



Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M)

Interregional analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of policies, institutions and processes for SARD in mountain regions

1. Introduction

The first priority and major activity of the Project (2005–2007) for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M) has been to “*assess the strengths and weaknesses of mountain policies, including social, economic, institutional and environmental aspects, in relation to sustainable agriculture and rural development principles.*”

In partnership with the SARD-M Project Regional Focal Points and other implementing partners¹, rapid assessments of SARD-M policies were conducted in the following regions and countries²:

- 1) **Andes:** Colombia, Ecuador, Peru
- 2) **Carpathian Mountains:** *Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine*
- 3) **Central America:** Costa Rica, Nicaragua
- 4) **Hindu Kush-Himalayas:** Bhutan, China (Sichuan), India (Sikkim), Nepal
- 5) **Mediterranean Basin:** Lebanon, Morocco
- 6) **South East Europe:** *Albania, Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

This paper provides an interregional analysis of the major findings of rapid SARD-M policy assessments and outlines principal areas of concern that need to be addressed for the development of improved policy packages and institutional processes for SARD in mountain regions. It also identifies key issues that will be important to address in the future.

The participants in the **Third Meeting of the Adelboden Group**, held in FAO headquarters on 1 -3 October 2007 globally **endorsed the assessments findings**, in particular the key principles for improved policy packages and institutional processes for SARD in mountain regions, and the major issues to address in the future.

¹ Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development (BFS) in South East Europe; International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-IAMB) in the Mediterranean Basin; Global Mountain Program (GMP) in collaboration with CONDESAN based at the International Potato Centre (CIP) in the Andes; International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas; Programme for Sustainable Agriculture in the Hillside of Central America (PASOLAC) in Central America; United Nations Environment Programme – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP-ISCC) in the Carpathian Mountains.

² The results of the assessments in the countries and region in italics have not been included in this interregional analysis due to delays in their completion and the fact that this document needed to be discussed for validation during the Third Meeting of the Adelboden Group held on 1 -3 October 2007 .

2. General approach of the SARD-M rapid policy assessments

The overall purpose is to **stimulate thought and actions** of all concerned stakeholders at the country and regional levels to **improve policy, institutions and processes for SARD-M**.

SARD-M rapid policy assessments provide an **understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of various policies related to SARD in mountain regions, recommendations and proposals for follow-up activities** that can help to improve the existing situation. The assessments do not aim to conduct an in-depth analysis of policies in a specific sector, but to try to provide more of a **cross-sectoral understanding**.

As the subject area of SARD is vast and that the SARD-M policy assessments were to be conducted in a variety of countries and contexts, it was deemed important to develop **a general framework**³ (see Annex 1) that would ensure that each of the assessments examined a common set of issues.

Key characteristics of the SARD-M policy approach and assessments include:

- 1) **Sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD):** Agriculture and rural development are sustainable when they are ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just and culturally appropriate. SARD addresses not only agriculture but also natural resources, the environment, health, as well as social, institutional and economic sectors. Policies for SARD must therefore have a **holistic vision** and **cross-sectoral approach**.
- 2) **Policies, institutions, and processes:** The successes and failures of policies rely not only on the contents of the policies themselves, but also on the context of how policies are developed and implemented. The SARD-M policy assessments place a **particular emphasis on examining the processes and institutions** that are involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies.
- 3) **Mountain specificities:** Mountain regions have **specific qualities or specificities** that characterize them. Although they face a number of **constraints** (i.e. inaccessibility, fragility, marginality), they have a **diversity** of cultures, resource bases and environmental conditions that provide **potentials** for products and activities that have a comparative advantage. They also provide significant contributions to other regions (lowlands). The assessments examine how the various potentialities and diversities can **be harnessed** to promote sustainable development.
- 4) **Participatory and qualitative approach:** The analyses are qualitative in nature and utilize a participatory approach at every step of the process. It makes use of literature reviews, surveys and interviews with key informants, from both government and civil society⁴ at the centralized and decentralized levels. Multi-stakeholder workshops at decentralised and/or national levels are also held to gather information and opinions. Based on the outputs of the country assessments, regional workshops gathering representatives from countries sharing the mountain range are organized to discuss and validate the assessment findings, and identify proposals for follow-up activities.

To ensure a greater ownership and incentive to act upon proposed follow-up activities, **entry points**, focussing on a priority or problematic issue, are selected in consultation with stakeholders. Nevertheless, the SARD-M policy assessments also examine the **relevant economic, social, environmental and institutional policies** related to the entry point and to other related issues to bring about a cross-sectoral understanding.

³ A practical guide on how to conduct a rapid assessment of SARD-M policies, institutions and processes, including examples of assessment processes and questionnaires utilized by the project partners is posted on the SARD-M Project website: <http://www.fao.org/sard/en/sardm/Communi/2666/index.html>.

⁴ Representatives from the Major Groups recognized in Agenda 21, including women, children and youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological communities, farmers.

Examples of usages of entry points

Andes

Water was identified by local populations as an issue of extreme importance in the Andean region and the assessment focussed its attention on "integrated natural resources management policies for SARD". The assessments examined the major agricultural development, environmental management, water and forest policies.

Carpathians

The Carpathian Convention is a framework type convention pursuing a comprehensive policy and cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians. The SARD-M policy assessments contributed to its Article 7, dedicated to Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, by examining the various policies, institutions and processes for agriculture, forestry and rural development.

3. Main interregional commonalities of SARD-M policy assessment findings

The main commonalities regarding policies, institutions and processes for SARD-M that were mentioned⁵ in the regional syntheses are listed below⁶. To better highlight and add some context to the issues raised, a number of points mentioned in the regional reports have been included to act as a sort of "testimonial" from the various regions.

Policies

Lack of strategies for sustainable development in mountain regions

The development of policies for sustainable development requires a **long-term vision** and a **holistic approach** that tries to achieve a balance between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. For the most part, policies tend to be developed on a short-term basis and there is a general lack of strategies and integrated approach to policies.

- *Hindu Kush-Himalaya: There is a strong felt need for an integrated framework for SARD-M policy-programme formulation / promotion / evaluation. This means a more systematic approach to policy formulation rather than depending on largely ad-hoc approaches.*
- *Mediterranean: Frequently, sectorality is identified as a main policy constraint and efforts should be made to create linkages and synergies with other ongoing policies.*

Even when policy frameworks for sustainable development or SARD exist, specific strategies or approaches for mountain regions have not been developed.

- *Mediterranean: Mediterranean countries do not have specific governmental strategies for Sustainable Development or SARD in mountain areas. This is not necessarily synonymous with a lack of concern for the sustainable development of mountain regions.*

Political stability was also mentioned as an issue in a couple of regions. If a country experiences frequent changes in government, it is difficult to have coherent policies as the vision and priorities of government plans and programmes can change.

⁵ Commonalities identified were issues that were mentioned in four or five of the regions where policy assessments have been conducted.

⁶ See regional syntheses on the Project website: <http://www.fao.org/sard/en/sardm/Communi/620/index.html>

- *Central America: Political stability is being increasingly recognized as a factor in the policy management cycle, because party-political decisions have repercussions on governmental plans and programmes.*

Little consideration of mountain specificities in policies for SARD partly due to low awareness of the importance of mountains

- The **specificities of mountains** are **often not taken into consideration** during the design and implementation of policies. Policies that are designed for lowland regions are not necessarily compatible to the socio-economic and environmental situation existing in mountain regions.
 - *Central America: No specific policies exist for mountains in any of the Central American countries despite the fact that it is a region with a marked predominance of mountain zones.*
 - *Hindu Kush-Himalaya: Practically all the countries (or their focused areas) have significantly bypassed the concern that the understanding and adaptation to imperatives of mountain specificities, bio-physical and social conditions of mountain areas is a key to facilitate SARD-M. This is consequence of missing mountain perspectives in designing and implementing development interventions. The areas and sectors which are exceptions to this trend have shown better performance in terms of addressing SARD-M.*
- The failure to take into account mountain specificities in policies can be associated with the **low level of awareness** of policy and decision makers regarding the importance and significance of mountain regions, its people and to its neighbours. At the same time, there is a general lack of awareness by local people, civil society and decision-makers of existing policies affecting mountain resources.
 - *Central America: Identify and make the potentials of hillsides visible by supporting economic appraisals and disseminating the results to decision-makers at all levels and to the hillside dwellers' own organizations.*
- The key question to be addressed in the countries is **whether** it is necessary to have **a specific policy for mountains** or whether **important aspects** of them should be **incorporated into present and future policies** of relevance to SARD-M. The two approaches exist, but there is a greater tendency to try to incorporate mountain issues into national policies.

Policies supporting value-added production and services in mountain regions essential for sustainable agriculture and rural development

Policies were criticized for their weak focus on **mountain livelihood issues**. A strong need was felt for policies that promoted **diversification and integration of economic activities**, such as eco-tourism, mountain quality products, value-added production, etc. Such activities can also contribute to the valorisation of the cultural heritage of mountain populations.

- *Mediterranean: Policies are generally criticized for not properly addressing the livelihoods diversity and vulnerability of mountain people...This leads to unequal access to opportunities by mountain communities and vulnerable groups.*
- *Carpathians: Small business development is often linked to rural tourism which offers a route to eco-farming and conservation because a high quality environment is a precondition for the successful development of quality products businesses.*

However, upland areas which are typically difficult to access have a harder time in accessing markets in lowland and urban areas. **Improved access to markets and services** found in these areas as well as the **promotion of public-private partnerships** were seen to be important to improve the socio-economic condition of mountain populations.

- *Hindu Kush-Himalayas: Effective and equitable market links (especially with lowland economy) should get high priority to ensure gains of development for the mountain people...Public-private complementarities in promoting SARD-M should be explored and harnessed.*
- *Mediterranean: Policies should support the strengthening of the linkages that connect uplands to lowlands and well-serviced areas.*

Institutions

Inadequate institutional capacities for participatory SARD-M policy formulation and implementation

The issue of **capacity building** was something that came out strongly. This issue is particularly important for institutions in mountainous regions, which tend to be more isolated and marginalized from the national development and policy processes.

In particular, it is felt that there is a lack of competencies of governmental staffs and local stakeholders about:

- program implementation using appropriate participatory mechanisms
 - taking into consideration the needs of mountain people
 - monitoring and evaluation
 - decentralization and local development
- *Mediterranean: Governmental institutions, when it comes to mechanisms for the implementation of policies for decentralization, local development and civil society participation, often appear as being unprepared and face strong constraints, such as the lack of financial power, inadequate administrative capacities, weak interaction with local stakeholders.*

Weak coordination of institutions at the national level

The coordination of institutions at the national level was felt to be weak and seen as a reason for why policies also tend to be developed sectorally. Better coordination is needed to achieve a **greater complementarity and coherence between policies** developed in various sectors related to SARD-M.

- *Andes: Change the institutions' vision from sectoral to comprehensive territorial development through the incorporation of a new territorial vision in the programs, projects and plans that institutions implement and place a priority on budgetary allocations for multisectoral funds for SARD.*

Need for cooperation at the transnational level

Mountain ranges often act as natural borders and are therefore typically shared between countries. At the same time, mountains areas in one country can also, for example, be a major source of water for another country further downstream. Such inherent interlinkages therefore require transnational policies. The need to strengthen transnational institutional coordination is thus an issue of concern.

- *Andes: Strengthen public coordination mechanisms between the Andean countries.*

Processes

Inadequate knowledge management, exchange of information and networking regarding mountain regions

One of the major problems identified regarding policy processes for SARD-M is that there is a **lack of basic information and data about mountains**. While socio-economic data exists at the national level, it is often not aggregated to take into account mountain regions. Having access to better organization of data and creation of databases to facilitate access to information is seen as important to help policymakers make informed decisions taking into account mountain specificities. Better communication of mountain areas data can also contribute to raise awareness of the issues facing the people of these regions and facilitate advocacy and lobbying by civil society.

- *Hindu Kush-Himalaya: Creation of comprehensive and well-analysed database and systematic studies for sound and integrated policy making for SARD-M.*

Some of the areas in which databases need to be built-up include information on:

- local/indigenous knowledge
- potentials of mountain areas
- inventory of local institutions dealing with mountains issues
- database of policies, programmes and projects being implemented
- state of rural families living on mountain zones.

The **exchange of information and networking within and between countries**, through national and regional platforms, was also cited as important to facilitate the **exchange of policies, knowledge and experiences** regarding agriculture and rural development in mountain regions.

- *Central America: The promotion of linkages between networks, alliances and regional initiatives of national and local stakeholders to share their experiences on agriculture and rural development must be fostered, because it makes policy management stronger and more flexible*
- *Mediterranean: In Algeria, SARD-related strategies and mechanisms impacting mountain territories are in place and their functioning should thus be investigated to understand the possibility of transferring or adapting them to other contexts.*

Limited participation in policy formulation

The formulation of policies tends to be conducted in a top-down manner with a **weak participation of local populations and diverse stakeholders at all levels**. As policies for SARD-M need to take into account the specificities of mountain areas and that data concerning mountain regions tends to be lacking, participation of mountain communities in policy formulation is all the more important to ensure better adaptation of policies to mountain situations.

- *Mediterranean: A weak participation of mountain communities in specific policy steps frequently emerges as a limitation. People participation often remains limited to project frameworks and does not become a structural part of policy processes nor result in the empowerment of mountain communities. Policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation should involve communities in a more systematic and substantial way.*

Mountain populations tend to be less aware of their rights and have weaker capacities of advocacy and skills to participate in policy formulation.

Weak monitoring and evaluation of policies

Weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of the impacts that policies have in mountain regions and of the policy implementation processes are a general issue of concern. It would facilitate the making of adjustments to policies and improve policy implementation processes.

- *Central America: There is no systematic analysis of SARD-M laws and policies in Central America to gauge their positive or negative effects. The system for monitoring and evaluation of policies is still very weak in both countries. (Costa Rica and Nicaragua)*

While this issue can be seen as a problem for SARD policies in general, the issue becomes more problematic in mountain regions. Policies which are poorly adapted to the bio-physical conditions of mountain areas can have highly negative impacts on the environment and livelihoods of mountain populations.

Key principles for improved policy packages and institutional processes for SARD in mountain regions

Based on the interregional commonalities, the following **key interrelated and interdependent principles** can be identified as being important for the development of improved policy packages and institutional processes for SARD-M.

Policies	Institutions	Processes
Development of sustainable agriculture and rural development strategies which integrates into policies the specificities of mountain regions	Adaptation of institutional capacities to facilitate participatory SARD-M policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation	Knowledge management, exchange of information and networking regarding mountain regions
Raising awareness of mountain specificities	Coordination of institutions at the national level through appropriate institutional arrangements	Participation in policy formulation
Development of policies that support value-added production and services in mountain regions essential for sustainable mountain development	Cooperation at the transnational level through appropriate institutional arrangements	Monitoring and evaluation of policies

The principles highlighted in bold in the above table indicate those which are more specific to mountain regions.

The recommendations and key messages on policies, institutions and processes for SARD in mountain regions included in the Statement of the Adelboden Group released on 3 October 2007⁷ highly converge with the above principles:

⁷ See the full document in the SARD-M Project website: <http://www.fao.org/sard/en/sardm/about/651/index.html>

The members of the Adelboden Group, on the occasion of their Third Meeting in Rome, 1-3 October 2007, express their serious concern and fully endorse the following recommendations:

Policies

- A long-term vision and holistic approaches should be adopted by governments and their development partners, in order to remedy the present common lack of strategies and integrated approach to policies for SARD in mountain regions;
- higher priority should be given to mountain issues in national, regional and global policy-making, either through incorporating mountain-specific requirements into general policies or through specific mountain policies;
- awareness of mountain specificities and of possible impacts of current policies on mountains needs to be improved among policy-makers and civil society partners;
- economic diversification as well as value-added production and services need to be fostered, with the objective of improving employment and incomes;
- better integration of mountain economic activities through improved access to markets and the promotion of public-private partnerships must be encouraged;
- securing long-term land tenure for mountain agriculturalists, including for women-headed households, is a fundamental prerequisite for SARD-M;
- higher priority should be given to indigenous traditional knowledge in order to protect mountain environments and promote SARD-M.

Institutions and processes

- The institutional capacity for SARD-M policy formulation and implementation as well as for policy coordination should be improved at the national level to achieve better complementarity and coherence between policies;
- transnational approaches to SARD-M should be fostered at the regional level, for instance in the context of regional mountain conventions, such as the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention;
- knowledge generation and management, information sharing and networking need to be rapidly developed at all levels;
- participation of civil society in policy formulation should be ensured at all levels;
- the capacities of all stakeholders should be strengthened to ensure that they can participate effectively in all policy formulation and implementation processes;
- the evaluation and monitoring of mountain-relevant policies as well as their implementation should be systematic.

4. Key issues for the future

The following outlines key issues of importance identified in the SARD-M policy assessment reports and discussions during regional workshops that mountain stakeholders feel are important to address in more detail in the future.

The members of the Third Meeting of the Adelboden Group highlighted that the possible **impact of climate change** on the following key global issues needs to be taken into consideration as a cross-cutting issue. The **valorisation of positive externalities as well as migration/urban-rural linkages** were particularly stressed as important and given a **high priority**.

Valorisation of positive externalities, such as environmental externalities (Andes; Carpathians)

Most people have an idea of what the positive externalities of mountain economies are, though they may not use economic language to describe them. Clean water, nature, places to enjoy hiking, traditional communities and ways of life - these are some of the most widely recognised. Sustainable development of mountain areas ensures adequate supplies of water, environmental stability, conservation of biodiversity, rural-urban population balance, specific products and culture, etc. The goods and services that mountains provide are often not taken into account by the market and are known as positive externalities.

External economic and environmental pressures will lead to radical change in the distinctive characteristics and values of mountains unless appropriate policies are in place to ensure the continued supply of externalities. **Positive externalities can help communities survive; without communities many of the positive externalities will not survive.**

The valorisation of positive externalities, through mechanisms such as payments for environmental services, is thus an issue that requires further examination and actions.

- *Carpathians: Payment for environmental services should be developed and implemented (when they exist).*
- *Andes: Design appropriate compensation policies and incentives and alternatives.*

Rural-urban migration (Mediterranean region; Hindu Kush-Himalayas)

While rural-urban migration has the negative effects outlined below, migration can also have positive effects for sustainable mountain development by alleviating population pressures on the land and resources and provide an opportunity for mountain households to earn income through employment in urban areas. The controlling of rural-urban migration is thus a policy issue of importance as it affects the overall sustainable development of the country.

- Pressures on urban areas

As the number of people who migrate increase, pressures are placed on urban infrastructure and can lead to chaotic urban sprawl. This will create increasing major challenges regarding urban poverty and unemployment.

In Lebanon, annual urban growth rate in the next 20 years is expected to grow from 3.5% to 7%.

In Sichuan (China), rural to urban migration has grown from 0.1 million people in 1985 to 16.4 million in 2005.

- Abandonment of rural mountain areas

As young and working age people tend to migrate to urban areas to find employment, the women, children and elderly tend to be left behind. This leads to the **"feminization of agriculture"** and **"hollowization of rural areas"**. In Sichuan, the problem has become so acute that local officials estimate a sharp drop in agriculture production within two or three years.

- *Mediterranean: Policies for controlling migration flows are needed since these have strong impacts on mountain natural resources and on long term economic trends.*

Gender and equity issues (Hindu Kush Himalaya; Mediterranean region)

In theory SARD-M policies should take gender and equity issues into consideration, but they tend to get sidetracked partly due to narrow growth-oriented focus of the interventions.

Mountain populations in general tend to have a weaker voice and capacities which can marginalize them from development and policy processes, thus generating or reinforcing inequity.

In particular, it has been highlighted that few policies were sensitive to gender issues despite the fact that women play a significant role in mountain societies by maintaining mountain families, lands and livelihoods. Specific attention needs to be paid to strengthening their ideas, talents and knowledge, to help them at improving their life conditions and social status and thus promote gender equity among mountain people.

- *Peru (PNTD): Compared to the rest of Peruvian society, the mountain communities are marginalized and ignored by strategies developed at the national level. These conditions are partially the result of the absence of a clear political agenda for small farmers, and partially the result of the perception that rural communities are a synonym for "underdevelopment".*
- *Peru (PNTD): In spite of their ecological and socio-economic importance, women, shepherds, youth and other vulnerable groups are still the least represented stakeholder in the process of territorial development. Yet, women are key actors for interventions on nutrition, education and health for the children. Women have clear roles in the management of chacra and flocks, contributing to the conservation and selection of seed, taking care of the productions for exchange or sale and of the transmission of the knowledge.*

Cultural heritage of mountain regions (Andes; Hindu Kush-Himalaya; Mediterranean region)

With contemporary globalization, distinct patterns of change are today visible in the mountain regions. This results in a rapid transformation in social values and traditional perceptions that threatens the diverse and unique cultural heritage of mountains.

Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage refer to a whole way of life from which a social order is communicated. Their traditional knowledge, systems and practices are well-adapted to mountain environments and can serve as an appropriate basis for sustainable natural resources management. They have potentials to achieve SARD in mountain regions through activities such as the production of handicrafts, maintenance of remarkable sites and landscapes that can be the basis for economic valorisation.

- *Mediterranean: Policy formulation should take into consideration the cultural heritage of mountain communities and their wealth of knowledge in order to valorise mountain specificities which contribute to improving mountain livelihoods in a sustainable way.*
- *Hindu Kush-Himalaya: Forest use in Bhutan forms an integral part of farming systems and is linked with traditional practice and culture. However, such traditional and customary regulations are weakening, leading to unsustainable use.*
- *Peru (PNTD): A Conservationist Association brings together inhabitants of different communities who are interested in bio-diversity and local conservation knowledge. Their proposal is interesting as it valorises the territory itself, its products and endogenous development paths.*



Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions

Framework for a rapid assessment of policies for SARD in Mountain Regions

SARD-M Project and SARD-M policy assessments

The Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M) in line with its objective of ***"strengthening mountain populations' livelihoods with improved policies for sustainable agriculture and rural development"***, is developing and implementing a framework for a rapid assessment of policies for SARD in mountain regions.

The overall purpose is to provide an **understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of various policies related to SARD in mountain regions.**

In light of the specific qualities or specificities that characterize mountain areas, the assessments try to bring about a better understanding of how the SARD framework is applicable to mountain regions and examine the types of **policies and policy packages, institutions and processes** that are important to achieve SARD in mountain areas, with attention being paid to **how the comparative advantages of mountains can be harnessed** to promote development in a sustainable manner.

Expected output

The assessments aim to have common exit points that can facilitate **comparison across regions:**

- **identification of problematic areas and priority issues** that are facing a region;
- **evaluation of the overall strengths and weaknesses** of SARD-M policies, making sure that the policies examined provide a balanced coverage of social, economic and environmental pillars;
- **general recommendations** of things that need to be improved in the policies, the processes and the institutions involved in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies;
- **proposals for concrete action-oriented follow-up activities** that meets the demand existing in the assessed region.

Targets

Middle-level practitioners and trainers involved in SARD-M policy making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, from:

- **governments**, at national and decentralised levels (i.e. ministries of agriculture, environment, rural development, finances...);
- **civil society organisations**, including local authorities.

Approach

The purpose of the framework is to offer some **basic guidelines and references** that can assist in the assessments of SARD-M policies.

Given that SARD requires an integration of policies across sectors, the aim of the assessments is not to conduct an in-depth analysis of policies in a specific sector, but to try to provide more of a **global overview** and **cross-sectoral understanding** of the strengths and weaknesses of policies for SARD.

The assessments are to be conducted within a **short period of time** and meant to be an exercise of reflection that provides **main elements** for a diagnostic of the current strengths and weaknesses of SARD-M policies.

As the success and failures of policies rely not only on the contents of the policies themselves, but also on the context of how they are developed and implemented, the SARD-M policy assessments place a **particular emphasis on examining the processes and institutions** that are involved in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies.

Some tools for a participatory process:

As the assessments are to be more of a qualitative study, **literature reviews and interviews** of key informants, from both **government and civil society** in diverse sectors related to SARD, conducted in an **iterative** manner, are the main tools utilised for the assessments.

The holding of **multi-stakeholder workshops at decentralised and/or national levels** is an extremely useful tool to gather information and opinions on how well policies are working on the ground and to provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the processes involved in the formulation implementation and evaluation of policies for SARD-M and how well the various institutions involved in these activities interact with one another.

Main steps:

Step 1. Background information of the country under study

Describes the important issues facing agriculture and rural development in the country and the situation of those living in mountain areas. It identifies the **problematic or priority issues** and the **role and importance of mountains and their specificities** (i.e. potentials, constraints and diversity).

Step 2. Selection of an entry point for SARD-M policy assessments

Simplifies and focalizes the analysis of SARD-M policies through the identification of a problematic or priority issue (i.e., entry point) which will preferably be selected **in consultation with stakeholders**.

Step 3. Outline of governance structure and institutional setting for SARD-M policies

Provides a general understanding of the governance system and institutional setting that exists for SARD-M policies in the country.

- Basic description of political history and system of governance
- Identification of major ministries responsible for SARD-M policies, their roles and interactions at various levels of governance
- Identification of major civil society organizations involved in SARD-M policy formulation and implementation

Step 4. Identification of policy frameworks and policies for sustainable development and SARD in mountain regions

Provides a broad overview on strategies and policies impacting on SARD in mountain regions, i.e.:

- policy frameworks and strategies that exist for sustainable development and SARD-M;
- major economic, social, environmental and institutional policies related to entry point of analysis.

Step 5. Examination of the impact and perceptions of policies for SARD in mountain areas

Examines the impacts that policies for SARD have on mountain regions and the perceptions that people have of policies under study in order to better understand their effectiveness and relevance.

- What are the **objectives of the policies** under study and do they address the issues facing the country at the national, sub-national and local levels taking into account the **specificities of mountains** and linkages between lowlands and uplands?
- What kind of positive or negative impacts do the policies being studied have on SARD? i.e. What are the opinions of stakeholders on the pertinence of policies? Do they feel that they are working and what are the reasons? Are there policy incoherencies or contradictions?
- Do the existing policies **create inequities**?

Step 6. Effects that existing institutions and policy processes have on policies for SARD-M

Examines how the existing institutions and policy formulation and implementation processes have influenced the positive and negative impacts of policies identified in step 5.

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions at the national, regional, and local levels responsible for formulating and implementing SARD-M policies?
- What kind of effects the existing policy formulation and implementation processes (i.e. political, participatory, institutional arrangements and knowledge management procedures, and financial mobilization processes) have had on the effectiveness and/or failure of policies for SARD in mountain areas?
- Do the policies address mountain specificities during the formulation, implementation and evaluation processes and if not, why?

Step 7. Summary of findings (e.g. SWOT analysis), recommendations and proposals for follow-up activities.

Some references

The development of this framework has drawn heavily from the work conducted by:

- **FAO** in policy issues related to SARD (i.e. [Guidelines for the integration of sustainable agriculture and rural development into agricultural policies](http://www.fao.org/docrep/w7541E/w7541e00.htm). FAO agricultural policy and economic development series 4. written by Hardaker, J. Brian, Rome: FAO. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w7541E/w7541e00.htm>);
- **OECD** Development Assistance Committee (i.e. OECD DAC. – 2001 - The DAC Guidelines: Strategies for Sustainable Development. OECD: Paris. http://www.oecd.org/document/40/0,2340,en_2649_201185_2670312_1_1_1_1,00.html);
- **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)** in establishing guidelines for the development of national strategies for sustainable development (i.e. UNDESA – 2002 - Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium. Background Paper No. 13 (DESA/DSD/PC2/BP13). http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/nsds_guidance.pdf

For more information

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