning

Step 1: Deciding what and how to monitor

After defining the vision and developing an action plan the community needs to track progress towards the achievement of the vision. There are two forms of monitoring; i) compliance or performance monitoring – tracking if activities are being implemented as planned and ii) outcome monitoring – based on indicators seeking to track if desired changes are occurring in the environment and livelihoods as envisaged.

Task 1: Community brainstorm and agree on what needs to be measured and how it should be measured (keep it simple and limit it to the options identified for implementation)

List actions and changes to be monitored and summarize in Table 7

Task 2: Establish specific indicators to measure performance and change

List actions and changes to be monitored and summarize in Table 7

Task 3: Develop tools to collect the data on performance and change.

Take into consideration the following:

- Who will collect the information?
- Who will use the information and for what purpose?
- What tools will be used to collect the data and information?
- How often will the data be collected?
- Who will collate and analyse the generated data?

Table 7: Community monitoring plan template

Outcome/ Result	Option/ Intervention	Key actions	Data to be collected	Data collection tools	Responsibility	Frequency of data collection
		Key changes				

Step 2: Establish co-learning platforms

To facilitate co-learning, the programme will facilitate the use of community and district level forums to share and plan together. Establishing and maintaining a co-learning platform involves four interactive steps as described by Restrepo et al (2014). They summarized collaborative learning as involving four stages, a) establishing collaboration, b) having dialogue, c) participating in discovery and d) applying new knowledge. Thus, for the DRYDEV programme all the farmers engaged in the programme will be encouraged and supported to participate in the community level platform. On a quarterly basis, the community level programme committee should convene a meeting for sharing and reflecting on experiences as well as identifying and planning for new learning priorities. This is slightly different from the innovation platforms defined by Makini et al as:

"…a forum established to foster interaction among a group of relevant stakeholders around a shared interest. The stakeholders perform different but complementary roles in the development, dissemination and adoption of knowledge for socio-economic benefit." An example is value chain innovation platforms.
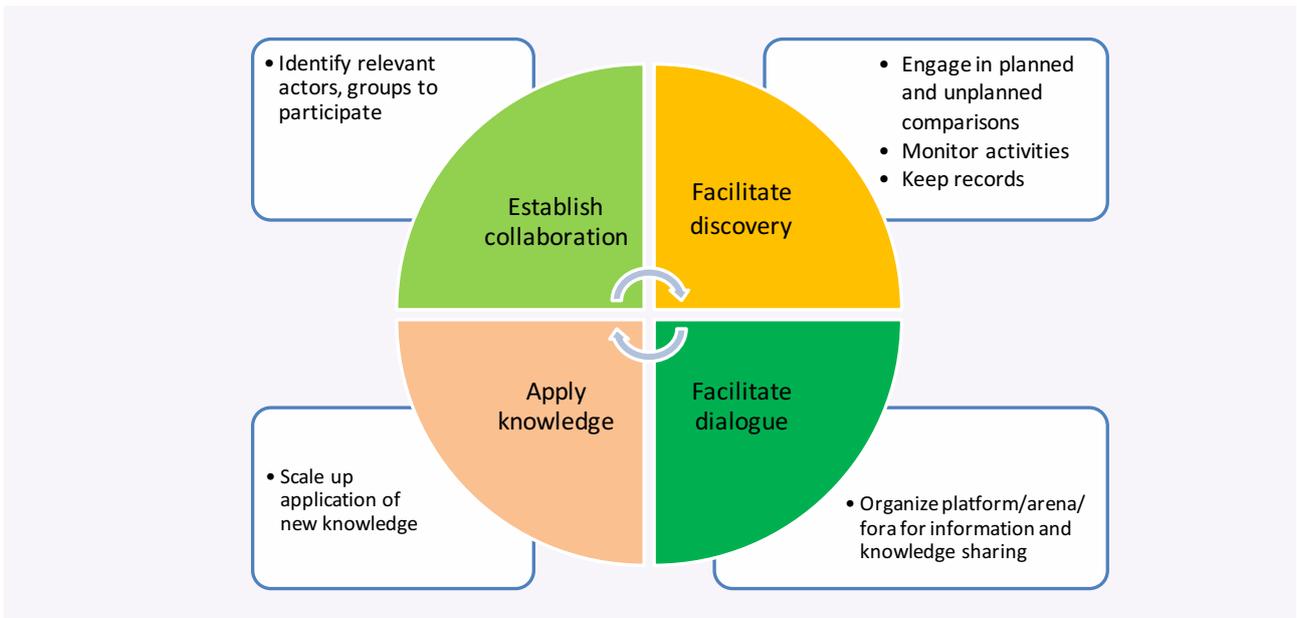
Figure 11: Collaborative monitoring and learning cycle

Task 1: Identify and engage various groups involved in the programme and other relevant stakeholders at community level

Compile list as indicated in Table 8

Table 8: Stakeholders at community level

Organization/ Farmer group	Type of organization	Sector	Contact Person	Contact details

Task 2: Identify and engage various stakeholders at district/county level

Compile list as indicated in Table 9

Table 9: Stakeholders at district/county level

Organization/ Farmer group	Type of organization	Sector	Contact Person	Contact details

Step 3: Reflection and review of events

As part of learning and reflection it is important for community groups or the community at large to periodically review progress and adapt. This should be done both at group and community or platform levels.

The objective of these meetings is to facilitate review of i) performance of options, ii) progress towards the implementation of the action plan, iii) the achievement of the results/outcomes and iv) attainment of the vision.

Task 1: Reflection and review sessions

All the groups and the community in general (through the community level platform) should periodically reflect and review progress on the activities and changes thereof focusing mainly on:

- What is going well and why?
- What is not going well and why?
- What should be done next?

Task 2: Convene a community level learning event

At site level the community should come together to review progress and reflect on the performance (including information from planned comparisons).

The process:

- Depending on the season and options being implemented the relevant farmer groups will share their experiences.
- The farmers participating in planned comparisons and the scientists/experts involved should also present preliminary findings and recommend ways of fine tuning options and identify new learning priorities.

- Which options are performing better?
- What is the progress towards the achievement of results/outcomes?
- What is the progress towards the attainment of the vision?
- What are the challenges, lessons learnt and emerging opportunities?

Task 3: Convene district/county level learning event

At district level stakeholders should come together to reflect on the performance of the options (including information from planned comparisons)

- The scientists/experts involved should also present preliminary findings recommending ways of fine tuning options and identify new learning priorities?
- Which options are performing better?
- What are the challenges, lessons learnt and emerging opportunities?
- What are the opportunities for scaling out?

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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