



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



**COMMUNICATION
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**
GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AND
PROJECT FORMULATION

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Additional readings and resources not included in the reference list can be found in the FAO ComDev thematic page www.fao.org/communication-for-development/en/

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INTRODUCTION

Communication for Development (ComDev) rests on the premise that sustainable development and social change cannot happen without the conscious and active participation of stakeholders at every stage of a development process. ComDev combines a range of participatory methods and media – from community radio to video and modern ICTs – to ensure more equitable access to information, knowledge sharing and inclusive decision-making for farmers and rural communities.

Agricultural and rural development projects and programmes can highly benefit from the integration of ComDev to increase their participatory base, promote coordinated and collaborative action and enhance project results and sustainability. In fact, stakeholders' engagement is even more needed now that climate change and natural disasters affecting rural livelihoods, are increasingly calling for community-based and site-specific adaptation and coping strategies.

To realize its full potential, ComDev should be factored in since project identification and formulation, accounted for with a proper budget line. Nonetheless, even if incorporated at a later stage of the project cycle, ComDev activities can maximize the impact of rural development undertakings by bringing about:

→ **Project relevance and accountability¹**

Listening to farmers and collecting information about their views, knowledge, skills and attitudes is the first step to ensure that a development initiative is well tailored to meet people's demands, in a timely and culturally appropriate way. Keeping the dialogue open among the different project stakeholders helps to identify relevant solutions, ensure coordination and transparency, and smooth project implementation.

→ **Targeted communication support**

Mapping stakeholders' sources of information, access to communication resources and social networks is a useful complement to the project baseline and allows to systematically plan communication services and/or activities that are supportive and well integrated in the overall project design.

¹ FAO is committed to improving project accountability, especially in the context of emergency responses, facilitating two-way dialogue with affected communities and providing appropriate, accessible and timely information. See *Guidance Note - Accountability to Affected Populations* (FAO, 2013a)

→ Stakeholder engagement and mobilization

ComDev is key to engage all the parties involved in the decision-making process, generating exchanges and mediating between different standpoints. Reaching a mutual understanding is the first step towards a broader consensus, that will in turn lead to sustainable change.

These guidelines have been developed for **managers and formulators of rural development projects and programmes**, who recognize the value of ComDev and are willing to integrate it in the project cycle to enhance its overall effectiveness and sustainability. In particular, this document seeks to provide practical orientation during the initial phases of project identification and formulation, as a way to ensure effective planning and implementation of ComDev activities.

Section 1 introduces the strategic functions of communication in support of agriculture and rural development initiatives, and illustrates the value added of ComDev to design and implement truly inclusive development processes.

Section 2 provides a step-by-step guide to embed ComDev in the design of rural development programmes and projects. It also includes a handy checklist to monitor and supervise ComDev activities all over the project cycle.

Section 3 then looks at the ComDev planning process in detail, presenting key practical tools to formulate and monitor the implementation of ComDev strategies and plans in support of field initiatives.

Section 4 focuses on how to integrate ComDev as part of FAO's and countries' joint development efforts at the national level.

Section 5 compiles a number of tips and considerations that will help identify, from time to time, the most realistic options for applying ComDev according to the specific project situation and the time, human and financial resources available.

The *Communication for Rural Development Guidelines for Planning and Project Formulation* adhere to the approach, principles and overall framework adopted by FAO and based on the five UN Common Country Programming Principles, as described in the *Guide to the Project Cycle* (FAO, 2012b)². These guidelines are meant

² The *Guide to the Project Cycle* and all the related tools and procedural explanations are also available on the FAO intranet at <http://intranet.fao.org/faohandbook/area/projects> where they are regularly updated.

to be used as a complementary resource jointly with the *Guide to the Project Cycle*, in the context of FAO Strategic Objectives³ and Country Programming Frameworks⁴, and in compliance with FAO corporate communication policies, strategies and planning tools⁵.

DEFINITIONS

ComDev planning in the project cycle

A participatory process through which a set of ComDev outputs and activities are identified as contribution to the overall project outcome and consistently embedded in the project Result Matrix, Workplan and Budget.

ComDev strategy

An integrated set of communication objectives, approaches, messages and channels tailored on stakeholders' needs and priorities.

ComDev plan

A tool to specify and schedule ComDev activities and products, and to allocate resources to make a ComDev strategy operational on the ground.

³ FAO has identified five Strategic Objectives, representing the key areas of work on which the Organization concentrates its efforts. See *Our priorities. The FAO Strategic Objectives* (FAO, 2013a)

⁴ The Country Programming Framework (CPF) is a tool used by FAO and member countries for country-level strategic prioritization and overall medium-term programming (see Section 4 of these guidelines).

⁵ Please refer to the Office for Corporate Communication (OCC) <http://intranet.fao.org/departments/occ/home>

SECTION 1

COMMUNICATION FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1.1 STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION IN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

1.2 THE VALUE ADDED OF COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

1.3 WHY COMDEV IS KEY TO AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



1.1 STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION IN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Many failures and disappointments in the history of development can be ascribed to two major intertwined factors: lack of participation and failure to communicate effectively. No matter what kind of project - agriculture, infrastructures, fishery, water, governance, health - it is always valuable, and often essential, to establish dialogue among the concerned stakeholders.

“Communication is important to support participatory development. Communication and participation are in fact two sides of the same coin. Communication is about bridging understanding within a human community by exchanging messages to enrich meaning and common knowledge, often with the purpose of embracing change.”

Ramirez and Quarry, 2004

For this reason the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/50/130, 1995) recognized *“the pivotal role of communication in the successful implementation of development programmes within the United Nations system”* to facilitate and improve the needed interaction among different actors involved in development including UN, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

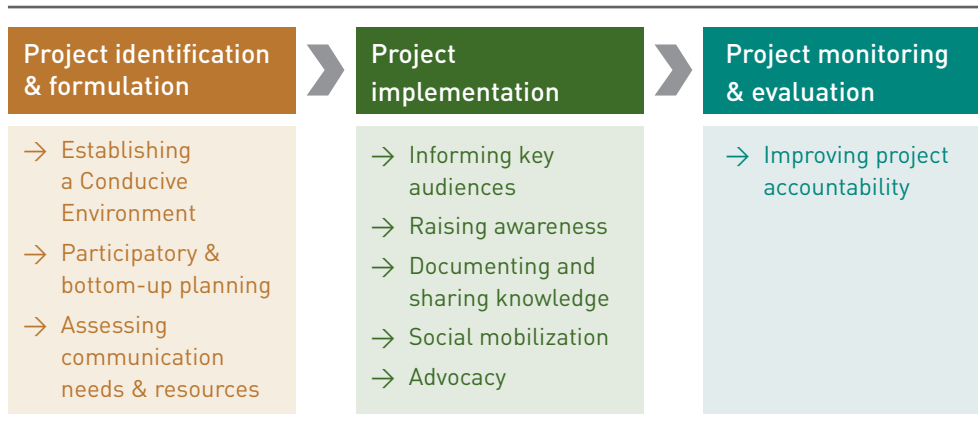
Communication relates directly to sustainable development because it contributes to people’s participation and social appropriation of the process of change. Rural programmes and projects that implement participatory communication activities guarantee people’s engagement and prompt ownership of development objectives. If communities take the leadership of programmes and projects intended to improve their lives, those programmes are likely to be more effective and sustainable once the external technical assistance has withdrawn.

Awareness of the different purposes and types of communication is the first step towards a better understanding of the field of Communication for Development⁶ and an effective way to enhance necessary quality standards.

⁶ These guidelines focus on how to effectively plan communication components and strategies to maximize the impact of agriculture and rural development projects. The origin and theoretical framework of Communication for Development as a discipline are treated extensively in other publications – see for example the *World Congress on Communication for Development* report (World Bank & FAO, 2007).

What follows is an overview of the main strategic functions of communication in development initiatives. For clarity purposes, they are differentiated according to when communication is applied within the project cycle (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Main communication functions in development projects



Below is a description of the key communication functions by project phase:

1. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND FORMULATION

A. ESTABLISHING A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The term 'conducive environment' indicates the broad function of two-way communication to improve dialogue and create spaces for listening, mediation and negotiation among the various parties involved in a development initiative. **Building trust and ensuring mutual understanding** is a necessary precondition to reach consensus on major risks, opportunities and issues to address; this in turns paves the way for sustainable change.

B. FACILITATING PARTICIPATORY AND BOTTOM-UP PLANNING

Communication is needed to actively engage project stakeholders and let them express their perceptions and valuable knowledge in a way that will help assess the situation, explore options, and focus the goals of a development initiative. Communication can help to marry outsiders' knowledge and skills with local needs, resources and know-how, for more effective problem solving. **Jointly identified solutions** are usually more relevant and more likely to be put into practice.

C. IDENTIFYING COMMUNICATION NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Participatory communication methods and tools generate insights about the **perceptions, knowledge gaps and information needs** of rural stakeholders in relation to a given topic. In addition, they serve to map the **communication resources** of a community or specific stakeholder group - including traditional and modern communication systems locally available, preferred and trusted sources of information, existing social networks, influential role models and opinion leaders. - to guide the interaction with the people during project implementation.

2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. INFORMING KEY AUDIENCES ABOUT THE PROJECT

A basic function of communication is **giving visibility and making stakeholders aware** of the development objectives and planned activities. This is fundamental to increase visibility for the project, and in general for FAO and the donors financing the initiative. If done in a more participatory way, informing project stakeholders is also extremely helpful to pave the way for a stronger endorsement of project activities.

B. RAISING AWARENESS

Awareness raising is one of the key functions of communication in development. It serves to **promote the credibility and raise the profile of a specific issue addressed by the project**, among specific audiences or the general public. As an example, an emerging issue such as climate change needs to be wisely communicated in order to increase the degree of public understanding of its causes, effects and possible mitigation measures. Targeted communication efforts are constructive and can lead to positive change in people's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and eventually actions.

C. DOCUMENTING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Documenting the experiences and approaches promoted by the project, as well as its results, is functional to increasing people's knowledge about good practices and lessons learned. Communication helps to **make available information, skills and knowledge in forms that rural people find useful, relevant and attractive**. Information and learning materials about new topics, technologies or practices are rendered in idioms and formats that people can easily comprehend, overcoming literacy barriers (e.g. through audiovisual materials) and through channels that reach specific audiences more effectively (either interpersonal or group communication, mass media or new ICTs). With information and knowledge at hand, people are able to make informed choices between adoption and rejection of a new idea, practice or technology. ComDev also strengthens knowledge sharing mechanisms to enable the **blending of local and indigenous knowledge** with scientific knowledge.

D. MOBILIZING AND EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES

ComDev uses participatory activities, media and materials to give rural people the means to articulate their own opinions and knowledge, both among themselves and with outside development agents. This enables to **make their voices heard**, but also encourages them to play an active role, get organized, establish networks and alliances and mobilize local resources for the achievement of common development goals. When communication is used to trigger community participation and social mobilization, the outcome is more likely to be sustainable because people see the decisions and plans as theirs and strive to ensure effective implementation. In sum, participatory communication processes **increase people's readiness to mobilize and organize themselves for collective action**. In a way, it is a process of empowering the local community and encouraging self-reliance.

E. ADVOCATING CRUCIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Advocacy is communication directed towards key players such as political, business, and social leaders at national or local levels who should take action to support project or programme objectives (UNICEF, 2008). Its main purpose is to **promote and influence change at the public or policy level** for instance in the form of legal reform or enactment of new laws, policy decisions and formulation, administrative directives, resource mobilization and financial allocation. Participatory communication plays an intermediary role contributing towards a people-oriented policy environment. By packaging and presenting rural people's opinions in ways the decision-makers understand, and vice versa, communication serves to facilitate policy dialogue and negotiation.

3. PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A. IMPROVING PROJECT ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY M&E

Participatory evaluation is a method allowing both development agencies and project stakeholders at various levels to work together in designing, carrying out and interpreting an evaluation. In conventional evaluation, communication usually comes at the last stage, functional to promoting project outcomes. On the contrary, in participatory M&E communication is central to **allow participants to share control of planning, conducting, assessing and applying learning from the evaluation process**. Being more than just sources of information about project achievements, the participants can fully express their ideas, perceptions and concerns about project strategy and implementation. Participatory M&E thus improves project accountability while building local capacities.

Each of the communication functions described above contributes in its own way to agricultural and rural development goals. Choosing the most suitable approaches, channels and formats to come up with a sound strategy is a specialized task that requires the expertise of a ComDev professional.

Experience has clearly shown that last-minute or *ad hoc* communication inputs, such as the stand-alone production of audio-visual or printed materials, hardly make a measurable impact and is not cost-effective.

Successful communication for development calls for a well-defined strategy, systematic planning and rigorous management: there must be research, clear objectives and audiences, careful message design and media selection, as well as proper monitoring and feedback (see Section 3.3). Development planners should therefore be aware that, for a project to fully benefit from the **use of media or information and communication technologies (ICTs)**, this has to be planned and monitored with a comprehensive ComDev strategy.

COMMUNICATION FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN

FAO project “*Strengthening Community Preparedness and Resilience to Natural Disasters in Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica*” introduced communication for development (ComDev) as a cross-cutting element to support community-level disaster risk management and increase livelihood resilience in rural areas prone to natural disasters and frequently hit by hurricanes.

Small-scale farmers and fisher folks were the primary communication stakeholders. Local institutions, media and decision-makers were also involved in the development of national ComDev strategies and local plans that prioritized awareness raising, information sharing, documentation and support to stakeholder participation in the overall Agricultural Disaster Risk Management (ADRM) process.

Mobile phones and SMS were identified as a suitable channel for community-based early warning systems for fisher folks. Community voices, testimonials of individuals who experienced hurricanes, good ADRM practices were captured through simple, low cost media including short videos and photos.



These were later used for the production of instructional materials such as community albums, posters and technical leaflets as well as for public service announcements encouraging fellow farmers and fishermen to adopt recommended practices.

Without the integration of ComDev activities in support of the whole ADRM process, the project may not have recorded such a high level of commitment and enthusiasm from local organizations and communities, who were willing to contribute their own resources and creativity to create useful and effective communication materials.

Source: FAO 2014a

1.2 THE VALUE ADDED OF COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Communication for Development (ComDev)⁷ is a communication approach based on the systematic use of participatory methods and tools – combining community media and modern ICTs – to maximize impact, cost-effectiveness and social sustainability of development programmes. It integrates all the strategic communication functions mentioned earlier to engage and empower farmers and rural stakeholders by ensuring equitable access to information, knowledge sharing and inclusive decision-making.

Communication for Development (ComDev) is a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. ComDev is about seeking change at different levels including listening, establishing trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change.

World Congress on Communication for Development, Rome 2006

Communication for Development is highly complementary to knowledge management and sharing, intended as the facilitation of access to and flow of relevant information and knowledge (FAO, 2012a). It is also closely related to other communication approaches dealing with public awareness raising, advocacy, visibility and outreach efforts. However, **what makes ComDev distinct and different from the conventional communication practice in development is its participatory nature.** It makes sure that the stakeholders' culture, knowledge and capabilities inform the formulation,

⁷ Also referred to as *Development Communication* or *Communication for Social Change*.

and subsequent implementation, of locally relevant, effective and sustainable development initiatives.

It is not just a matter of getting the message right to the general public, promoting the adoption of a new behaviour or persuading the audience through one-way communication or social marketing. Rather ComDev focuses on two-way, dialogic processes based on listening, the interaction with and among stakeholders, the convergence of different media, the valorization of indigenous knowledge and the generation of local contents. It is closely related and contributes to rural people's empowerment and self-determined development.

Going beyond visibility efforts, ComDev constitutes a strategic asset for project managers to design and implement truly inclusive development processes, enhancing their efficiency thanks to a broader consensus and the mobilization of relevant actors. In fact, integrating the power of media (e.g. rural radio, mobile phones, ICTs) with local knowledge and communication systems can give rural stakeholders, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups, more power to take action and change their lives for better.

To further clarify the value added of ComDev, Table 1 on next page summarizes the definitions, functions and required competencies of different types of communication frequently encountered in the context of development organizations.

Each of these types of communication has its own goal and specific set of competences and skills that, although highly complementary, are not fully interchangeable. According to the circumstances, a communication intervention can involve one specific approach or a combination of approaches. For example, to increase the visibility of FAO activities in a country and advocate for greater investments by the government, a combination of corporate or institutional communication and public relations would be required⁸. On the other hand, in development projects aiming to mobilize and empower rural stakeholders at the field level, communication for development would be the most appropriate. In this case, it is highly recommended to identify ComDev specialists with a solid experience in addressing rural issues, instead of assigning the task to communication professionals who are more familiar with corporate or institutional communication.

⁸ For FAO corporate communication policies and guidelines refer to the Office for Corporate Communication (OCC) <http://intranet.fao.org/departments/occ/home/>. In addition, the Food Security Communications Toolkit (FAO, 2011) can be a useful resource for rural development professionals on how to improve public relations and use communications with focus on policy makers and the media.

Table 1. Main types of communication in development organizations

Type	Purpose/Definition	Main Functions	Required Core Competencies
Corporate communication	Communicate the mission and activities of the organization, mostly for external audiences.	Use media outputs and products to promote the mission and values of the institution; inform selected audiences about relevant activities.	Public relations, institutional communication, excellent writing skills, press releases, broad media network contacts.
Internal/organizational communication	Facilitate the flow of information within an institution, organization or project (sometimes this area is included in corporate communication)	Ensure timely and effective sharing of relevant information within the staff and institution units; enhance synergies and avoid duplication.	Institutional communication, excellent writing skills, web and internet skills.
Advocacy communication	Influence change at the public or policy level and promote issues related to development.	Raise awareness on hot development issues; use communication methods and media to influence specific audiences; promote participation in policy dialogue and negotiations.	Public relations, marketing, experience in media campaigns and advocacy campaigns.
Communication for Development (ComDev)	Seek sustainable social change by engaging and empowering key stakeholders.	Support equitable access to information, knowledge and communication resources; facilitate participation, multi-stakeholder dialogue and collective action.	Communication research, participatory approaches, adult education, community media, consultations and facilitation skills.

Source: Adapted from Mefalopulos (2008)

1.3 WHY COMDEV IS KEY TO AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture and rural development involve sustainable innovation and social learning. Rural stakeholders engage in the identification of success stories or local talents, gain lessons from their experience and share this know-how as a basis for improving practices. People's participation and empowerment, both as a means and an end, lies at the heart of this approach to rural development where information, knowledge and communication are to be considered strategic assets (FAO, 2010).

→ **There is a need for multi-stakeholder solutions**

Present challenges in the agricultural and rural development sector call for shared solutions based on collective decision making and action. For these to happen, various stakeholders must be deliberately and systematically involved to participate and dialogue with each other in a social learning process that will eventually lead to collaborative and sustainable change. For example, coping with the risks and shocks brought about by disastrous effects of climate change requires a considerable deal of information and relevant knowledge, as well as collective efforts to make local production systems and livelihoods more resilient. Likewise, environmental issues such as river pollution or waste management cannot be tackled without bringing together and mediating to reach a common agreement between local households, industries, farmers, fisher folks, policy makers and the government agencies mandated to do the job.

→ **Participatory approaches have a successful track record**

Participatory development approaches, which originated and have been intensively applied in the rural and forestry sectors, have proven to be more effective than top-down management approaches. Communication efforts in development cannot ignore this. Dialogue is the necessary ingredient for building trust and ensuring mutual understanding among project stakeholders. Even a project that apparently enjoys a wide consensus, such as the construction of a bridge, can have hidden obstacles that two-way communication will help uncover, address and mitigate. Not applying the dialogic approach and participatory tools used in ComDev greatly reduces the chances to prevent conflicts, ensure the relevance of the intervention, gain solid support by project stakeholders, or mobilize local knowledge and resources – all of which means failing to meet sustainable development objectives.

→ Rural people's voices matter

In a global digital landscape, where the majority of the population is empowered by increased connectivity⁹, development organizations cannot miss the opportunity to make local voices heard and count in development processes. ICTs are becoming more and more important as enablers of social participation and inclusive agricultural development. The value added by ComDev is promoting the convergence of new ICTs with more traditional media (e.g. community radio) that normally have a wider reach but a lower degree of interaction. Conscious that access to technology is not an end in itself, ComDev also strives to bring out and amplify what rural people have to say, their knowledge and standpoints, the content they produce locally. More than on the media and technologies used, ComDev focuses on the need to empower rural actors – people or institutions – by strengthening their capacity to plan and manage their own communication processes.

→ Local ownership is the basis for sustainability

ComDev is a means to expand and deepen the interface among the many different issues and areas of expertise that are involved in addressing natural resource management, agricultural innovation, food security, climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and so forth (FAO, 2010). It is an invaluable tool that allows all development actors, particularly the rural poor, to engage in dialogue and negotiations. ComDev makes cooperation and sharing of resources possible, therefore facilitates the resolution efforts. By boosting rural stakeholders' sense of ownership and appropriation over development efforts, ComDev can be the change engine that guarantees long-term sustainability of development projects.

⁹ A recent report of the UN International Telecommunication Union estimated that 86 percent of the world's population – approximately 6 billion people – now uses a mobile phone. See *Measuring the Information Society* (ITU, 2012).

SUSTAINABLE RURAL SERVICES THROUGH COMMUNITY RADIO IN BANGLADESH

Radio is one of the most widespread means of communication in rural areas, capable to reach illiterate audiences and the most disconnected groups. FAO assisted the Ministry of Agriculture in Bangladesh to pilot out **Rural Communication Services (RCS)** in support of climate-smart agriculture, food security and disaster risk reduction. The project applied the Communication for Development approach to facilitate equitable access and sharing of agricultural knowledge, spearheading the establishment of the first farm radio of the country.

With the slogan “My Radio, My Voice” Krishi Radio (98.8FM) started broadcasting in January 2012 from Amtali, Barguna, and after one year had an estimated listenership base of 40,000 local residents. Every day (9-11am; 3-9 pm) the radio broadcasts a wide range of locally-produced programs, talk shows and magazines addressing agriculture, fishery, livestock, disaster preparedness, youth, women, health and nutrition issues. The programs offer expert advice and host call-in discussions where farmers, who tune in mostly using mobile phones, can send their questions and feedback. The radio has become so popular that community listeners groups have formed spontaneously and meet regularly to participate in live discussions.

Initially run by government agricultural officers, over time the radio consolidated a team of community volunteers – trained by the Bangladesh NGO’s Network for Radio and Communication – who currently perform the daily production and broadcasting tasks. Community members, local authorities, cultural groups and NGOs also participate in the radio management committees.

Local ownership of the radio has ensured its sustainability after the project’s end. As a result, when Cyclone Mahasen struck the southern coast of Bangladesh in May 2013, Krishi Radio contributed to save people’s lives and assets by spreading information about cyclone shelters, crop harvesting and other disaster preparedness measures in areas isolated due to power failures.

In sum, the experience of Krishi Radio has proved successful in:

- Ensuring rural people’s access to relevant information on key development issues;
- Facilitating information brokerage and two-way communication flows;
- Developing demand-driven communication services, agricultural research and policies;
- Empowering local actors and enabling inclusive decision making at the community level.

Source: FAO 2014a

SECTION 2

INTEGRATING COMDEV IN PROJECT DESIGN

2.1 COMDEV IN FAO PROJECT CYCLE

2.2 WHERE DOES COMDEV FIT IN THE LFA?

2.3 STEPS TO INCORPORATE COMDEV IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENT

2.4 CHECKLIST FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

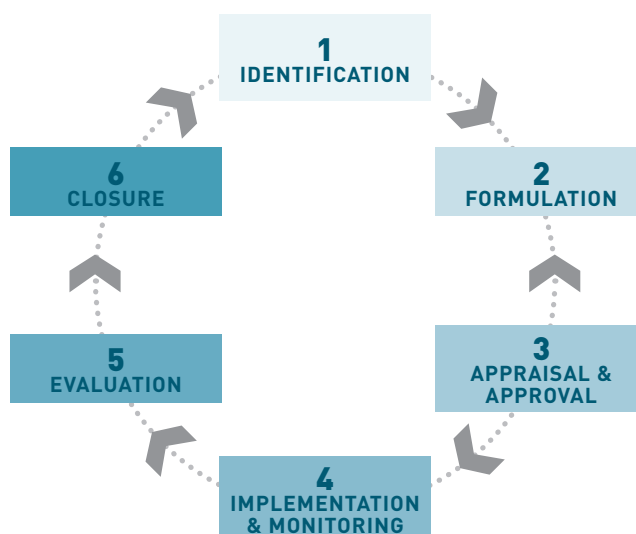


2.1 COMDEV IN FAO PROJECT CYCLE

As a result of the UN Reform and the consequent organizational reform process undertaken in 2010, FAO has made a commitment to integrate the UN Common Country Programming Principles¹⁰ into all phases of the project cycle, for adequate and effective project development and management arrangements. In particular, to ensure articulated and complimentary interventions, project results must contribute to the achievement of higher-level development goals, such as FAO's Strategic Objectives (SOs) and Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), as well as the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The new project cycle (FAO, 2012b) therefore consists of six phases (see [Annex 1](#) for a definition of each phase):

Figure 2. The six phases of FAO project cycle



ComDev should be mainstreamed throughout the whole project cycle. If well-planned, it will contribute to project accountability and effectiveness through targeted communication efforts, including both information provision and two-way dialogue with stakeholders. ComDev will make sure that the set goals are widely understood, shared

¹⁰ The Normative Principles include: Human Rights, Gender Equality and Environmental Sustainability. The Enabling Principles are: Capacity Development and Results-Based Management (RBM).

and supported by all relevant players. It will give rural communities the means to make their voices heard, get involved in project design and take part in its implementation to bring about more sustained and meaningful change. Similarly, ComDev is functional to participatory monitoring and evaluation as it allows development agents and rural stakeholders to jointly plan, carry out and learn from the assessment of project activities.

Although the ComDev approach is flexible enough to be applied even after a project has been designed or while it is under implementation, for best results it is always recommended to plan ComDev activities from the very beginning, to ensure multi-stakeholder consultations and participation in detecting relevant issues, needs, risks and opportunities as the ground for project planning. Taking into account people's views, attitudes and knowledge about their livelihood and environment helps to prevent conflicts or problems in the implementation of a development intervention, and paves the way for a strong sense of ownership by the communities and individuals involved.

As reported in the *Guide to the Project Cycle* (FAO, 2012b)¹¹:

Communication is essential for project effectiveness and sustainability. Communication for development activities should be planned from the beginning to ensure stakeholders' engagement, access to relevant information and ownership. A comprehensive communication strategy should be designed to effectively promote participation and dialogue and improve the visibility of project results. Any specific visibility arrangements requested by the resource partner should also be factored in.

Communication activities should be considered for all projects and be planned/budgeted for during the project formulation phase.

FAO, 2012b

The following sections will focus in particular on how project managers can factor in ComDev from the initial phases of project **identification and formulation**, to make sure that ComDev activities are effectively planned and implemented. For a broader understanding of the ComDev process and how it unfolds during the whole project cycle the *Communication for Rural Development Sourcebook* (FAO, 2014a) is a recommended reading.

¹¹ See Section 2.6 of the FAO Project Document Template, applicable to FAO projects (Trust Funds), Technical Cooperation and Emergency projects, including United Nations Joint Programmes (UNJPs).

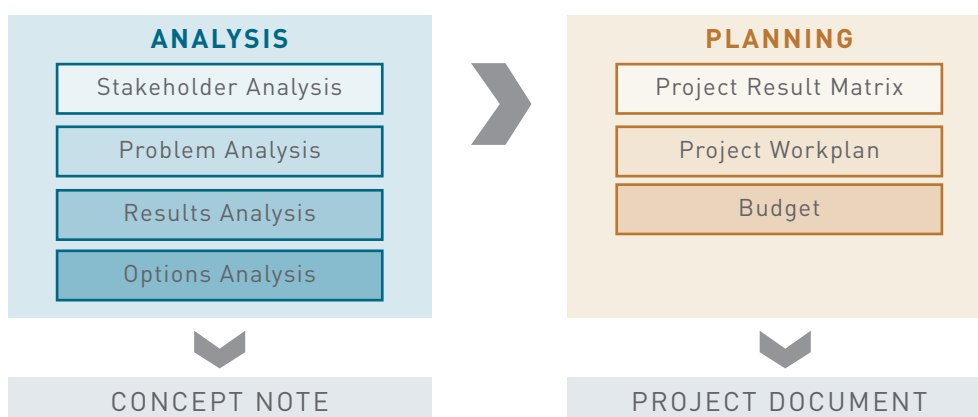
2.2 WHERE DOES COMDEV FIT IN THE LFA?

The method adopted by FAO and most development organizations for project formulation is the **Logical Framework Approach (LFA)**. The LFA assists in defining the scope and strategy of a project through a logical hierarchy of objectives, means to achieve those objectives, implementation arrangements and resources (see Annex 2). Despite its rigid structure and its emphasis on problems more than opportunities, the LFA remains a valuable tool for result-based management when applied with a certain degree of flexibility.

It is now commonly recognized that the LFA analysis, once conducted by external experts, should be done jointly with project stakeholders to embed their perspective in the planning process. And this is where ComDev comes in handy: the participatory nature of ComDev can enhance the human dimension of the LFA and give rural people, particularly the most vulnerable, an opportunity to have a say and influence decision-making processes regarding their development.

In the LFA, the basis for *Planning* is a throughout *Analysis* of the context in which the project will operate, including the intended stakeholders, key problems and their causes, possible solutions and best options (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. The two main stages in LFA



The Analysis phase in LFA corresponds to the **Identification (Phase 1 of Project Cycle)**, where the key elements of the project are identified and formalized into a Concept Note. The Planning phase corresponds to the **Formulation (Phase 2)**, where all the elements needed to ensure relevance, feasibility and sustainability of the project are further defined and described in a Project Document.

A. ANALYSIS

Stakeholder Analysis serves to identify individuals or groups having a stake in the project design, implementation and results, and to describe the nature of their roles and interests. *Problem Analysis* focuses on major issues in a specific area or context, and their immediate and underlying causes/effects, as a basis to conduct *Results Analysis* and sketch out the changes that will be generated by the project. The focus then moves to *Option Analysis* to help understand the current circumstances and prioritize the way forward. The whole exercise should be participatory and gender-sensitive (FAO, 2012b).

→ **ComDev contribution:** ComDev dialogical techniques are ideal to improve the consultative process and help validate the project focus and overall objectives¹². During this identification phase, an assessment of communication needs and resources will enrich the profile of project stakeholders and introduce the communication dimension in the *Concept Note*.

B. PLANNING

Findings of the previous phase feed into a *Result Matrix* that outlines the logical elements of the project: what are the intended achievements, the underlying assumptions, and how the results will be monitored and evaluated. Based on the expected outputs, the *Project Workplan* later details activities and tasks to be carried out in a given timeframe, while the *Budget* makes a cost estimation of the required inputs and services¹³.

→ **ComDev contribution:** During the formulation phase, specific ComDev outputs and activities are identified, by focusing on specific issues that can be addressed through the use of participatory communication methods and tools for information and knowledge sharing, awareness raising, multi-stakeholder dialogue or community mobilization (see the overview of communication functions in Section 1.1). This contribution to the main project outcome will be adequately reflected in the *Project Result Matrix, Workplan and Budget*.

ComDev outputs and activities, along with the related indicators and budget, are the key planning elements to be included in the Project Document, as explained in the next section.

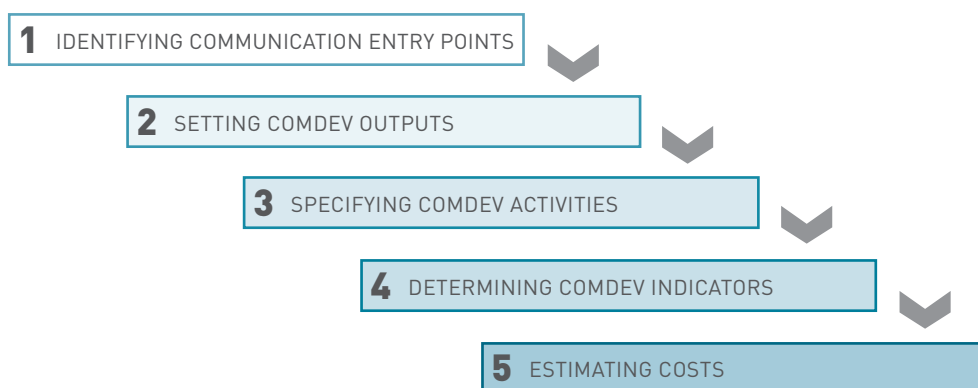
¹² For example the *Windows of Perceptions (WOPs)* is a key tool that allows to understand and reconcile different views of the issues identified and the solutions proposed, or reach a new perspective acknowledged by all stakeholders - see the Toolbox in *Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal Handbook* (FAO, 2014b).

¹³ Templates of the *Project Result Matrix, Workplan and Budget* are found respectively at pages 31, 32 and 33 of the *Guide to the Project Cycle* (FAO, 2012b).

2.3 STEPS TO INCORPORATE COMDEV IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENT

Basic steps to include ComDev outputs and activities in the Project Document are presented in Figure 4. It is always advisable for project managers and decision-makers to tap a ComDev specialist who will provide the needed expertise and technical inputs¹⁴.

Figure 4. Steps to include ComDev in the Project Document



STEP 1. IDENTIFYING COMMUNICATION ENTRY POINTS

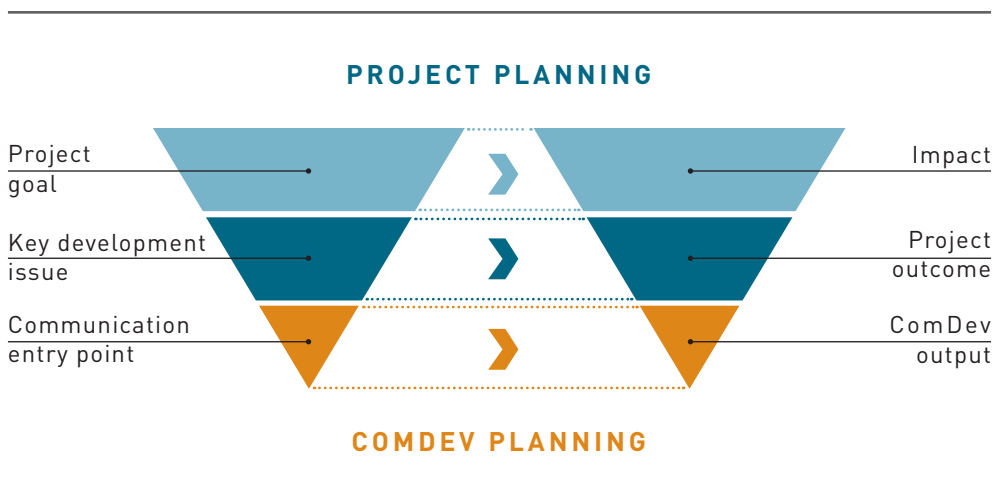
Among the root causes of the key issue tackled by the project¹⁵, one or more entry points can be identified by looking at those aspects or gaps that relate to and can be solved through participatory communication (e.g. limited stakeholder participation in planning or implementing development initiatives, limited access to the information and knowledge required to deal with a given development issue, weak social mobilization or political commitment, need to document and share traditional/local knowledge or practices).

¹⁴ FAO Office of Partnership, Advocacy and Capacity Development (OPC) provides technical support in Communication for Development to FAO Strategic Objectives and field projects.

¹⁵ Problem analysis is usually conducted using a Problem Tree, where the trunk represents the focal problem, the causes are drawn as the roots and the consequences as the branches. This will be later reversed into an Objectives Tree where the main issues identified are turned into positive statements or possible solutions.

Communication entry points are the direct link between project planning and ComDev planning: they are the basis to formulate ComDev outputs which, in turn, will contribute to the overall project outcome (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Interplay of project planning and ComDev planning



STEP 2. SETTING COMDEV OUTPUTS

As the relevant communication entry points are selected and analyzed, the most effective ways of dealing with them are also discussed. Appropriate ComDev outputs will be easily outlined by rewording the communication issues as desirable states or solution-oriented statements to be embedded in the *Project Result Matrix*.

STEP 3. SPECIFYING COMDEV ACTIVITIES

A tentative list of activities will be specified according to the ComDev objectives foreseen. These of course have to be validated, prioritized and fine-tuned with project stakeholders whose knowledge and experience will ensure that they meet local needs and demands in a culturally appropriate way (see Section 3.2 on participatory ComDev planning).

STEP 4. DETERMINING COMDEV INDICATORS

Concrete indicators are devised to facilitate the assessment of ComDev undertakings as part of the overall *Project M&E Framework*. Indicators should derive from baseline data and comply with the SMART (simple, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) principles.

Below is a sample ComDev logframe where poor feeding practices have been identified among the root problems of malnutrition and prioritized as communication entry point as they relate to inadequate knowledge, under-utilization of feeding schemes and low motivation.

Table 2. Sample ComDev logframe

COMMUNICATION ENTRY POINT	COMDEV OUTPUT	COMDEV ACTIVITIES	COMDEV INDICATORS
POOR FEEDING PRACTICES AMONG MOTHERS OF UNDER FIVES linked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inadequate knowledge • low participation in nutrition programmes • lack of motivation 	Increased knowledge and adoption of proper feeding practices among mothers of under five	1. Participatory rural communication assessment in the target area	At least 60% of mothers and women between 16 and 40 years old are aware of proper feeding practices at the end of 1 year
		2. Design of a local communication plan	
		3. Training of field agents and local media on ComDev	At least 40% of mothers have adopted correct feeding practices at the end of 2 years
		4. Participatory multimedia awareness campaign on proper feeding practices	
		5. Set up of local nutrition committees and facilitation of knowledge sharing among local women	

STEP 5. ESTIMATING COSTS

A tentative break down of costs provides a benchmark to ensure that initial commitments to supporting ComDev activities are matched by adequate finance. As a general rule, ComDev outputs and activities should be assigned between 7 percent and 10 percent of the total project funds.

FAO *Guide to the Project Cycle* recommends to develop a results-based budget modeled on the *Result Matrix*, where the estimated costs for personnel, contracts, travel, training and equipment are organized by outputs and activities. Below is a sample budget for the ComDev logframe in Table 2.

Table 3. Sample ComDev budget

	BUDGET
OUTPUT 1: Increased knowledge and adoption of proper feeding practices among mothers of under five	55 000
Activity 1.1 Participatory communication assessment [national consultant, transportation, equipment]	12 000
Activity 1.2 Design of local communication plan [facilitation, workshop logistics]	6 000
Activity 1.3 Training of field agents and local media on ComDev [national consultant, equipment, training materials, logistics]	20 000
Activity 1.4 Participatory awareness campaign on proper feeding practices [audio/video/print materials production, contracts with local media]	16 500
Activity 1.5 Set up of local nutrition committees for knowledge sharing [facilitation, workshop logistics, supplies]	5 500
Project Support Cost (PSC)	19 500
Technical Support Services (TSS) [desk work, backstopping missions, travel]	25 000
General Operating Expenses (GOE)	20 500
GRAND TOTAL	130 000

More detailed instructions to make an accurate budget for the design, pre-testing, production and distribution of various kinds of ComDev materials (print, audio, video) can be found in the *Communication for Rural Development Sourcebook* (FAO, 2014a).

In conclusion it is worth noting that, as in all development interventions, the ComDev outputs and activities can be mediated and refined during project implementation. While keeping a logical sequential relationship among all its elements, the ComDev planning process should remain elastic to allow for later reassessments, specifications and adjustments.

Table 4 in the next page is a simplified *Result Matrix* of a disaster preparedness program that incorporated ComDev. This example illustrates how ComDev outputs, activities and indicators can be embedded in the logical framework of any development project.

Table 4. ComDev in the FAO programme “Strengthening Community Preparedness and Resilience to Natural Disasters in Vulnerable Areas of Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica”

	RESULT CHAIN	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
IMPACT	To enhance agricultural-based livelihoods and food and nutrition security in rural communities by building preparedness capacity and resilience.			
OUTCOME	Small-scale farmers and fisherfolk communities have stronger capacity to prepare for future disasters and more resilient livelihoods to absorb, cope with and recover from them	<p>a) At least 100 communities in all 3 countries receive technical and operational assistance in disaster preparedness</p> <p>b) At least 75% of selected communities have reduced vulnerability to disasters and are prepared to effectively respond to and recover from damages caused to the agricultural sector</p>	<p>a) Linkages established b/w national DRR policies and measures adopted at community level</p> <p>a) Baseline document with livelihood based vulnerability and risk profile</p> <p>b) Number of strategic stocks prepositioned</p> <p>c) Delivery report for stocks of agriculture inputs</p> <p>d) Completed local DRM plans</p> <p>e) Number of communication plans</p> <p>f) Mid-term project report</p> <p>g) Monitoring reports</p> <p>h) Final report</p>	<p>Assumption:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security condition stable • Stable political situation <p>Associated risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restriction to access project areas • Destruction or disappearing of project equipment and infrastructures • Restriction in availability and access to services and goods due to price increase • Change in local policies and priorities • Social mobilization problems or decrease in local participation <p>Pre-condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted populations and local authorities maintain interest in the project
OUTPUTS	<p>O#1. Local partners have developed baseline livelihoods assessments, disaster risk profiling and DRM plans with focus on vulnerable communities</p> <p>O#2. Rural communities and local partners are better prepared through strategic stocks of agricultural inputs</p> <p>ComDev Output #3. Rural communities and local institutions have developed ComDev strategies for DRR with focus on preparedness</p>	<p>1.1) Baseline information on livelihoods and disaster risk is completed for at least 70% of selected communities and provided to country counterparts for planning</p> <p>1.2) At least 65% of local DRM plans with emphasis on disaster preparedness and contingency measures is completed and ready for endorsement</p> <p>2.1) More than 80% of selected communities in each country have stocks of agricultural inputs positioned in strategic locations to support first response in case of hurricane or other emergency.</p> <p>3.1) At least 80% of communities and relevant stakeholders monitor and disseminate information on preparedness plans and evacuation measures.</p> <p>3.2) 70% of the communities have developed elements of ComDev plans on disaster preparedness</p>		
ACTIVITIES	<p>ComDev Activity #1. Design local ComDev strategies for awareness raising, knowledge sharing and community mobilization for DRR</p> <p>ComDev Activity #2. Kick-start the implementation of ComDev plans through integrated community-based approaches (using local/folk media, field days, orientation meetings, drama, exchange visits)</p> <p>ComDev Activity #3. Provide technical support to local institutions, community leaders/facilitators to ensure sound implementation of ComDev strategies and plans for DRR</p>			

Source: Adapted from FAO [2013c]

2.4 CHECKLIST FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

The checklist below is intended for project managers and lead technical officers (LTOs) to manage and monitor ComDev activities throughout all phases of the project cycle, in close coordination with FAO ComDev specialists. The tasks and their sequence may vary according to the specific context, implementation arrangements and availability of human and financial resources.

Table 5. Checklist for managing ComDev activities

	TASKS	NOTES
1. Identification		
✓	Determine if ComDev support is needed	
✓	Assess in-country capacity for providing ComDev services	
✓	Select partner unit and/or organizations responsible for ComDev (GOs, NGOs, CSOs, universities, etc.)	
✓	Select project site	
✓	Liaise with FAO ComDev specialists or hire a consultant to prepare a proposal	
2. Formulation and approval		
✓	Agree on purpose, content and methodology of ComDev activities	
✓	Identify ComDev outputs and activities (LOGFRAME)	
✓	Agree on implementation arrangements, tasks, responsibilities and schedule (WORK PLAN)	
✓	Estimate costs of ComDev activities (BUDGET)	
✓	Negotiate approval of ComDev activities	
3. Implementation and monitoring		
✓	Supervise the selection of national/local consultants or partner organizations to implement ComDev field activities according to the agreed TORs, LOAs and work plan	
✓	Brief and provide necessary advice to implementing partners, including technical inputs, training, clearance of project reports	

	TASKS	NOTES
✓	Coordinate with FAO ComDev specialists for technical backstopping of ComDev activities [communication appraisal, local plans, production of materials, training, etc.]	
✓	Monitor the status, effectiveness and impact of ComDev activities and adjust work plan as needed	
✓	Conduct ComDev planning sessions every year to update the strategy	
4. Evaluation and closure		
✓	Document, systematize and share project results and lessons learned	
✓	Identify mechanisms for sustainability and opportunities for follow-up	

SECTION 3

COMDEV PLANNING IN A NUTSHELL

3.1 THE FOUR PHASES OF THE COMDEV PROCESS

3.2 PARTICIPATORY COMDEV PLANNING

3.3 COMDEV PLANNING TOOLS



3.1 THE FOUR PHASES OF THE COMDEV PROCESS

ComDev planning is a dynamic process, adjustable according to the situation, the time and resources available and, most important, to the agenda of project stakeholders. A ComDev strategy can be as elaborated or simple as needed but it should always be revised and validated with local stakeholders. Monitoring efforts running through the entire process will provide inputs for the final evaluation, but also to eventually modify the plan, based on new information gathered or new factors intervening at a later stage.

For clarity purposes, the ComDev process can be divided into **four distinct phases** presented below¹⁶:

Figure 6a. The four phases of the ComDev process (FAO, 2014a)



PHASE 1. PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION APPRAISAL

The first phase involves studying the context where a project is being implemented, including key issues at stake, policy framework, stakeholders' characteristics, views and resources that would have a bearing on the design and implementation of ComDev activities. A preliminary situation analysis, mainly based on secondary data, sets the focus for the field appraisal that, using PRCA techniques, generates insights on stakeholders' knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices, as well as on their communication needs, preferences and resources.

¹⁶ It is beyond the scope of these guidelines to present in detail the steps and concrete outputs under each phase. For a comprehensive description of the whole process, the Communication for Rural Development Sourcebook (FAO, 2014a) is a recommended reading.

PHASE 2. DESIGN OF COMDEV STRATEGY AND PLAN

In the second phase, PRCA results become powerful accounts to define clear, stakeholder-specific ComDev objectives and intended results. A major output is the formulation of the ComDev strategy, which includes the selection of appropriate participatory communication methods, channels and tools. The strategy is then translated into a plan of action that specifies the ComDev activities and outputs foreseen, while outlining financial, material and human resources required.

PHASE 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMDEV PLAN

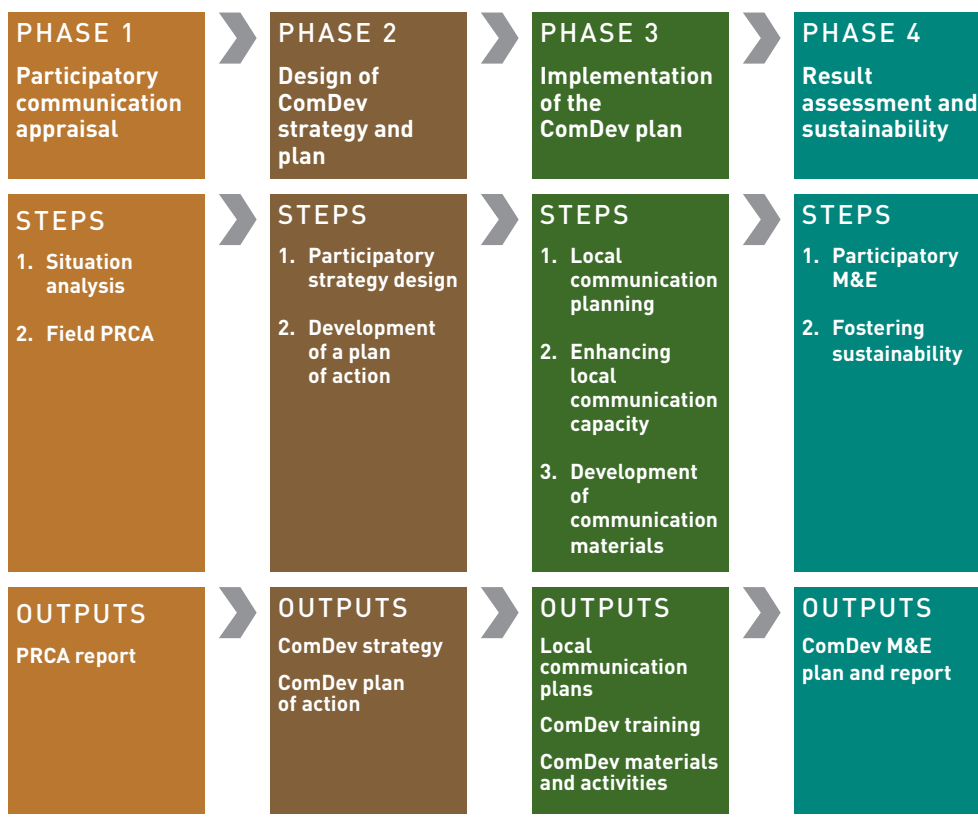
Phase three involves the actual implementation of planned ComDev activities. A ComDev specialist should also act as facilitator to enable stakeholders' dialogue and inclusion in decision making, to reach consensus and mobilize all available resources. Influential sources of information and advice identified during the PRCA will be engaged, while solid alliances will be established with relevant local actors, organizations and media. It is also important to equip field staff with the communication and facilitation skills needed to handle the process. The participatory planning efforts will result in the development of thought-provoking messages and ComDev materials such as radio programmes, videos, TV shows, drama, comics or online campaigns, among others.

PHASE 4. RESULT ASSESSMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Monitoring is a continuous procedure that runs through the whole process to assess whether or not the ComDev strategy is being implemented according to plan and how successfully. In this final phase, it allows to measure the effectiveness of ComDev activities after implementation and evaluate their impact in terms of contribution to the overall development objectives. Special attention is also given to ensuring the sustainability of ComDev activities and/or services after the project's end.

The sequence of phases and steps presented in Figure 6 represents an ideal **full-fledged ComDev planning process**, but in reality the process can be less linear and some elements changed, substituted or dropped according to the situation. For example, if relevant data are already well-documented, the field appraisal can be shorter and less detailed. Likewise, some steps might need to be set aside when immediate support is needed for an ongoing project: in this case a basic ComDev plan would have to be gradually adjusted based on information gathered later during project implementation.

Figure 6b. The ComDev process (adapted from FAO, 2014a)



3.2 PARTICIPATORY COMDEV PLANNING

ComDev planning is a **participatory and socially inclusive process**: it aims to incorporate and reconcile a variety of views from community members, local leaders, government officials, rural institutions, local media and subject matter specialists. The very essence of ComDev planning is that it is done *with* the people, not just *for* the people.

Participatory planning is a multiple-way learning process: the use of participatory methods and techniques serves to determine the design and contents of the ComDev activities based on actual needs, opportunities and constraints of rural stakeholders. This creates an opportunity for people both to experience and guide change (Fraser and Villet, 1994), with long-term benefits for sustainable development and local people's empowerment.

Figure 7. Expected results of participatory planning (FAO, 2014a)

A multiple-way learning process	Community ownership over the initiative	Enhanced political and institutional support	A gradual process of local empowerment
<p>Establishing horizontal relationships between and among various parties involved (local community, project staff, rural institutions, government) enables timely adjustment of project services to changing local realities.</p>	<p>The integration of technical support with local knowledge systems leads to development strategies and projects shaped according to local needs, opportunities and constraints. This encourages community mobilization and ownership.</p>	<p>Building a platform for dialogue and common understanding between decision makers and rural communities, increases the capacity of local stakeholders to claim higher-quality services and stronger political commitment.</p>	<p>Creating opportunities also for disadvantaged groups to access external resources (training, credits) or mobilize their own resources (knowledge skills) enhances the capacity to voice their interests and take action to defend them.</p>

FAO promotes **local communication plans** as tools for participatory planning and decision-making, where local stakeholders jointly define priorities, set common goals and mobilize technical, financial and social resources for the implementation of ComDev activities and services (FAO, 2014a). The engagement of local actors in negotiations – including community representatives, producer organizations, agricultural technicians, local institutions and development organizations – produces a site-specific plan of action firmly anchored on local needs, opportunities and resources and kicks off a collaborative effort towards the implementation of appropriate responses.

Local communication plans have to be based on agreements between public/private development entities active in the area. The parties involved must be willing to contribute different resources (assigned personnel, training costs, expenses for field equipment) to not only implement targeted activities, but also to strengthen local communication capacities.

A recent example of local communication planning is the process facilitated in Bolivia by FAO *Communication for Sustainable Development Initiative (CSDI)*.

LOCAL COMMUNICATION PLANNING IN BOLIVIA

In Bolivia, FAO applied the methodology of local communication plans - *Planes Locales de Innovación y Comunicación* (PLICs) in Spanish - to promote and provide participatory communication services for agricultural innovation. A series of meetings, interviews and informal discussions were conducted in four pilot areas to initiate dialogue and seek advice before starting the in-depth rural communication appraisal. Based on the information gathered through PRCA, specific themes, problems and solutions were identified with farmers, grassroots organizations, small-scale producers, NGOs, local media platforms and decision makers.

In each area, technical roundtables were organized inviting producer organizations, extension service providers, research centres, NGOs, the municipality and other local institutions to express their views and needs on agricultural issues and opportunities. These were compared with the development plan for the district. The same assessment was later done in participatory workshops with community members, coordinated by local technicians. The key topics to address were finally agreed upon, along with a list of communication activities, tasks and resources - in most cases a written agreement was signed by all the parties involved (see Figure 6 later in this module).

The PLICs allowed different groups of rural actors to set common goals in well-defined geographic areas, with measurable outputs. This facilitated the establishment of local venues for rural actors to dialogue and make informed decisions on agricultural innovations, the so called *Espacios Locales de Concertación*.

As part of the PLICs, more than 500 small-scale producers, extension workers, technicians and local promoters were trained across the project pilot areas in the use of the *Modulos de Conocimiento y Capacitación*. These sets of multimedia resources - including videos, brochures, guidelines, audio tracks engaged community members in a two-way learning process, responding to local priorities and promoting the recovery of traditional knowledge.

Source: FAO 2012c

3.3 COMDEV PLANNING TOOLS¹⁷

The very first step in ComDev planning is conducting a **communication assessment** to generate insights about the perceptions, knowledge gaps, existing practices and resources of the intended stakeholders. These data will prove extremely useful for the overall project design, particularly to figure out the best ways and means to meet local communication needs. Ideally the communication assessment should be part of the project baseline, but not necessarily the timing coincides. It is advisable to start – during the project identification or formulation phases – with a preliminary situation analysis based on secondary data, and later collect more information using participatory techniques.

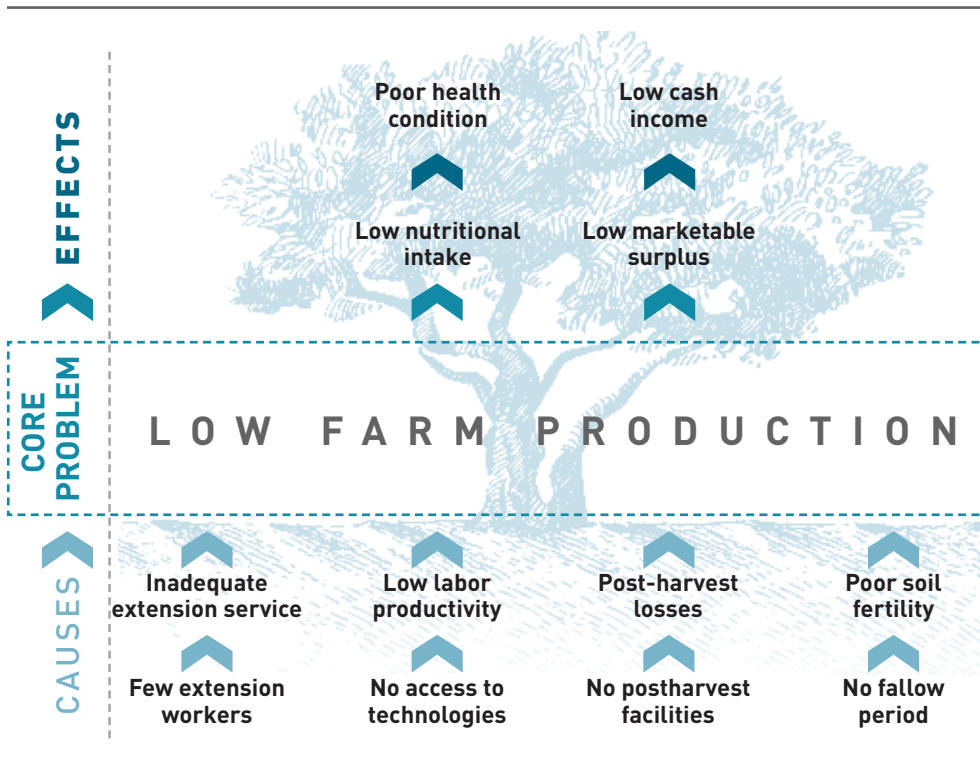
The *Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA)* is a communication research methodology being used extensively by FAO and partner institutions to unravel rural issues and plan targeted ComDev activities jointly with the ultimate users (FAO, 2014b). Among others, the following methods can be applied:

- Review of reports of previous projects on the subject
- Interviews with key informants and subject matter specialists
- Focus group discussions among members of the stakeholder groups
- Brainstorming techniques and problem tree analysis

Below is an example of *Problem Tree*, a visual tool commonly used to conduct the cause-effect analysis of major issues tackled by a project. A crucial task is to gather stakeholders' opinions and analytical judgment to identify the relevant root problems and, among these, prioritize those that can be directly addressed by communication (see Section 2.3 on the identification of communication entry points).

¹⁷ A comprehensive step-by-step guide to ComDev planning methods and tools is found in the Communication for Rural Development Sourcebook (FAO, 2014a).

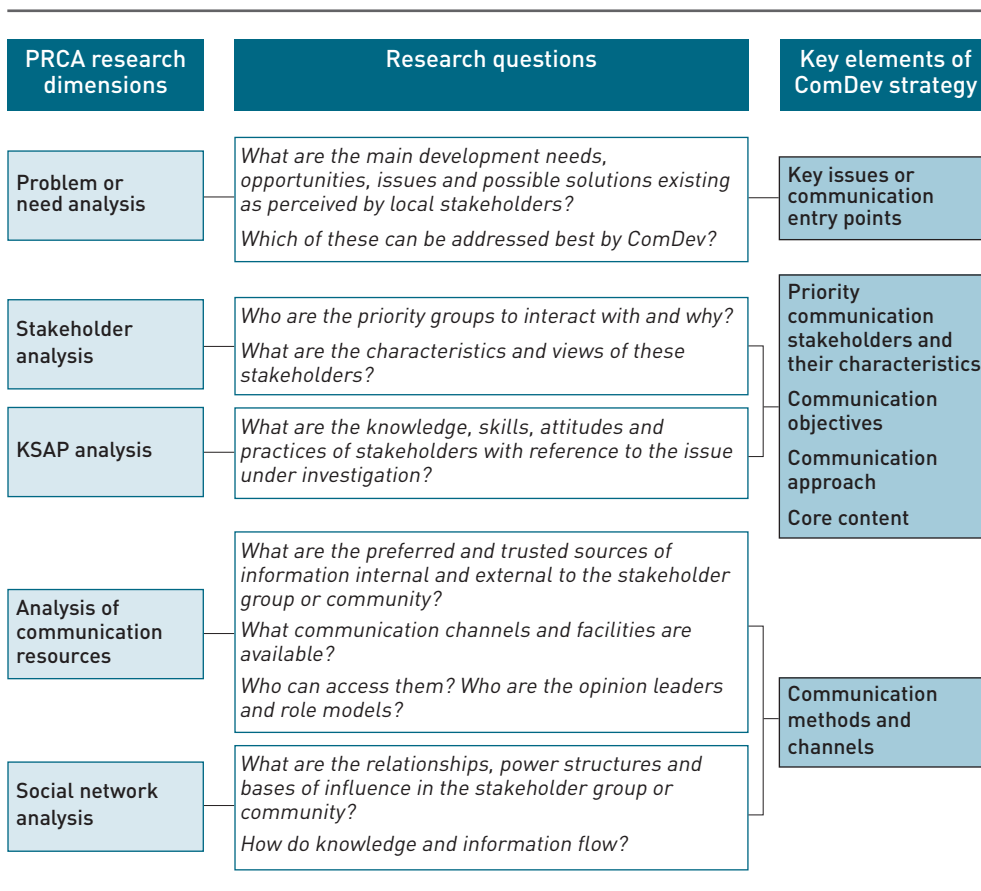
Figure 8. Sample problem tree focusing on low farm production (FAO, 2014a)



PRCA findings include evidence on how people communicate within their community, their main sources of information from outside, the patterns of interaction, social influence and knowledge exchange. All of this constitutes a baseline for the envisioned ComDev strategy and plan (see Figure 9).

The design of the ComDev strategy involves setting stakeholder-specific ComDev objectives or outputs, choosing relevant communication approaches, identifying the core content of the communication effort, and finally specifying the most appropriate choice or combination of methods and media to reach the intended stakeholders and engage with them in fruitful, two-way communication.

Figure 9. PRCA findings relevant for strategy design



Media selection depends primarily on the ComDev objectives to fulfill, taking into consideration the different functions, advantages and limitations of each channel (see Table 6). For example mainstream radio, TV and newspapers have proved to be more effective in creating awareness, advocating or spreading information about a particular development issue among the general public at the national level. On the other hand, to mobilize farmers and to stimulate debate and knowledge sharing, projects generally make use of community media, face-to-face communication or ICTs, particularly mobile phones, taking advantage of their growing penetration in rural areas. Combining more than one media available in a locale tends to produce the best results, thus a multi-media approach is always encouraged to maximize impact and cost-effectiveness.

Table 6. Advantages and limitations of different media

Media	Advantage	Limitation
Folk media (e.g. puppetry, community theatre, storytelling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be easily understood by all members of the community • Intrinsically adapted to local cultural scene • Can use familiar dialects for the most intimate and local communication at the village level • Appeals at the personal level • Does not depend on technology that is liable to break down • Comparatively cheap to produce since most of the resources needed are available in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires skilled crafting of development messages into the fabric of the folk media • May lack prestige vis-à-vis more modern media in some societies • May be difficult to organize and calls for close working relationship between development workers and folk media artists
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide coverage and availability/ accessibility even in rural areas • Low production cost • Delivery of information can be localized • Well-segmented audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak as a medium for training and education since it is audio only • Constant competition with other programmes in other stations • Fleeting message • With nothing to watch, listeners more subject to distractions, limiting their attention-span • Some concepts can be portrayed more clearly in visual than in auditory terms • Requires skills in broadcasting and programme planning, designing, production, and management
Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide coverage • Combines sight, sound, and motion, thus, more attention grabbing • High prestige 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends to be monopolized by powerful interests because of its prestige • Not widely available especially in all rural areas • High production cost • Difficult to localize information for agriculture unless there are local TV stations, still rare in developing countries
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines sight, sound, and motion, thus, more attention grabbing • Highly persuasive • Constantly improving technology is making production ever cheaper and more reliable • Can be played back • Allows more than one language to be recorded as commentary on a single tape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiplicity of standards/formats • Requires talent, skill, and experience to produce good programmes for development • Requires rather sophisticated repair and maintenance facilities • Dependent on the use to which it is to be put, may call for quite large capital investment • Colour/visual quality mediocre in some standards
Printed materials (e.g. leaflet, brochure, magazine, newspaper)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively cheap, simple, and easy to produce • Can be taken home, consulted, and kept as a permanent reminder • Particularly valuable for extensionists, technicians, and community leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to literate audience • Some formats tend to be boring most especially if there are no visual images
Visual media (e.g. flipchart, poster, billboard, comics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap and simple to produce and use • Good for training and extension support in areas where there is no electricity • Use of images helps people recall and remember concepts better • Easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care required to make drawings understandable to illiterates • Lack the attraction of audio-visual materials • May be thought of as “second-rate” by people with experience in electronic media • Suitable only for small group discussions

Media	Advantage	Limitation
Mobile phones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capable of a variety of tasks such as sending and receiving messages, recording audio and visual images, playing video and audio files, browsing the Internet, and organizing files Compact and easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited information can be stored based on mobile phone's capacity Dependent on electricity Not widely available in some rural communities because of poor signal/reception Privacy and confidentiality of information are at a great risk May not be affordable in some communities
Internet and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates the exchange of information among stakeholders regardless of geographical boundaries Links all stakeholders Encourages interactivity More flexible in delivering information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not be accessible/ available to intended stakeholders Special skills are needed to operate the technology and to access the information Computer technology is expensive Language barrier

Adapted from FAO (1989)

Below is a reference matrix to assemble all the key elements of a ComDev strategy.

Table 7. ComDev strategy matrix

Key issue(s) addressed: [communication entry point]				
Priority stakeholder	ComDev objectives	Communication approaches	Core content	Communication methods & channels
[groups, individuals, org. or institutions involved or able to influence the outcomes of the communication activities]	[desirable states expressed in terms of changes in stakeholders' knowledge, skills, attitudes or practices]	[awareness raising, information & knowledge sharing, social mobilization, advocacy, etc.]	[rough content based on the ComDev objectives & KSAP findings]	[interpersonal, mediated or mass communication - through folk media, community media, mainstream media, ICTs, social media, etc.]

But before turning the strategy into a proper workplan, it is important to assess it with concerned stakeholders in the community such as extension workers, other organizations working on the same issue, village leaders and farmers themselves.

A series of consultations and meetings will help ensure that the ComDev strategy is relevant and socially acceptable. This is also an opportunity to mobilize and create a sense of ownership among local stakeholders.

A concrete ComDev plan will delineate, for each objective, all the ComDev activities, expected deliverables, specific responsibilities and schedule. This has to be complemented with an estimate of the funds available and needed to cover each activity. The chart below is a useful model.

Table 8. ComDev plan

ComDev objective	Activities	Deliverables	Schedule	Person in Charge	Location	Budget Estimate

Another important aspect to consider is how to keep track of the management and implementation of the ComDev plan. When formulating the ComDev objectives, the relative targets and indicators should be defined as attainable and realistic standards against which progress and achievements can be measured and evaluated. The framework is complete when also the appropriate data sources and gathering methods have been identified, along with the resources required for conducting the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities.

Table 9. ComDev M&E framework

ComDev objective	Target	Indicator	Data source	Data gathering method	Budget
		[quantitative & qualitative]			

SECTION 4

MAINSTREAMING COMDEV AT COUNTRY LEVEL

4.1 FAO COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

4.2 ADDRESSING COMDEV ISSUES WITHIN THE CPF



4.1 FAO COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

The ongoing reform of FAO focuses on decentralization and results-based management to improve the organization's way of working and to deliver more effective services. Within this context, greater attention is being given to strategic programming at the country level.

The **Country Programming Framework (CPF)** is a tool used by FAO to define medium-term responses to the assistance needs of member countries in pursuit of national development objectives. It establishes a strategic link between a country's development goals and FAO's *Strategic Framework* within the regional priorities, and consistently with MDGs and other internationally agreed goals such as those defined in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The CPF therefore aims to enhance the impact and effectiveness of FAO country-level support, to improve coordination with other development agencies and increase opportunities for resource mobilization. It also paves the way for a more integrated and bottom-up approach to the FAO programming process. According to the Guide to the Formulation of the Country Programming Framework (FAO, 2012d):

The CPF represents a major step in the transition from a demand-driven and ad hoc project approach to a longer-term needs-driven results approach.

Under the new approach, FAO country-level support contributes to national strategic objectives and capacity development based on the priorities agreed with the government and the development community. Such priorities are in line with FAO's mandate as expressed in the corporate Strategic Objectives, Subregional and Regional Priorities and the priorities agreed by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the government in the UNDAF or similar exercises.

FAO, 2012d

The CPF contributes to the UN common programming process at the country level through:

- a situation analysis and review of relevant national policies focusing on agriculture, rural development, food security and other FAO-mandated areas, thereby contributing to UN-led needs assessments and analytical activities such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA);
- the identification of CPF Priority Areas, which guide FAO's involvement with partners and contribute to defining the scope of UNDAF priorities;
- the CPF Results Matrix, harmonized with the UNDAF Results Matrix; and
- the identification and development of UN Joint Programmes.

The team in charge of the formulation of the CPF includes the FAORep and the Assistant FAORep, the designated Focal Point from the government, a Technical Expert/Advisor, other national and international experts or technical officers from the relevant ministries, and FAO officers from the country office, SRO, RO or Headquarters, as needed. When there is no technical expertise in ComDev at the decentralized office level, following the subsidiarity principle the ComDev technical team in FAO Headquarters can provide direct country support for the CPF formulation and Quality Assurance process.

4.2 ADDRESSING COMDEV ISSUES WITHIN THE CPF

The CPF adopts a results-based management (RBM) approach that builds on FAO's comparative strengths and partnerships at national and international levels. It focuses on a set of **national priorities** identified by the local government that are within FAO's mandate and in which the organization has strong comparative advantages *vis-à-vis* other development partners.

These priority areas for FAO-government collaboration are then translated into a *Result Matrix* – organized as **impact, outcomes and outputs** – that describe FAO's strategic focus in the country and how those results will contribute to the corporate results at regional and organizational level. Finally the CPF outputs are further detailed – in terms of **activities, financial resources, and time lines** – in a biennial *Country Work Plan* encompassing all FAO undertakings in and with a particular country.

DEFINING THE CPF RESULTS

CPF Impact: It is the contribution that FAO is expected to make towards national priorities. It relates to the long-term development changes to which FAO contributes. It is either derived from the priorities or development goals stated in the national development plans or policies and strategies and/or from UNDAF.

CPF Outcome: It is defined as the measurable uptake of the FAO contribution to the achievement of the country development objectives and of the Regional and Organizational Results within the CPF time frame. It is presented with targets, indicators, assumptions and resource requirements.

CPF Output: A CPF output is defined as a significant and measurable result of FAO activities in the country, usually through projects and programmes that contribute to achieving the CPF outcome.

Source: FAO 2012d

Hence the *Results Matrix* is the main output of the CPF formulation process. It constitutes the reference tool to monitor the performance of FAO’s interventions in support of a country’s development objectives, is fully integrated with FAO’s Strategic Framework and is aligned to the national and UNDAF Results Frameworks.

Table 10. CPF Results Matrix Template

CPF Priority Area A: [Statement]			
CPF RESULTS	Indicators, baseline and target	Means and sources of verification	Assumptions
Outcome			
Outputs			
UNDAF outcome	[Statement]		
FAO Regional/ Organizational results	[Statement]		
Continues for other CPF priority areas [outcomes and outputs]			

Based on a preliminary communication assessment in the country, specific ComDev outputs and activities should be identified and included as part of the CPF *Result Matrix*. ComDev outputs can be included in the CPF Results Matrix either as deliverables - with targets and indicators - or only described in the narrative of the document, with information about the type of ComDev interventions that FAO intends to undertake to achieve the outcomes.

For example, in the framework of the CPF 2010–2015 jointly prepared by FAO and the Government of Bangladesh, relevant areas for ComDev contribution have been identified within the following outcomes:

- Improved knowledge of climate proofing agriculture
- Increased resilience of vulnerable populations to climate change and natural disasters
- Strengthening mainstream extension approach

SECTION 5

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF COMMUNICATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 TEN QUESTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND COMDEV PLANNING

5.2 INSTITUTIONAL, FINANCIAL AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS



5.1 TEN QUESTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND COMDEV PLANNING

The following are frequently asked questions about how rural development programmes and field projects can benefit from the application of Communication for Development.

1. How can communication make a difference in agriculture and rural development?

Communication relates directly to sustainable rural development: it is the means to guarantee people's participation and appropriation of the process of change. Facilitating access to agricultural information and opening up two-way communication channels between rural stakeholders – including institutions, producer organizations, smallholders and local communities – is key to establish a conducive environment where they can engage in constructive dialogue, learn from each other, collaborate on innovative solutions and eventually influence policy making. Informed decision making and active participation is fundamental for farmers to take the lead on development processes.

2. What is the value added of participatory Communication for Development compared to conventional communication and visibility efforts?

ComDev is not simply about dissemination of information, project outreach or media campaigns to change behaviors. It is first and foremost about involving rural communities in decision making, bridging knowledge gaps and enhancing social inclusion. Participatory communication techniques allow to identify and discuss local priorities, needs or sensitive issues, and help mediate between different perceptions before they turn into misunderstanding, conflicts or major problems. This in turn provides better insights to design media campaigns or produce communication materials. Encouraged and empowered to make their voices heard, rural stakeholders are eager to play an active role, get organized and mobilize local resources to bring about more sustained and meaningful change.

3. What types of development initiatives require ComDev support?

All rural development interventions, even those without a prominent information, communication or education dimension, can greatly benefit by the professional use of ComDev. As shown by past field experiences, ComDev can be successfully applied as a crosscutting approach in the rural sector to address various interrelated issues such as natural resources management, agricultural innovation, food security and nutrition,

climate adaptation, disaster risk management, emergency response¹⁸. Participatory communication methods, community media and ICTs can greatly maximize the impact of development interventions facilitating community mobilization and bridging the knowledge gaps that often hinder effective collaboration.

4. When should ComDev be applied in the project cycle?

The sooner the better. The strategic use of participatory communication methods and channels should be factored in from the very beginning of a project to ensure multi-stakeholder consultations, equitable access to relevant information, social dialogue and mobilization. A coherent set of ComDev outputs and activities should be identified during the formulation phase as a contribution to the overall project outcome, along with the related indicators and cost estimates. All these elements should be consistently embedded in the *Project Result Matrix*, *Workplan* and *Budget*.

5. Who should plan the ComDev activities?

ComDev planning is a specialized field and calls for people who, in addition to a knowledge of communication processes, are also familiar with participatory techniques, knowledge management and community development processes. Managers and decision-makers should have a basic understanding of ComDev functions in order to know why and when integrate ComDev in their projects. But the inputs for developing a full-fledged ComDev strategy or plan should be the responsibility of ComDev specialists.

6. Which is the most important phase in ComDev planning?

Even though multimedia materials such as videos, radio programmes, brochures, leaflets and posters, are usually the most visible, and often fanciest, results of a ComDev initiative, it is crucial to understand that their effectiveness is determined by a strategic thinking process. The ComDev strategy behind the selection of the suitable methods, channels and messages is in turn informed by a research phase, when data about rural audiences and media are collected, local information and knowledge gaps investigated, communication resources assessed and opportunities identified jointly with key stakeholders. This is the most important, and often the most neglected, of all phases in the ComDev process.

7. What does a ComDev strategy look like?

As illustrated in Section 3, a ComDev strategy provides the guiding framework for selecting the best communication approaches, messages, methods and channels in

¹⁸ For a showcase of experiences and lessons on ComDev applications to different agriculture and rural development projects see Module 7 of the *Communication for Rural Development Sourcebook* (FAO, 2014a).

response to local needs and priorities, building on existing rural knowledge and networks. Complemented by a concrete action plan, the strategy looks like a road map to keep field practitioners on track and focused on the objectives that ComDev activities will contribute to achieve.

8. How does a ComDev strategy become operational on the ground?

In order to facilitate stakeholder mobilization, commitment and control over communication activities, the ComDev strategy and plan are always validated and fine-tuned through local consultations. Local partners – including community leaders, producer associations, local institutions, development organizations and media – are the ones who take the lead in the implementation of ComDev activities, contributing their own human, technical and financial resources. This is the greatest guarantee for sustainability. Likewise, working with local communication and media professionals for the production of ComDev materials has tremendous benefits in terms of capacity strengthening, accountability and cost effectiveness.

9. What are the things to avoid when planning to use ComDev?

Embarking in media production without a proper strategy and well-defined objectives based on systematic research is a major mistake, too often done in the development context. As stated earlier, the effectiveness of communication materials depends on the key pieces of information gathered with stakeholders as much as on their technical quality, so it is essential that both tasks are carried out in a professional way. If not, there is a risk that final products do not reach the set objectives due to faulty information. In general focusing on the communication technology rather than on the overall communication process, is the wrong thing to do. Moreover, calling a ComDev specialist when the situation is already compromised by the lack of initial dialogue and a growing mistrust between the parties should be avoided. Pretending that s/he solves the problem within a tight deadline and without further consultations with local stakeholders, is definitely inappropriate.

10. What are the most important considerations in ComDev planning?

First of all, managers and decision-makers should make sure that a proper communication assessment is conducted and be ready to adapt the subsequent strategy to the local needs and cultural context. A crucial planning factor is ensuring that all key stakeholders' knowledge, opinions and perceptions are accounted, even, and especially, when they are not in line with those of the experts. Making the proper budget allocation is also very important, including an estimate for the communication assessment, the design and implementation of the needed strategy, and its overall evaluation.

5.2 INSTITUTIONAL, FINANCIAL AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

There is no one-size-fits-all recipe for successfully applying ComDev in rural development initiatives. Even though the design and implementation process remains consistently similar, each ComDev strategy is unique because it reflects the project goals, the stakeholders' needs and the specific context. The same applies to the implementation: every time a ComDev strategy moves forward, there are a range of issues and sometimes unexpected challenges to face. These may require to maneuver and make adjustments almost in real time, and this is why the in-depth knowledge and practical experience of a ComDev specialist will be of great help.

When implementing ComDev activities, some **institutional** considerations enter the arena:

- **Institutional arrangements.** What organization, department or unit will take the lead and be responsible for planning and implementing the ComDev strategy? Finding an institutional home and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the implementing partners is a very important step to undertake before launching the ComDev process. Most governments and rural institutions have departments or units mandated to provide information and communication services although their functions are usually limited to getting information out to the general public, often with insufficient skills and resources. For any ComDev effort to be viable and sustainable in the long run, the organizations involved should acknowledge and embed ComDev as a strategic area of work and perform it regularly, according to the clients' needs. Political and financial aspects can also influence institutional arrangements. For example, setting up a technical team to assume the ComDev function (which not necessarily means hiring new staff) may imply refocusing work priorities and changing the organization's approach to its stakeholders, as well as adjusting roles, responsibilities and budget.
- **Development of local capacities.** It is vital that partner institutions and organizations are able to design, plan and implement a ComDev strategy. While outsourcing can be an option to overcome the lack of in-house capacity, it is essential to tap local/national communication and media practitioners and invest in their capacity development. This can be done for example by seconding local professionals to work with international experts, or by organizing experiential learning workshops where participants can acquire the necessary skills as the

ComDev process unfolds¹⁹. Strengthening capacities allows local counterparts to give continuity, replicate independently or even scale up ComDev initiatives after the project's end. In the case of public institutions, there is a risk that trained personnel may leave their job looking for better incentives in the private sector. Unfortunately, there is no easy fix to this issue, unless governments recognize the value of having qualified professionals and are able to provide competitive remuneration.

- **Value of communication processes vs. products.** Many development managers and decision makers unfortunately pay little attention to communication as a social process, while focusing on more tangible outputs. Therefore they tend to consider strategy design not so highly as media and communication materials. For example, a full-fledge strategy presenting relevant data and logical options to use communication for reducing school drop-out is likely to be less appealing to decision-makers than a stand-alone website, video or mobile app about the subject. Yet it should be clear that communication products of this kind cannot guarantee significant results per se, unless they are part of a comprehensive strategy carefully designed to address the root causes of a development issue.
- **Synchronicity.** Ramirez and Quarry (2004) call this aspect “readiness”: making sure that all various actors and components of a development initiative are coordinated to avoid gaps and ensure timely delivery of project services and activities. For example a massive communication campaign was launched by the Ministry of Environment of a Latin American country to improve the quality and cleanliness of the beaches. The campaign's call to action was inducing people to throw the garbage in the trash bin and not in the sand. It did not work simply because most beaches had no trash bins, as it was the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism to install and maintain them. This shows how coordination among all involved actors is a precondition for the effective implementation of any communication strategy.

From the financial point of view, important issues to be considered are:

- **Designated budget lines.** A dedicated budget line should always be included during project formulation to ensure that the commitment to supporting ComDev activities, as an integral contribution to the overall project outcome, is matched

¹⁹ The *Communication for Rural Development Sourcebook* (FAO, 2014a) describes how to organize and deliver well-tailored capacity development in ComDev (see Section 2 of Module 4).

by adequate finance. Making a proper estimate of the inputs needed and the costs involved for planning and implementing ComDev activities is possible only after assessing the communication capacities and resources available in the project area. As a general rule, ComDev activities should be assigned between 7 percent and 10 percent of the total project funds.

- **Local resource mobilization.** The assessment of existing communication capacities and resources will prove useful also to identify local financial assets, concrete opportunities for cost sharing and potential in-kind contributions (e.g. office space, staff time, equipment, technical expertise) by local individuals, development agents, governmental and non-state organizations, including the private sector. This will secure the buy-in of local stakeholders and encourage them to take control over the ComDev process not only in terms of decision making, but also of management responsibilities.

Finally, a couple of points related to the **policy** dimension:

- **Enabling policy framework.** The successful application of a people-centred approach like ComDev greatly depends on the wider policy environment. Where national policies guarantee the participation of rural women and men in development processes there are certainly more chances to get the support of decision makers for more inclusive, accountable and participatory rural communication services. For example, telecommunication policies and regulatory frameworks play a key role in reducing inequalities around affordable access to ICTs in rural areas or facilitating the survival of community broadcasters through a legal recognition and reduced fees for licensing or spectrum allocation. To achieve long-term sustainability, ComDev should also be embedded in agricultural and rural development policies as a means to increase the responsiveness and accountability of research and extension services.
- **Avoiding political interference.** Sometimes political interests can either prevent addressing controversial issues or try to ensure a “friendly” treatment of particular issues close to the government agenda. Political interferences can also be caused by tensions between the central government and local entities: rural development programmes linked to decentralization reforms are often subject to this risk. As long as the overall development and communication goals are not being affected, negotiating between different positions is a viable and recommended solution.

GLOSSARY

Communication for Development (ComDev) is the systematic use of participatory communication methods and tools to facilitate access to information, knowledge sharing and the active participation of the stakeholders involved in a development initiative.

ComDev planning in the project cycle is a participatory process through which a set of ComDev outputs and activities are identified as contribution to the overall project outcome and consistently embedded in the *Project Result Matrix*, *Workplan* and *Budget*.

ComDev strategy is an integrated set of communication objectives, approaches, messages and channels tailored on stakeholder's needs and priorities. It sets the lines of action that will bring stakeholders to jointly address communication-related issues and move forward to accomplish common goals.

ComDev plan is a tool to specify, schedule activities and products, and allocate resources to make a ComDev strategy operational on the ground. The ComDev plan has to be fine-tuned with local stakeholders to facilitate their mobilization, commitment and control over communication activities.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) is a tool used by FAO to define medium-term responses to the needs of member countries in pursuit of national development objectives. CPF aims to increase the impact and effectiveness of FAO technical assistance consistently with its overall Strategic Framework, regional priorities and global development goals.

Local communication plans are tools for participatory planning and decision making allowing various stakeholders to jointly prioritize local needs, set common goals and mobilize technical, financial and social resources for the implementation of communication activities.

Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is an analytical and planning method that assists in defining the scope and strategy of a project through a logical hierarchy of objectives, means to achieve those objectives, implementation arrangements and resources.

Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) is a field research method that uses participatory techniques to generate information about and with communication stakeholders as a basis to formulate ComDev initiatives that meet their needs, reflect their perspectives, and build ownership of and commitment to the project.

ANNEX 1. DEFINITION OF THE FAO PROJECT CYCLE PHASES

1. Identification

Involves the preliminary analysis of project relevance, feasibility and prospects for sustainability. It is closely linked to the formulation phase, within the continuum between analysis and planning processes. Its mainstay is the development of a *Concept Note*.

2. Formulation

Consists of a series of activities related to the review and agreement on the expected results, design and implementation modalities of the project, including with partners. It requires a series of analyses to ensure that the project is relevant, feasible and sustainable. The output is the *Project Document*.

3. Appraisal and Approval

Covers the required corporate technical reviews and quality assurance process that enable management to provide final approval to the project. It applies to all projects regardless of their funding source; only activities at global level (publication, conferences, etc) do not follow these procedures.

4. Implementation and Monitoring

Covers the implementation of the planned activities. The outputs and outcome should be managed for and monitored on the basis of the Results Matrix, workplan, score card system and budget.

5. Evaluation

Concerns the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results, as part of the overall accountability and oversight system. Evaluation is an independent contribution to, and integral part of the programme and project cycle and builds on the quality of formulation of results, logical framework and monitoring data.

6. Closure

The principal aim of project closure is to wind up technical, operational and/or administrative actions by the NTE date and so inform all parties: recipient country, funding source(s), and concerned FAO unit(s).

ANNEX 2. CORE ELEMENTS OF THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

IMPACT: the longer term positive change that the project will contribute to by addressing a major undesired situation or development issue (e.g. increased productivity and income).

OUTCOME: the short and medium-term positive effects of the project, as a contribution to the overall goal, that occur after the achievement of project outputs.

OUTPUTS: measurable end results, products and services, deriving from the completion of project activities. Can be quantitative (e.g. number of workshops held) or qualitative, intangible results (e.g. extent to which participants learned and use communication skills in their fieldwork).

ACTIVITIES: tasks/actions to be performed in order to produce specific project outputs. Can include delivery of a training workshop, production of audiovisual materials, etc.

INPUTS: financial, human, material and information resources (such as money, equipment, personnel, training facilities) necessary to carry out the project activities.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS: variables outside the control of the project management, that may determine the success or failure of the project.

INDICATORS: clearly verifiable and measurable checkpoints used for monitoring or assessing project components (outcome, outputs, activities) in terms of quantity, quality and time.

MEANS OF VERIFICATION: data sources and evidence required to measure the indicators. Like the indicators themselves they should be identified and specified in advance.

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Communication for Development (ComDev) is a participatory approach that integrates community media, low-cost ICTs, mobile phones and other communication tools to facilitate access to information, knowledge sharing and social dialogue. Well-planned and managed ComDev activities are crucial to ensure stakeholder engagement, and should be considered in project design, in order to enhance impact and ownership of rural development initiatives.

The *Communication for Rural Development Guidelines for Planning and Project Formulation* provide development planners with practical orientation on how to plan and monitor ComDev activities as part of the project cycle, so that overall effectiveness and sustainability may be improved.

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