Practice of Integrated Rural Development (PRIDE)

A guide for participatory planning in Hungary

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January 2005
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Foreword

In the past years Hungarian institutions have gained experience with rural development planning processes involving local municipalities, economic and social stakeholders. For further capacity building the Dutch and Hungarian government jointly initiated the PRIDE-H Project. Hungarian and Dutch partners jointly guided a pilot planning process. This multi-annual partnership also helped us acquire well-tested planning techniques and methodologies that are based on EU principles.

This long-running experience has shown us that Dutch experts understand and sense the specific problems of Hungarian rural communities; even to the point of the most sensitive issues, they have assisted us in Europeanising our domestic rural development. Due to Hungary’s accession to the EU, the demand for sustainable rural development together with accelerating development have emerged in the rural areas. For both – seemingly contradictory – aims, the most important tool is planning, which has to be followed by a much longer-lasting participatory implementation process. The PRIDE methodology and tools have proved their worth in the micro-regions during the review of agricultural and rural development programmes.

This manual will be useful for all those who take part in and take responsibility for building the future, whether it be in villages or towns, in the interest of civil society organisations or entrepreneurs, as a representative of a municipality or a minority organisation. I particularly recommend this manual for rural development groups who are interested in the recently launched LEADER+ training programme. By applying the various steps as detailed in this manual to guide the project, locally initiated, long-term, integrated micro-regional rural development programming can be successfully put into practice in other regions as well.

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Acknowledgements

In the wider context of a globalising economy, integrated rural development is a challenge for many European countries. Critical to development is the willingness of people to work together. Sharing knowledge and experiences in active partnerships between residents, specialists and administrators is essential for triggering change in rural regions. Working together can result in new dynamics, creativity, action and experiments. But cooperation does not come out of the blue. Often, it proves to be a difficult process of ups and downs, with challenges and disappointments. This can be caused by many factors. Different expectations, lack of mutual trust or team spirit, disappointment about initial activities that do not prove to be feasible - all play a role.

This process guide aims to support the steps to create partnerships and to come to feasible development interventions. It is the result of an international partnership between the governments of Hungary and the Netherlands, called the ‘Practice of Integrated Rural Development in Hungary’. The project is funded by the Dutch MATRA Pre-accession Programme, which is managed by EVD International Business and Co-operation.

Just like in rural development planning, this guide is the result of an active partnership, intensive teamwork and the outward-oriented eclectic perspective of the team. It is a joint product of the Hungarian Institute of Regional Planning and Urbanism (VÁTI) and the Centre for Regional Studies (RKK/CRS) in Hungary, and the Land and Water Management Service (DLG) and the International Agricultural Centre (IAC) in the Netherlands.

The guide would not have been possible without keen interest and participation in the process of integrated rural development by the people of the two case study Micro-regions of Kiskőröös and Paks. Much time and effort was given by a core group of people in each micro-region to coordinate and undertake the activities outlined in this guide, lead by the two heads of micro-regional associations, Mr. Ferenc Barkóczy of kiskőröös and Mr. József Kiss of Paks-Dunaföldvár.

The process outlined in this guide draws heavily on a framework for facilitating multi-stakeholder processes developed by the International Agriculture Centre (IAC). Staff from VÁTI and RKK and the Micro-regions were trained by the IAC in this approach at the beginning of the project. Some of the content of the guide has been adapted from “Sustainable Regional Development” (Dore et al, 2000), a guide developed to support sustainable development in Australians rural and regional areas.

DLG has brought in its experience with managing of multi stakeholders processes and programming in the rural areas of The Netherlands. Together with IAC, VÁTI and RKK the work in the pilot micro-regions was guided. The joint experience of the experts in various places formed the basis of the manual.
Introduction

What is this guide about?

This guide focuses on the particular processes needed to get stakeholders in a rural (regional) area together in order to contribute to integrated rural development. It helps communities at the (micro-)regional level to adapt to a changing environment by outlining a planning process, providing tools and setting concrete examples. While working together with the different stakeholders during planning processes of the region, typical rural problems like economic stagnation, social discohesion, and environmental instability can be encountered.

Rural areas in Hungary are not alone in these. The same phenomena occur elsewhere in Europe and around the world. In its approach and tools, this manual builds on best planning and organisational practices identified in Hungary and in many other countries, both developed and developing. The PRIDE-H project facilitated the testing of some of these best practices in two pilot micro-regions in Hungary. Based on this, the guide contains information about the concept itself, the preconditions needed, the steps to be taken and the methods and tools that can be used.

Who can use this guide?

This guide can be used by a broad range of organisations and people:

- **Policy-makers and staff of national level government agencies** can use the guide to inspire and guide regional and local actors.
- **County and regional development agencies** can use it to inspire and guide local actors and to guide their own planning processes.
- **Micro-regional leaders, managers, members of micro-regional planning boards, and active community and business representatives** can use the guide to explain concepts to those involved in the process and to guide their operations.
- **Consultants and advisors of (micro-)regions** can use the methods and tools to facilitate planning processes.
- **Educational institutes** can use it as a reference document to develop their curricula and to train a new batch of community workers and facilitators.

How to use the guide?

This guide describes a planning process in the context of a broader development perspective (multi-stakeholder processes) and is divided into three sections.

**Section 1** Provides a brief overview of the economic and institutional context of rural areas in Hungary. It provides information on the conceptual background of sustainable rural development, and important preconditions for successful planning and implementation. This part is relevant to all targeted users of the guide.
Section 2   Describes a typical planning process in a rural micro-region in Hungary. It provides the steps to be taken and it explains how it can be done. It was deliberately designed as a fully outlined planning process, to be as practical and concrete as possible. By no means is it meant to be used as a rigid framework. There are many ways to plan, so users of the manual are encouraged to feel free to try out other ways. This part of the manual will guide those responsible, such as (micro-)regional leaders and actors, through a planning process.

Section 3   Contains a set of selected tools and methods to be used while planning and organising in local communities. It also contains other references and sources of information. This section is typically used by those who have a role in facilitating the planning process, such as (micro-)regional managers and external facilitators like consultants or other advisors.

What do the concepts most used in this guide mean?

Integrated Rural Development involves a range of old and new ideas, concepts and language. Although the words are shared, different people may have different understandings of what they mean. Therefore it is important to share a common understanding concerning the most used concepts, of which a few are described below and the rest in the glossary (see Subsection 3.5).

- **Actors:** Individuals, groups, organisations or agencies that play a role or have an interest in the outcomes of a particular situation or initiative.

- **Community:** There is a great deal of debate about what constitutes ‘community’. Here the term is used very generally to refer simply to the individuals and social groups who collectively make up the social groupings of a locality, region or nation. Use of the term is not intended to necessarily imply a sense of social cohesion or identity between those different individuals and groups, although this may exist. While the boundaries are blurred, ‘community’ is generally used to refer to individuals or social groups outside the formal structures of government.

- **Facilitation:** The conscious process of assisting a group to successfully achieve its task as a group. In other words, facilitation means enabling members of a group to take part in a process in an effective way without any one member dictating what will happen.

- **Institutions:** The organisations, laws and patterns of behaviour that underpin the way a society functions. The term ‘institutions’ is often used in a narrower sense to refer only to government organisations. The broader meaning is used in this guide.

- **Participation:** One or more processes in which an individual (or group) takes part in specific decision-making and action, over which s/he may exercise specific controls. It is often used to refer specifically to processes in which stakeholders take an active part in planning and decision-making, implementation, learning and evaluation. This has the intention of sharing control over the resources generated and responsibility for their future use.
- **Sustainable development**: Improving social wellbeing and economic opportunity whilst caring for the environment. This includes maintaining and enhancing environmental quality and ecological integrity and not diminishing opportunities for future generations by thoughtless spending of natural capital endowments.

- **Stakeholder**: An agency, organisation, group or individual who has a direct or indirect interest in the project/programme, or who affects or is affected positively or negatively by the implementation and outcome of it. In this guide, ‘stakeholders’ is the term used for the main intended beneficiaries of a project/programme.

- **Vision**: A statement of some future improved state that the initiative will contribute to. It could embody the basic motives or reasons for beginning an initiative.
1. Context of integrated rural development

1.1 Main Developments of Integrated Rural Development

The context of integrated rural development in which three main developments are important, will be sketched in this section.

Firstly, rural areas in Europe are facing important pressure due to international developments. Increased mechanisation and competition have led to a gradual process in which the agricultural sector is losing its importance as a pull factor in rural areas. Central European countries like Hungary have faced a rapid integration into the global market economy resulting in a legacy of obsolete industrial areas and agricultural complexes. This transformation has dramatically changed the system of agricultural production, processing and marketing. While in Western European countries, developments are mitigated and guided by protective policies, Hungary has faced the pressure of rapid liberalisation. Hungarian rural areas therefore face an important challenge to play a role in the global market. Subsection 1.1.1 describes in more detail the processes and challenges involved.

Secondly, Hungary has adopted the full *acquis communautaire* as part of EU membership obligations. Thereby it will be entitled to receive income support for farmers who fulfil certain standards. But it also results in the conformation of Hungarian policies with EU rural development policies. Subsection 1.1.2 sketches EU policy developments over the past decades to provide the rationale for current concepts of balancing agriculture with environmental standards, diversification of rural economies and setting up of the required institutional frameworks.

Thirdly, Hungary is undergoing a phase of rapid transformation of its political and institutional system. During the past fifteen years, many decisions have been taken to reform the role of regional and local government organisations. This has led to the discrepancy of decentralising many of the functions without providing the means to fulfil local government obligations. Subsection 1.1.3 describes the ongoing process of developing the micro-regional associations of municipalities as the most relevant government level for dealing with rural development.

1.1.1 Challenges for rural economies in a global market

It is not just in Hungary that rural communities are finding they must struggle for economic survival. In all parts of the world, declining terms of trade for agricultural commodities and more open and competitive markets are putting farmers and agricultural businesses under great financial pressure. The problems are compounded as people migrate from rural to urban areas and government services are cut back.
For rural economies to prosper, a change of outlook is needed from a production- to a market-oriented focus. Rural economies and farmers in particular have often only concerned themselves with production, with the assumption that they will be able to profitably sell what they produce. With open and competitive markets (albeit distorted by agricultural subsidies) this assumption can no longer be made. Instead, farmers and rural economies must look much more carefully at the market opportunities and market conditions. The products that have been the economic backbone of a particular rural area, perhaps for generations, may well have become non-viable in a more open market.

The implications are that agricultural producers and rural economies need to develop a much better understanding of the external market and what it is that their area can competitively produce. The only thing that rural communities can be sure about is that markets and prices are going to be ever more changeable and unpredictable. This means that diversification is often necessary, and risk management strategies need to be considered.

The sort of economic planning and innovation needed to revive rural economies is not something that can be left to individual farmers and businesses. Instead, people must work together to identify opportunities, market the benefits of the areas’ services or products and to develop new skills and capacities.

While many rural communities are struggling, there are also those that have dramatically transformed their economic future. This has happened through good leadership, careful analysis, good planning and most importantly, people’s willingness to work together to create a positive future. The ideas presented in this guide are a small contribution to the rural communities in Hungary working towards reviving their local economy.

1.1.2 Being part of the EU

Integrated rural development is very much about coping with managing and prospering from change. Change - whether at a local, regional, national or global level - must be comprehended and the implications understood. Therefore, this subsection focuses on the past, current and future trends of developments in Europe, with Hungary being a full participant.

Past developments
The EU rural development policy was gradually introduced in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It slowly developed from a policy dealing with the structural problems of the farm sector to a policy to make rural economies more diverse.

The main steps taken were:
- focusing on food production in the 1950s and ‘60s. The main objective was to secure food supply at a reasonable price and a proper income level for farmers. It meant direct support to agricultural production and modernisation of agriculture and food processing;
- paying attention to human capital and less favoured areas in the 1970s. Support for early retirement and vocational training was introduced. Disadvantaged areas were supported through compensatory allowances in order to maintain the economic, social and environmental balance;
- dealing with overproduction in the 1980s. Some products (such as milk) were bound by maximum quotas. To accompany market reforms, early retirement, agri-environment, and afforestation of (marginal) agricultural land were introduced; and
- further broadening of rural development in the 1990s.

Various actions were undertaken to shift from production support to income support. Besides agricultural restructuring, environmental concerns and the wider needs of rural areas were acknowledged. Decisions were made to divert funds from agricultural support (the so-called 1st pillar) to broader rural development support (the so-called 2nd pillar). This set of decisions became known as Agenda 2000.

In 1996, EU Commissioner Fischler hosted the European Conference on Rural Development. This conference issued the Cork Declaration (see Box 1) which, among other things, called for a simpler, more integrated rural development policy. The conference launched a wide debate on rural development policy. That process culminated in the Agenda 2000 reforms, in which rural development policy was established as the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The Salzburg conference was a follow-up to the Cork Conference on Rural Development. The conference was held at a crucial time during the preparation of EU policy for rural areas for post-2006 and in the run-up to the publication of the 3rd Cohesion Report at the end of 2003. Rural policy needed to evolve to meet new challenges within an enlarged European Union.

The conclusions of the conference were as follows:
- A living countryside is not only in the interests of the rural society but also of society as a whole. Sustainable development must be based on the specific needs of different areas and build upon the full range of potential of local rural areas and communities.
- Preserving the diversity of Europe’s countryside and encouraging the services provided by multifunctional agriculture is of ever growing importance.

**The Cork Declaration**

Sustainable rural development should be put at the top of the agenda of the European Union. Rural development policy must be multi-disciplinary in concept, and multi-sectoral in application, with a clear territorial dimension.

Other important aspects:
- Support for diversification of economic and social activity must focus on providing the framework for self-sustaining private and community-based initiatives.
- Policies should promote rural development which sustains the quality and amenity of Europe’s rural landscapes.
- Rural development policy must be as decentralised as possible and based on partnership and co-operation between all levels concerned.
- Rural development policy, notably in its agricultural component, needs to undergo radical simplification in legislation.
- The application of rural development programmes must be based on coherent and transparent procedures, and integrated into one single programme for each region.
- The use of local financial resources must be encouraged to promote local rural development projects.
- The administrative capacity and effectiveness of regional and local governments and community-based groups must be enhanced.
- Monitoring, evaluation and beneficiary assessment will need to be reinforced in order to ensure transparency of procedures, guarantee the good use of public money, stimulate research and innovation, and enable an informed public debate.

**Box 1**
The competitiveness of the farming sector must be a key aim, taking into account the diversity of agricultural potential in different rural areas as well as the growing importance of diversification, innovation and value added products that consumers demand.

Rural development policy must apply to all rural areas in the enlarged EU in order that farmers and other rural actors can meet the challenges of ongoing restructuring of the agricultural sector, the effects of CAP reform and changing patterns of agricultural trade.

Rural development policy must serve the needs of broader society in rural areas and contribute to cohesion.

Rural development policy should be implemented through a partnership between public and private organisations and civil society in line with the principle of subsidiarity. EU support for rural areas should be accessible through bottom-up local partnerships by building on the lessons learned from the LEADER approach (see Box 2).

More responsibility must be given to programme partnerships to define and deliver comprehensive strategies based on clearly defined objectives and outcomes. Local capacity building, development of local networks and exchange of best practices is essential.

A significant simplification of EU rural development policy is both necessary and urgent.

Current situation
Agenda 2000 is the basis for the current rural development programme. All existing rural development measures and instruments were brought into a single legal framework (Council Regulation 1257/99/EC) based on multi-annual programming. For the current period 2000-2006, Rural Development Plans have been developed by each EU member state. Two funding sources are available for rural development (RD) measures: the EAGGF Guarantee and EAGGF Guidance. Figure 1 shows the complicated structure of available resources in the EU for countries like Hungary. New EU Member States like Hungary get funds for the 2004–2006 period based on newly developed Rural Development Plans.
In addition to the Rural Development Plans, LEADER continued in its third generation (LEADER+). The main principles of the programme and the structure of implementation have basically remained the same. For the period of 2004-2006, HUF 4.8 billion is available for the LEADER+ measures in Hungary. About 40 potential Local Action Groups will be selected to implement local rural development plans (amounting up to HUF 100 million) according to the LEADER principles and rules.

**The Future**

In line with the previous improvements, the EU Commission spelled out three major objectives for RD policy for the period 2007-13:

- Increase the competitiveness of the agricultural sector through support for restructuring.
- Enhance the environment and countryside through support for land management (including RD actions related to Natura 2000 sites).
- Enhance the quality of life in rural areas and promote diversification of economic activities through measures targeting the farm sector and other rural actors. The general trend will be increased attention to and funds for rural development.

The LEADER programme proved, both in terms of content and methods, to be a proper tool for the realisation of the main principles of rural development. Therefore, in its new rural development policy proposal, the Commission is widening the system of local level programming and decision-making. The approach will be integrated into the other rural development measures. Diversification of the rural economy and the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas will increasingly be carried out through local development strategies.

The ‘programme-based support system’ gives a chance to rural areas to develop and finance programmes based on commonly developed long-term strategies instead of preparing projects (or programmes) tailored to the actually available resources. This makes the planning approach, as outlined in this guide, relevant to Hungary and its efforts to generate EU funds for rural areas. The approach is based on:

- the real needs articulated by local people;
- the given advantages realised by local people; and
- the strong commitments and partnership of the members of the local community.

The next section will describe Hungary’s first steps in the field of integrated rural development.

**1.1.3 Micro-regions and micro-regional planning in Hungary**

Micro-regional associations of municipalities have been the main focus of institutionalising rural development planning in its initial phase. This subsection gives an overview of its background and experiences to date.
The 1996 Regional Development Act established the system of statistical micro-regions (MR). It is a designation of areas, equivalent to the EU NUTS IV level with the main purpose of statistical comparison. The original number of micro-regions (150) was increased to 168 in 2003 under the pressure of MRs. These statistical micro-regions have no role in the building of public administration but they do have promotion and co-ordination tasks concerning regional development issues within the micro-region and in relation to horizontally and vertically linked planning authorities and agencies. According to the 2004 amendment of the Regional Development Act, a statistical MR is headed by a so-called Regional Development Council made up of the elected leaders of the villages and towns the MR comprises. This is the body that fulfils regional development tasks in co-operation with the economic and civil society actors in the area. A delegate of the MR Development Council is authorised to participate directly or indirectly in the upper layers, that is, county and regional levels of regional planning bodies and agencies.

However, a set of other type of area-related regional development associations exist in Hungary. Their origin, social content and function follow various tracks reflecting the changing circumstances from the system-change to the new Millennium.

Example: Rural development micro-regions (RDMR)

So-called rural development micro-regions started to operate in 1999 when the Rural Development Chief Department of MARD decided to promote the preparation process for EU accession - particularly for one of the pre-accession programmes, called SAPARD aimed at assisting agriculture and rural areas. The idea was to provide state support for making area-related development strategies and operational programmes participatory. In RDMRs, where an appropriate workforce was available, the first plans on the basis of participatory method did come into being; in others, experts and various agencies assisted MRs in this task. As opposed to the general rule regarding the requirements of spatial plans at the micro-regional level, the target area of the development strategies did not have to overlap with the statistical MR. However, roughly half of the statistical micro-regions applied for the available fund in their actual shape, whilst others split along various boundaries. Therefore, 168 statistical micro-regions and 198 rural development micro-regions operated in Hungary during the PRIDE programme (accidentally, in the case of the two pilots, rural development and statistical micro-regions overlapped). Beyond the state funds available for making their own strategies, the most important advantage provided by the MARD to the RDMRs was a 'seed workforce', that is the micro-regional rural managers, whose salary was financed, or at least co-financed by state resources from 2001 to 2004.

After the abolition of the lower-middle scale district administration, necessitated by the doubling of the number of local councils in 1990, more and more rural communities – mostly those rural areas struggling with serious social, economic and geographic disadvantages – felt the necessity of strengthening co-operation on the micro-regional level. The availability of different Phare funding schemes also stimulated the formulation of volunteer-based, area-related associations. Beyond the purpose of gaining financial resources, enhancing the lobbying power of the member settlements was also usually a primary goal to be achieved. These associations were mostly structured as so-called foundations, associations, ‘circles’, and the like, representing the common grounds/interests of the member communities. A typical grassroots area-related organisation could focus on cultural issues aimed at maintaining/reviving cultural/ethnic identities of an area or to provide a common forum for villages sharing certain interests, etc.

Box 3

The SAPARD Programme also influenced the process of forming area-related coalitions. In 1999, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) subsidised a programming process in rural areas. The ultimate objective of this action was to form the framework for generating viable projects for different subsidy schemes (i.e. VFC, SAPARD, TFC, etc.) fitting into a bottom-up development strategy. Another chief goal of this top-down MARD programme was to promote bottom-up strategy building at the grassroots area.
level. Following some main features of the EU LEADER approach, the programme did not stick to the statistically fixed micro-regions. Therefore, statistical MR associations as well as any voluntary organisations or goal-oriented coalitions of some settlements could apply and then qualify for the fund that was to support the preparation of rural development plans of the applying associations. All in all, almost 200 ‘rural development micro-regions’ were formed during the SAPARD preparation process in 1999-2000 that could but did not necessarily match the boundaries of statistical MRs. For various reasons, the strategic plans were not implemented as such, although many of the initiated projects got funding from various resources. By involving local stakeholders in the planning process and increasing their commitment, an improved co-operation and planning capacity was brought about in quite a number of micro-regions as a positive side-effect of a top-down initiated process. Ties between local groups were strengthened as well.

The evaluation of strategic and operational plans has highlighted some general shortcomings:
- Some of the strategies focused exclusively on SAPARD measures.
- A shopping list type of action plans was rather common. Priority setting and reasoning represented weak points in such ‘strategies’.
- The formulation of strategies was not yet based on assessing, comparing and then drafting the impacts of different alternatives.
- The level of participation varied. Some plans were the result of deskwork, while others involved a wider range of stakeholders either as part of a planning procedure completed by an external consultant (company) or by a local planning team. The process thus contributed to the creating of partnerships to a limited extent.
- The management and organisation of the planning process needed to be improved. Clear roles during the implementation of the programme and a clear monitoring and evaluation structure (progress indicators) needed to be defined.

From the end of 2001, a preparatory programme for the LEADER+ was initiated by the Rural Development Department of MARD. Six NGOs based in rural areas were asked to delegate candidates to the experimental programme. As a result of their activity, some 30 applications and action-plans were drafted at the end of 2001. Fourteen Pilot Local Action Groups were selected from among these candidates to implement their area based integrated rural development strategies to be developed during three months in the first quarter of 2002.

Following LEADER patterns, the pilot LAGs consisted of a balanced representation of the public, civil society and private sector. The funded strategies comprised area-specific development measures focusing around issues such as capacity building, strengthening of the small-scale service industry, human and physical capacities of rural tourism to generate income for the deprived, etc. The selected ‘proto LAGs’ were able to gain experiences in the operation of a LEADER-type programme: a small administration unit was either developed or contracted to advertise the programme locally, to assist final beneficiaries in writing proposals, to share experiences within and outside the area.
Meeting the requirements of accessibility, transparency and publicity was part of the conditions of joining this MARD programme between 2001-2004.

Probably, one of the most important advantages provided by the LEADER-type experiment was its funding scheme. Area-based programmes as coherent items were funded in this case; in other words, experiences were provided by LEADER+ showing the advantages of programme financing instead of project financing. This funding scheme made the promotion of a high level of cooperation between local partners possible and allowed adequate flexibility for implementation.

Beyond preparation efforts aimed at introducing the EU LEADER+ programme, the main purpose of this experiment was to promote participation both during area-related planning and implementation of the strategies.

The most important impacts of participatory planning showed up clearly. The strategies produced within a participatory process:
- were unique for the micro-region;
- relied on a complete, empirical analysis of the problems grasped, thus providing a firm basis for strategy-making;
- contained packages of activities that were mutually supportive;
- activated different social actors for the same, commonly forged goal, thus strengthening local and micro-regional communities, identities and partnerships; and
- delivered real and feasible projects during the implementation phase.

The above-mentioned programmes contributed essentially to the experiences gained in participatory approach processes in Hungary. While during the agricultural and rural development programming process, participation was mostly based on occasional consultations, during the LEADER-Type pilot programme, the involved actors formed real partnerships and set up an institutional structure responsible for the programme implementation at the local level. This is the point at which the LEADER-Type and PRIDE pilots found some common ground, which could be further strengthened and developed in line with the new national policies (e.g. the promotion of multifunctional associations at a micro-regional level) as well as the new EU rural development policy.

The EU rural development policy has increasingly taken into account important experiences of other countries and organisations involved in rural development. A set of concepts, principles and tools has evolved over the years. The next section will describe some of the most important key concepts toward creating common understanding.
1.2 Key Concepts of Sustainable Regional Development

‘It is impossible to solve today’s problems by thinking the way we thought when we created the problems.’
Albert Einstein

1.2.1 Sustainable development principles

Many decades of planned development have delivered the concept of sustainable development, defined by the OECD in 2001 as:

*Sustainable development stresses the long-term compatibility of economic, social and environmental dimensions of human wellbeing, while acknowledging their competition in the short term.*

This term was popularised by the 1987 Report of The World Commission on Environment and Development (the ‘Brundtland Report’). It has influenced many policy decisions afterwards. The 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development set things in motion for many national governments. It is an accepted concept now in many regional and rural development policies.

The holistic consideration of community, economic and environmental issues is fundamental to sustainable development. This seems to be striking a chord with many regional communities, which are increasingly recognising the links between economic survival, prosperity, social cohesion and environmental management. Various regional planning and strategy development exercises have supported this by engaging a broad cross-section of regional players in a critical examination of

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**Box 4**

Experience has demonstrated that the longer-term sustainability of project benefits depends on the following factors:

1. **Ownership by beneficiaries**
   the extent to which target groups and beneficiaries of the project/programme (including men and women) have participated in its design and are involved.

2. **Policy Support**
   the quality of the relevant sector policy, and the extent to which the government has demonstrated support for the continuation of project/programme services beyond the period of external support.

3. **Appropriate technology**
   whether the technologies applied by the project/programme can continue to operate in the longer run (e.g. availability of spare parts; sufficiency of safety regulations; local capabilities of women and men in operation and maintenance).

4. **Social-cultural issues**
   how the project/programme will take into account local socio-cultural norms and attitudes. Which measures have been taken to ensure that all beneficiary groups will have appropriate access to project services and benefits during and after implementation?

5. **Gender equality**
   how the project/programme will take into account the specific needs and interests of women and men. Will it lead to sustained and equitable access by women and men to the services and infrastructures and contribute to reduced gender inequalities in the longer term?

6. **Environmental protection**
   the extent to which the project/programme will preserve or damage the environment and therefore support or undermine achievement of longer-term benefits.

7. **Institutional and management capacity**
   the ability and commitment of the implementing agencies to deliver the project/programme, and to continue to provide services beyond the period of external support.

8. **Economic and financial viability**
   whether the incremental benefits of the project/programme outweigh its costs, and the project represents a viable long-term investment.

The substance and relative importance of these factors will depend on the context and on the specific features of the project/programme. Consideration of these issues may lead to changes in the project/programme design.
the issues that are affecting their future, and in defining visions and goals for their region. These processes, while not sufficient in themselves, are an important starting point.

It is also acknowledged that an integrated framework is essential for sustainable development (see box 5). Building this framework requires a coherent integration of policies across the economic, social, and environmental spheres (see Figure 2). The significant participation of civil society in policy-making and implementation is also needed.

Example: Sustainable dairy farming in Western Holland

Dairy farming in the western part of The Netherlands followed the reclamation of marshes in the period between the 11th and 14th century. This shaped the typical Dutch landscape of low lying wet grasslands with a very regular allotment. Continued subsidence typical to peat soils, required various modifications of the drainage system. The Dutch thus created a complicated system of watercourses, dykes, windmills, pumping stations, etc. Dairy farming, butter and cheese production brought prosperity to the region up to the Second World War. The area followed the rationalisation of production in the 1960s and ’70s. It benefited clearly from the protective mechanisms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Support under CAP was maximised in the ’80s by the milk quota system. After this, developments stagnated and came under more pressure by international agreements to lower support to agricultural production (GATT/WTO) in the mid-nineties. The area found itself unable to compete in the world market due to the small scale of the farms and the high cost of production in this historically grown man-made landscape. The path of further enlargement and intensification needed to compete would do harm to cultural and natural values of the area. So an integrated plan was made after intense consultations between public and private partners. This plan contains various mutually supporting activities to balance agricultural developments with environmental and cultural concerns.

The package contains:
- an exchange of land plots to form larger units for farmers;
- subsidies for work to make new plots accessible;
- adaptation of the water management system based on zoning ranging from intensive > less intensive > natural areas;
- agreements for agri-environmental activities by farmers (protection of nesting birds, protection of shore belts, upkeep of woodlots); and
- formation of an agricultural nature management organisation to channel premiums for agri-environmental measures.

Co-ordination between national governments and international organisations and a strong political commitment to a long-term perspective are required. In particular, NGOs play an important role in promoting transparency, efficiency, and co-operation in all phases of the sustainable development agenda. This includes decision-making, skills training, policy implementation and assessment.

The European Union has deepened the concept of sustainability especially concerning the sustainability of projects/programmes (see Box 4). The term ‘quality factors’ is used to emphasise that quality is an issue that applies from the beginning of the project/programme design, whereas sustainability is measured after the life of a project/programme (EU Manual on Project Cycle Management).

1.2.2 An integrated perspective

Rural communities and planners face several simultaneous challenges while striving towards sustainable development. Any intended development needs to deal with the complex reality in a particular area. Complex situations need complex solutions. What do we mean by ‘complex situations’?

Very often, we mean:
- Individual needs require public intervention;

examples: A new farm needs an appropriate access road.
A rural bed and breakfast facility will be more successful if supported by proper regional promotion.

- ‘Soft’ and ‘hard’ issues are both involved and critical to success;
  *examples:* A joint storage facility for regional products needs a strong partnership at the regional level.
  Building a new thermal/health centre needs a trained labour force.

- Solutions to one problem can lead to new problems;
  *examples:* Extension of the tourist infrastructure may disturb natural values.
  More rational or modernised ways of agriculture could increase unemployment.

- Problems or needs go beyond one sector;
  Support structures (either governmental or non-governmental) tend to be organised by sector. They are often inwardly orientated.

An integrated or holistic approach is needed to come to a comprehensive set of actions. Some keywords are: teamwork, thorough analysis, broad thinking, good co-ordination, and communication. The following sub-section shows that problems in rural areas indeed are complicated.

### 1.2.3 Participation and co-operation

Society is continuously changing and micro-regions need to adapt. In the past, this was often done from the top down, with the central government deciding about programmes and activities. Technocrats sat behind their desks in the capital and planned development. Among such conditions, participation did not exist until the 1980s and then started to exist to a very limited extent. People were already informed and were rarely asked their opinion - and participation never went beyond this level. In the 1980s-1990s, associations started to develop, paradoxically enough first in the economic, and then in the social sphere. After the political shift, an explosion suddenly took place in the civil society sector, resulting in thousands of NGOs being organised, but their influenced remained limited. A process of breaking-up, of ‘individualisation’, became prevalent in the economy and state administration; new local councils strove for autonomy, and real partnerships were and remained exceptions from the rule. Distrust between the public and private sectors did not disappear.

Assistance programmes from the European Union, United States and other countries, such as Phare, USAID, Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation, MATRA, etc. and certain MARD programmes made an essential contribution to disseminating the notion and practice of participation and forging partnerships at the local and regional levels (*also see sub-section 1.1.1*). Although it is a paradox, top-down initiatives had no alternative but to build grass-roots structures and practices within a situation lacking in a civil society sector while undergoing a very fast restructuring process.
In the late 1970s and 1980s, many organisations in western countries began realising the problems caused by non-participatory development. This was accompanied by the process of emancipation of (groups in) society that wanted a bigger say in decisions made. The idea of participation has now widely been adopted at the local level to make development more effective and sustainable and to empower people to manage their own development.

Box 6 contrasts the different results of non-participatory development in western and socialist countries.

Box 7 explains two broad purposes of participation. There are some common misunderstandings about participation:

1. Participation is limited to planning with local stakeholders
   Participatory development planning is not just about sitting down with village people and deciding what to do. It recognises the fact that administrators, experts and residents all have their own experiences and knowledge. Many local communities of producers, labourers, entrepreneurs or other people with concerns are organised in associations or NGOs. True participation and co-ordination build on these structures by creating conditions for multi-stakeholder processes of planning and negotiation. These multi-stakeholder processes take participation to a higher level by bringing governments, businesses and civil society together in a process of interaction, dialogue and social learning.

2. Participation always means that local stakeholders make all decisions
   Different degrees of participation can be distinguished (adapted from Pretty's ladder and from UNCDF, 1996):
   1. Manipulation: the lowest rung applies to situations of 'non-participation', where any participation is actually an opportunity to indoctrinate.
   2. Information: stakeholders are informed.
3. Consultation: stakeholders answer questions and can have a say.
4. Implementation: stakeholders form groups to implement activities.
5. Consensus-building: stakeholders interact, and analyse problems and solutions of a project together.
6. Decision-making: stakeholders make collective decisions.
7. Partnership: exchange among equals working towards a mutual goal.
8. Self-management: stakeholders take initiatives.

Not every development activity is suitable to the highest level of participation. The government has to guard the interests of the wider public. Sometimes these interests do not match the interests of regional and local (groups of) stakeholders.

Box 8 provides some examples of how the level of participation varies from situation to situation. The one option is not better than the other but depends on the scale of the intervention, the objectives and the stakeholders involved.

The most important factor is to make conscious decisions about the level of participation needed and to be transparent to stakeholders. This avoids expectations building up too high.

1.2.4 Sound feasibility analysis

Development planning is not only a matter of putting people together or getting them around the same table. One also needs a thorough and good analysis process supported by expertise in order to achieve quality planning.

A very common issue for communities is that they just want to go out and do something right away (see Box 9). However, it is essential to first analyse its feasibility while planning for development. Economic, social and environmental issues need to be taken into account while assessing feasibility. The term Impact Assessment stands for a broad range of tools and activities in order to predict the outcome or feasibility of interventions. Some examples follow below:

An assessment of economic effects could involve:
- calculations of economic return of investments in farms or companies;
- estimates of increased levels of operation and maintenance; and/or
- calculations of costs of the investment and the increased operation generated.
An assessment of social effects could involve:
- estimates in the change of employment rate;
- estimates in the changes in composition of employment (jobs terminated, jobs created, labour fired, labour hired); and/or
- assessment of the level of organisation and abilities of civil society organisations.

An assessment of environmental effects could involve:
- estimates of the changes in quality of surface water;
- estimates of the changes in quality of soils; and/or
- estimates of the changed levels of noise by infrastructure or industries.

It is important to do feasibility studies or impact assessments in order to assure the main actors of a certain initiative that money will be well spent and that negative effects will be avoided or mitigated. And – depending on the nature of the project - there may also be legal requirements on the national or EU level to produce an assessment. These are usually assessments which describe the impact of intended projects on the environment (Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)).

Within the EU context, two directives are relevant:

The EU directives specify in which cases an EIA is mandatory (so-called Annex I projects) and in which cases the member state decides whether or not an EIA is required (Annex II projects - see Box 10). Certain development and agricultural investment projects in rural areas fall under Annex I, like for example, the withdrawal or artificial recharging of groundwater (>10mm³/yr). Some rural development projects fall in the second category, like projects for the restructuring of agricultural landholdings (land consolidation), reclamation of semi-natural lands, water management for agricultural purposes, change of function of lands (forestry, tourism, etc.), intensive livestock installations, etc. In these projects, the member State may decide, either by performing a case by case examination or by specifying criteria or threshold values, whether an EIA is required. In these cases, Hungarian environmental legislation will determine the requirements.
The EIA should identify, describe and assess the direct and indirect effects on:
- human beings, fauna and flora;
- soil, water, air, climate and landscape;
- material assets and cultural heritage; and
- the interaction between the above.

The assessment report should comprise:
- a description of the project;
- measures designed to decrease or counterbalance negative effects;
- information needed to judge the negative effects of the project;
- an outline of all alternatives the applicant has investigated; and
- a non-technical summary.

In any case of feasibility analysis, it is recommended to fully integrate the steps into the overall planning process, to make sure that:
- resources are well used; i.e. if early screening of a project idea points out that feasibility or benefits are doubtful, than inputs can be used for other projects; and
- necessary data are collected on time and alternative options of a certain project idea are developed to define the most environment-friendly solution.

Experts should be involved in good time to support a proper analysis and elaboration. The type of expertise in rural development depends on the project, but includes the following fields of knowledge: macro-economics, business economics, product marketing, SME development, tourism development, civil engineering, gender issues, cultural anthropology, ethnography, hydrology, environmental science, ecology, etc.

1.2.5 Planning, not just plans

The previous paragraphs made clear that utilising strengths/opportunities and working together provide a considerable added value while planning. Existing organisations and expertise are a starting point: nobody knows the region’s strengths better than local authorities, local businesses, and local farmers’ organisations. These organisations make for a “winning team”: when organisations join hands, new opportunities come up because now they can utilise each other’s strengths.

A plan based on a thorough feasibility analysis is a real asset but it is not the end in and of itself. An atmosphere of “learning by doing” and adaptation needs to be created. A joint planning process will produce a PLAN, but this is not the essence. Plans need to be adapted to ongoing developments. During
planning and experimenting for implementation, many new problems and issues will come up. Organisations must be flexible enough to deal with them.

Trust and partnership as preconditions for good PLANNING are just as important as having a good PLAN.

Development is a dynamic and ongoing process of planning strategically, implementing, learning from implementation and adapting based on experiences and a changing environment. It is a repetitive process, as shown in Figure 3. Monitoring and evaluation need to be institutionalised properly (by providing clear indicators, a feasible means of verification, responsible persons and organisations). Subsection 2.7 elaborates on a good M&E process.

The Sustainable Regional Development (SRD) Process Model (Dore et al, 2000) is a summary of the key aspects that need to be considered in planning, implementing, managing and evaluating a SRD initiative. It is intended as a guide and a checklist. It is also not the only model to follow in facilitating SRD. However, it is a model that works for the purposes of this guide and we believe most regions will find it helpful.

The model is based on the common-sense action-learning cycle of planning, acting and evaluating, with an additional phase of setting up. The four phases of the SRD Process Model are:

**Setting up**: establishing the reasons for a SRD initiative, mobilising community interest, and deciding what organisational and institutional arrangements are needed;

**Planning strategically**: undertaking the detailed planning and strategy development needed for a SRD initiative to be successful;
Implementing and Managing: managing the implementation and ongoing resourcing of the initiative and ensuring continued community input and support; and

Learning and Adapting: monitoring the impact, the successes and failures, learning from these, and continually improving on what is being done.

As elaborated in *Box 11*, several key elements have been identified for each phase. It is important to remember that this is only a model, and models are always a simplification of reality. In practice, you will not always neatly and sequentially follow each phase but rather may work in a number of phases at once and jump back and forth. However, what is important is that attention is given to each phase and to each element within a phase.

This model has been used for the planning process in two micro-regions in Hungary, which will be described in *Section 2* of this guide. Here again not every phase has been “neatly” followed up but elements have been adapted to the concrete situation of these two regions.

### 1.3 Conditions for Success

It’s people that make that difference! To have a successful sustainable regional development process you need to think carefully about how to engage the different stakeholder groups and how to maintain their commitment. It is also very important to create a supportive institutional environment. This means making sure that the local organisational structure, government procedures, funding mechanisms, and government agency staff are, as best as they can, supporting the development process.

Here, four key conditions for success are discussed:
1. Establishing effective facilitation and leadership;
2. Developing the necessary human capacities;
3. Designing a good process that will mobilise and maintain stakeholder participation; and
4. Creating or adapting supportive institutional arrangements.

#### 1.3.1 Effective facilitation leadership and facilitation

Over the last twenty-five years, a great deal has been learned about how to get diverse groups, across government, business and the community, working together to solve complex social, environmental and economic problems. Facilitation is at the heart of such processes and simply put, it is about helping people to work together to make a difference. Effective facilitation (see *Box 12*) is central to the success of any initiative that involves different groups or people of the same social group meeting for the first time, working together to identify and achieve common goals.

To be a good facilitator you need:
- a clear vision of what you are trying to achieve;
- a set of theories, assumptions and values about how to generate change;
- a set participatory methods, tools and techniques; and
- the personal qualities and skills to take on a facilitation role.

*Box 12*
It is important to recognise that it is a Sustainable Rural Development Process. SRDP facilitation is much more than just the “facilitation” of meetings and workshops; rather, it also involves the planning and managing of a participatory process that may continue over a number of years. Furthermore, facilitation and leadership are closely linked. A facilitated process will not work so well in situations where the leadership of different stakeholder groups is very top down and non-participatory. Facilitation requires building a culture of careful listening, good communication, and constructive conflict management amongst the leadership and members of all the involved groups.

Facilitation really is an art. People, organisations and their relationships are highly complex and always changing. Being able to manage this social complexity to bring about worthwhile change requires considerable insight and skill.

A key part of facilitation is what happens behind the scenes when a facilitator (or facilitating group) works with stakeholders to design a specific process suited to the needs of a particular situation.

There are many different methodologies and tools that a facilitator can draw on and combine into a purposefully built methodology or process. And, of course processes never go exactly as planned, so a facilitator needs the ability and experience to be constantly adapting and improving the process as it unfolds.

A good facilitator needs a thorough grasp of the theoretical, methodological and institutional aspects of participatory development (see Figure 4). Furthermore, facilitators need to be as knowledgeable as possible about the subject area with which they are dealing. Participatory processes often fail because quite simple parts of the process have not been adequately considered. In a world often preoccupied with scientific and technological progress, the importance of the social dimension to managing social and political relationships is often undervalued. Fortunately, there is a wealth of knowledge and a broad range of methodologies and tools available to those individuals and organisations interested in the art of facilitation and social change.

It is important to remember that whatever one does is based in some way on an underlying set of beliefs or assumptions about the world and the universe we inhabit; often these are so internalised we are unaware of their guiding influence. The nature of these beliefs and assumptions (or ‘worldviews’) leads humans to interact with their surroundings and each other in quite different
ways. Effective facilitation and leadership involves helping people to be aware of these beliefs and assumptions. A starting point will often need to be the beliefs and assumptions about participation, leadership and facilitation.

Facilitation capacity needs to be viewed not just in terms of individuals but also in terms of organisations. Increasingly, government agencies, for example, find themselves taking on more of a facilitative role, particularly as agencies move from providing technical pre-packaged answers to developing innovative solutions in dialogue with stakeholders. This often requires a significant internal culture change, employment of different types of staff and the development of new training programmes (see Box 13). Critical is that incentive structures in organisations match the new way of working.

In setting up a SRDP consider the following:

- Discuss amongst the key organising group how and by whom the overall process will be facilitated.
- Identify experienced facilitators who can support the process.
- Build the leadership capacity of key groups to constructively support a participatory process.
- Build the capacity of everyone involved to work in a participatory way.

**1.3.2 Having necessary capacities**

Setting up and implementing a micro-regional development process will require a broad range of skills and capacities from all involved (see Box 14). As mentioned above, facilitation and leadership skills are critical. But more than this is required. The local economic conditions and opportunities need to be analysed. It is important to have the communication and media skills to ensure region-wide understanding and support. Being able to write project funding proposals and develop business plans will be important.

The idea of a participatory regional development process is that many different people can become involved and provide support. Consequently, it is very important to think about how to build people’s capacity so that they can contribute effectively, and to assess lacking capacities to be imported from elsewhere.

**1.3.3 Designing an effective and inclusive process**

The key challenge for micro-regional development is mobilising the support and input from key stakeholder groups and the wider community. The quality of the process that you set up and follow will make the difference between success and failure. There will be a constant tension between involving people as much as possible and getting on with the jobs at hand quickly and efficient-
ly. If the process ends up being a series of endless meetings with no action, people will become very frustrated and will lose interest. On the other hand, if a small group of people push ahead on making decisions and taking action with little understanding or support from the wider community and important stakeholder groups, they will also end up failing, due to a lack of support and commitment.

Right at the beginning, it is critical to start building community support. The key is to involve people at the start as this will enable them to build a vision, to assume high levels of involvement and to develop ownership. Regional initiatives require significant support from many different players. The community needs to be confident that its concerns and suggestions are not only being listened to and considered, but that the regional initiative will deliver gains for the whole community and not just for a few people of influence.

Developing a healthy micro-regional economy, community and environment requires co-ordinated action from many different groups and individuals. The best micro-regional plan in the world will be useless if it is not implemented by committed and capable people. The process of micro-regional development needs to focus on how to build this commitment and capacity.

To design a good process, you need to consider the following:

- building trust between individuals and the different groups;
- ensuring that those leading and facilitating the process, and the process itself, are seen as legitimate by key stakeholder groups;
- inspiring creativity and innovation (new problems will never be solved by thinking and acting in old ways);
- building robust partnerships and effective teams that can cope with difficult problems and effectively manage differences and conflicts;
- making roles and responsibilities clear, and holding individuals and groups accountable for delivering; and
- empowering individuals and groups to be able to contribute effectively in the planning process and implementation.

### 1.3.4 Supportive institutional arrangements

The capacity of individuals or groups to act is both supported and constrained by the institutional context (see Box 15). There are many types of institutions that shape the way society works; for example, the legal framework, govern-

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**Examples of supportive institutional arrangements**

**Zelow, Poland**

When almost half of the community's workforce was made redundant by the closure of a local cotton mill, the Zelow government, led by the vision of a deputy mayor, mobilised the community to address the crisis. Community leaders engaged citizens in a strategic planning process to undertake a SWOT analysis and to develop a multifaceted economic development strategy. As a result of Zelow’s economic development efforts, its unemployment rate decreased from 40 to 13 percent. Eleven companies employing a total of 147 workers used the ‘business incubator’.

**Oblast (region), Russia**

When the Soviet Union broke up, over half of the highly-trained, technical workforce was laid off from jobs at the high-tech industries that were an important part of Oblast's regional economy. Local leaders set out to develop a strategy that would capitalise on the skilled workforce and apply all of the tools at their disposal to attract new investment. Oblast and local officials solicited input from the community to ensure that their programmes reflected its vision and concerns. The oblast government worked with the private sector, local NGOs, and the university to identify the labour needs of local businesses and to create training programmes to meet them. The region, once ranked sixty-third out of eighty-six Russian regions in terms of investment, now attracts more investment than any other region in the country.

Box 15
ment policies, programmes and agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as many informal norms and customs. Institutions can be thought of as the formal and informal “rules of the game” that shape social life along with the organisational fabric of society. SRD requires attention to the following institutional aspects:

- the organisational structure (existing or adaptable) for guiding and managing the SRD process;
- the support of and co-ordination with government agencies and programmes;
- the impact of local norms, values and customs;
- the impact of external institutional changes such as markets and European Union policies; and
- the functioning and potential role of local business and community organisations.

At the beginning of your process, it will be helpful to undertake an institutional analysis and to identify those institutions that will be supportive and those that will or may be a constraint. Strategies can then be developed for maximising support and working around the constraints.

Around the world, you can find examples of successful local economic development underpinned by participatory processes of community and business mobilisation. The ideas and approach presented in this guide are based on these proven examples of success.

For example, in 1998, more than 250 local government, community, and private sector representatives from across Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (CEE/NIS) came together in Bucharest, Romania, to discuss the challenges and opportunities of local economic development at a conference on ‘Mobilizing Community Resources for Local Economic Development.’ The conference was co-sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation, and the Council of Europe. The focus was on the critical importance of forming partnerships among the public, private, and community sectors to create new jobs and community wealth, and of mobilising all of a community’s resources for economic development.
1.4 Experiences in the two Pilot Micro-regions – a Broad Overview

Selection of PRIDE pilots

In selecting the PRIDE pilot sites, the most important factors taken into consideration were as follows: the agricultural potential of the area, the priorities and measures of their rural development strategies and operational programmes, their human capacities and their willingness to join the programme. In Paks-Dunafoildvár micro-region the discussion point to split the micro-region and reduce the scope of the planning exercise to the least developed part of the area was raised. After consideration, this idea was rejected.

Need for vertical co-operation (BOX 17 LABEL)

As PRIDE pilots were selected from among rural development micro-regions, a link to the MARD as an interested state-level (funding) organisation was thus automatically secured. Given the area-based planning procedure, it was a strong and shared conviction of the Dutch and Hungarian planners that the pilot exercise, focusing on the two selected micro-regions, should inform/attract the upper levels of regional and rural policy-making and/or implementation. Particular attention was paid to the county and regional levels relating to the two micro-regions. Representatives of county and regional development agencies (agencies of relevant county development councils and regional development councils) as well as regional rural development agency actors (REVIS) repeatedly participated in the larger groups and events as well as at a training course in The Netherlands.

The expected impacts of the inclusion of the higher echelon actors of regional and rural development agencies were to help develop:
- a shared understanding of the participatory process;
- stronger networks; that is, broader and stronger links between micro-regional actors and practitioners working in similar fields but at higher levels;
- smooth information and communication exchanges about county and regional development policy and programme-realisation issues, and sharing experiences;
- a broader range of planning fields and programming exercises covered (in addition to so-called rural developers, actors of regional planning were also integrated into the process); and
- a bridge between the top and the bottom: stronger awareness of the higher placed actors as to what was going on at the grassroots level.

The concept and methodology of the project, Practice of Integrated Rural Development in Hungary (PRIDE-H), was introduced and tested in two pilot micro-regions. The aim was to experience a participatory planning process, which had not yet been widely used in Hungary in a complex way.

The selection of the two pilot micro-regions followed a thorough process in early 2002, in which many factors were taken into consideration (see Box 16). The project team intended to find two micro-regions with slightly different backgrounds and problems. The selection procedure resulted in choosing Paks-Dunafoildvár, representing a micro-region with a large agricultural potential, and Kiskörlös, an area with an agro-environmental potential. The two micro-regions happened to be neighbours, but they are on different sides of the Danube and have particularly divergent environmental and economic conditions.

The two main Hungarian project partners of the PRIDE-H project, RKK and VÁTI VID, divided the tasks of assistance in the two pilot micro-regions’ planning process. RKK gave its expertise to Paks-Dunafoildvár and VÁTI to the Kiskörlös micro-region. The approaches of the two institutes followed two slightly different concepts: RKK gave more direct assistance with an intense presence in the region, while VÁTI followed a more distinct consultancy methodology, delegating more tasks to the local institutions.

After initial discussions and co-ordination with the micro-regional managers and the head of the Micro-regional Association of Local Governments (MAG), the first step of the participatory planning process was to organise a scoping (‘focusing’) workshop in January 2003. It was planned to be a two-day workshop, in which participants had to decide on the scope of the development process (main issues of the micro-regions, stakeholders to be involved (see Box 17), proposed institutional structure, etc.) The first lesson learned was that most of the active and committed people found it difficult to spend two days in a workshop since many people are engaged in many other activities. So a number of participants could not participate in the full event, in spite of having expressed their com-
mitment and interest. It seemed more realistic to organise more frequent
though shorter meetings at a time suitable to the participants (i.e. late after-
noons).

As a result of the focusing workshop, two main development fields were de-
 fined for focusing the planning procedure. In both micro-regions, these were:
agriculture and tourism. It meant that within the rural development strategy
of the micro-regions, these two sub-strategies would be elaborated in more
detail. This determined the scope of the stakeholders for the participatory sit-
uation analysis as well as the main topics to be surveyed and discussed.

The local institutional background to enforce
the planning process was another issue of the
Focusing Workshop. According to what was
decided in the workshop, stakeholders of the
project agreed upon setting up an Initiation
Committee with the task of assisting in the for-
mation of the Local Area Committee (LAC),
which was responsible for the participatory
planning process as a whole. The main task of
the LAC was to follow the planning process
and to operate as an advisory board to the
MAG as a legally binding decision-making
body. The leaders of the LACs are the same
people as the heads of the MAG in order to en-
hance the commitment and co-operation.

After the Focusing Workshop, the micro-
regional management realised that conducting
a participatory planning process with the in-
volvement of a broad cluster of local stake-
holders is a job that requires a considerable
human capacity exceeding what was availa-
bale in the micro-region. This issue brought the
work to a halt between February and May
2003, at which time MARD offered financial
support to hire a project manager to assist the
existing micro-regional staff.

Under the official supervision of the LAC, working groups were established
for the participatory situation analysis in both micro-regions. RKK and VÁTI
provided an introductory capacity-building training session for the working
groups. At the end of September 2003 in Paks, thematic working groups were
formed to focus on specific subjects. This was followed by intensive week-long
fieldwork with the assistance of RKK experts. During this week, the partici-
pants conducted group discussions with agricultural producers and different
producer groups, village managers, representatives of the Chamber of Agri-
culture and entrepreneurs. There were two forums for those who had not yet
been involved in tourism, but were interested in it, or had particular project
ideas in this field. There were also forums for the NGOs, including one on the
high level of unemployment among women (which was followed by a group
discussion), as well as one on the Romany minority group of Kajdacs. Eventually, the week’s work resulted in ten group discussions, two group and two individual interviews.

During this time, the staff of Kiskőrös micro-region was working on a concept of tourism. This covered one of the two subjects designated for a sub-strategy under the PRIDE-H project but it had to be deepened for other reasons as well (upgrading of micro-regional strategies). The team decided to make use of the methodology of the participatory situation analysis (PSA) to cover both aims. To supply the necessary skills and capacity, the Dutch and the Hungarian project partners provided training. In a short workshop, the idea and methodology of the PSA were introduced and the members of the PSA working group experienced a few facilitation skills and tools. The PSA focusing on agriculture in Kiskőrös undertook a bit longer and less structured process, following the elaboration of the tourist strategy. It started with group discussions that brought up some major issues. Discussions took place during a period in which the agricultural crisis had deepened. By this time, the discontent of farmers had increased and the discussions initially had the function of providing stakeholders with a channel for their dissatisfaction about general developments taking place. Because of this, the step to think strategically about the future and to generate constructive ideas proved to be a bridge too far. On the basis of this lesson, the team decided to conduct more individual interviews and questionnaires instead of group discussions.

While talking about the benefits and practical uses of the skills and capacity gained from the PRIDE-H project, the matter of the LEADER+ subsidy scheme appeared from time to time. The local institutional capacity that had been developed as well as the strategy to be completed by the end of the project showed a strong resemblance to LEADER requirements. Therefore, the PRIDE-H project was viewed as a very suitable preparation for LEADER, and the micro-regional teams asked the project group to provide more information on LEADER. This led to mutual exchange visits and discussions with the Dutch LEADER group of Hoo
geland - Groningen.
The PSA process was still going on in February 2004, but now it was time to synthesize the information and start planning strategically in the form of scenario analysis and vision planning. A broad participatory base was planned, with the involvement of stakeholders from all fields from the micro-region. Unfortunately, the invitation in Kiskőrös was either not quite efficiently extended or its timing was inadequate, and thus mainly the members of the PSA working group showed up. Therefore, the work done in the workshop was missing the support of the broad society. In Paks, things went better, as about 30 of the invited people participated to form scenarios and a vision.

At the end of March 2004, a planning workshop was held in both micro-regions. Because of the limited participation in the visioning workshop in Kiskőrös, the management team did its best to mobilise a larger group of stakeholders for the strategic planning workshop, resulting in a group of approximately 50 people. Since having a commonly shared vision is essential to a participatory planning process, the practices of scenario analysis and visioning were again carried out in the planning workshop, and activities for the strategy were also defined. The workshop was concluded a success, participants expressing their commitment towards the development process. It was good to see how the different ideas could come together to form a vision and an activity plan with which everybody was satisfied.

In order to reinforce some of the ideas and to look for answers to certain questions in Paks, two outside experts were invited to give a lecture covering the subjects of EU subsidies and tourism possibilities. Later, the micro-region management team organised the planning workshop, inviting more than 100 stakeholders. Unfortunately, this time Paks suffered from the same problem as Kiskőrös had: not much more then 20 people came together. How to mobilise people successfully continued to be a difficult issue in both micro-regions. What proved to be the best practice was to invite a few (10-20) key committed people they personally knew and to ask them to invite other interested people. With this strategy, a snowball effect could bring together a considerable group of people for a workshop, when it was well timed.

After all the participatory workshops and events, the information that emerged from the process of PSA was further synthesized. The work was carried out by members of the PSA working groups and the micro-regional managers, in small workshops from May to June. The most challenging task was to make use of the ‘soft’ information in the strategy. To find the best hierarchy for and inner consistency of the strategies, the working groups used the Logi-
cal Framework tool. After documentation, the strategies were reviewed by the LACs.

The last element of the process will be a final conference which is planned to be held in February 2005, with the aim of disseminating the ideas behind the participatory planning process and the learnings from the experiences of the two pilot micro-regions.

Some major learnings:
- Creating commitment and mobilising of stakeholders for co-operation is a difficult process with ups and downs, especially in the initial phase.
- Going through a participatory process requires considerable capacity and skills.
- Flexibility is needed in using the different tools.
- Timing of events as well as the form in which events take place are critical to the quality of the information to be obtained.
2. **Step by Step - Managing the Development Process**

This section provides a step-by-step guide for undertaking a participatory planning process that will result in a rural development strategy. The micro-regional level will be the focus here; however, the process, with some adaptation, would also be very appropriate to rural development planning at other scales.

As already discussed in *Section 1*, the process described here is based on two key ideas. One, that rural development will only succeed if there is a high level of input and support from a broad range of community, business and government stakeholders. A top-down plan that very few people understand is unlikely to drive successful rural development. Two, what is important is not the plan itself but the ongoing process of planning. In today’s world, things change rapidly, so plans are quickly outdated and need to be revised based on new circumstances and on what has been learned from trying to implement the first version of the plan. Also, it is the process of planning, and not the plan, that builds the understanding and commitment amongst the regional community necessary to bring about innovation and change.

The (participatory) planning process is presented as six phases with each phase containing a number of steps (*see Table 1*). Nearly each phase has one or more key events, comprising the main meetings, workshops or information gathering activities that enable stakeholder participation in the planning process. Good participatory planning takes time, so you should expect the sort of process outlined here to take about one year, depending on the depth of analysis and how often people are prepared to meet.

In summary, the planning process involves starting with a small group that gets things going. This group then engages with a wider group in the community to identify key regional issues and to focus the planning process. This is best done by holding a workshop for about 60 people representing a good cross-section of interests and organisations from business, government and civil society. From then on, more detailed investigations can be carried out using what is in this guide called Participatory Situation Analysis. This part of the process provides a more detailed knowledge of issues and concerns in the region and of people’s ideas for future development. This can be done through many small discussion (focus) groups with representatives from different sectors and interests. Based on this information, a series of participatory workshops can be held to develop a vision for the region and to identify key strategies to be followed. It will probably be necessary to establish smaller working groups to elaborate the strategies in detail. Finally, follow-up is needed to make sure that the planning process leads to action. Throughout the process, it is important to be constantly reviewing progress and making improvements as well as keeping those not directly involved informed about what is happening.
To make the guide understandable, the phases and steps are presented in a linear and perhaps oversimplified way. A real participatory planning process is likely to be unpredictable and probably much ‘messier’ than the guide makes it seem. Consequently, what is presented is intended only as a rough guide and should not be taken as a ‘blueprint’ or ‘recipe’ to be followed exactly.

As mentioned in Section 1, there are many different participatory tools and methods that can be used to help people work effectively in group situations. These tools help groups to visualise and analyse problems and to arrive at decisions. They are also designed to ensure that everyone is heard and has an opportunity to contribute his/her ideas. For each of the steps or key events, this section of the guide tells you what participatory tools can be used. These tools are then explained in detail in Section 3 of the guide.

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Ongoing phases

**Capacity Building**

Monitoring & Evaluation, Learning and Adapting

1. Initiate the planning process.
2. Get to know and attract the key people.
3. Establish commitment from the start.
4. Get the context understood.
5. Outline the planning process.
6. Explore institutional options.

1. Explain the planning process to a wider group of stakeholders.
2. Expand the stakeholder analysis.
3. Identify main issues and concerns of different stakeholder groups.
4. Elaborate and agree on the planning process.
5. Agree on institutional arrangements and responsibilities.
6. Establish a communication plan.

1. Prepare for the situation analysis.
2. Gather background information.
3. Explore local knowledge and perceptions.
4. Undertake additional investigation.
5. Synthesize the information.

1. Give feedback on PSA.
2. Analyse scenarios.
3. Generate a vision.
4. Identify key actions/strategies to follow.

1. Identify sub-strategy working groups.
2. Get an overview of all the results.
3. Set priorities.
4. Formulate and finalise strategies.
5. Disseminate the strategy: strategy workshop.

1. Strengthen partnerships.
2. Investigate implementation opportunities.
3. Plan projects in detail.
4. Prepare applications, manage and implement projects.

**Event**

**Orientation Workshop**

**Focusing Workshop**

**Several meetings, Workshops**

**Visioning Workshop**

**Strategy Workshop**

**Several Meetings, Workshops**

The process here described is based on the micro-regional planning pilot studies, introduced in the previous Section, and good practices from experiences in other countries.
Before beginning with the Getting Started phase, some terms need to be introduced that describe the different stakeholder groups and organisational arrangements. The process begins with what will be called the **Initiating Group**. This is the group of people that initially gets things going. Generally, however, at some point a more formalised, representative group will need to be established that is seen by most (if not all) stakeholder groups to be a legitimate representative group. In this guide, this group is referred to as a **Local Area Committee** (LAC). The LAC will generally have close linkages with the Micro-Regional Association. The LAC will need to be supported by a core co-ordination and facilitation group that does much of the hard work and carries out day-to-day activities (called the **Co-ordination Group** in this guide). The Co-ordination Group may be supported by a number of **Working Groups** that deal with specific sectors or issues.

### 2.1 Phase 1

**Getting Started**

There is much to be thought about and organised during the Getting Started phase. Who should be involved? What organisational structures will be needed to support the planning process? How long will the process last and what will be the key activities? Who will take responsibility for what? How will the process be communicated to the wider community?

Participatory planning processes often go wrong right at the start. Sometimes key people are left out, sometimes expectations are set too high, or perhaps responsibilities are unclear and nothing happens. Careful thinking during the Getting Started phase will help avoid some of these common pitfalls.

By the end of the setting-up phase, it is important to have the key stakeholders on board, a clear idea of how the rest of the planning process will be implemented, clear roles and responsibilities and as much interest and commitment from the wider community as possible.

It will often be the case that participatory planning is a new way of ‘doing business’ for many people. Consequently, it is necessary to discuss in detail what this means and it will probably be helpful to have some introductory training sessions. The services of an experienced participatory planning facilitator to support the process and help with capacity building will often be particularly essential during this phase.

During the Getting Started phase, the Initiating Group will need to meet regularly. A key event for this phase is the Orientation Workshop. The idea is to have a well-facilitated small workshop for the Initiating Group and a limited number of other key stakeholders. This workshop will contribute to the main steps of the Getting Started phase. It may also be an opportunity for some
basic training and orientation on participatory planning for those not familiar with the approach.

**Step 1: Initiate the planning process**

How does a participatory planning process get going and who initiates it? This will probably vary between different regions. Perhaps those responsible for the existing planning (mayors and micro-regional managers) will decide that they would like to make the process more inclusive. Or, a group of local business leaders might be concerned about economic decline and will, in consultation with key local and regional government people, initiate the process.

Wherever the initial inspiration originates, the first step is to get together a core group of key people that can help shape and drive the process – the Initiating Group. Box 18 describes important tasks for this group, which will generally include key community leaders, mayors, business leaders, and the micro-regional manager. It will often be the case that the Micro-regional manager is the most suitable person to convene the group and carry out basic organisational tasks. It will also be helpful to include people with participatory planning experience in the early discussions. Also, if this group consists only of ‘high profile’ and hence very busy people there may be nobody that has the time to actually make things happen. So, think about creating a balanced Initiating Group that has the diversity, experience, skills and time to get things going well at the start.

**Step 2: Get to know and attract people**

A key principle of effective participatory planning is to involve people as much as possible right from the start. Apart from the value of being able to draw on different expertise and perspectives, if people feel left out you may lose their support and find that they try to undermine the process. Consequently, a key task for the Initiating Group is to map out who the key players in the region are (see Box 19) and to make initial contact with them. Of course, if you try to involve everybody all of the time in everything it will be very time consuming and not very efficient. A key challenge then is to find the right balance between efficiency and participation.

Understanding of the different stakeholder groups and their interests will develop during the planning process and will need to be revisited a number of times. The snowball method can be a useful way of identifying key stakehold-
ers. Each time you talk with people you ask them who else they think would be important to involve.

**Step 3: Establish commitment from the start**

To achieve good results from a participatory planning process, one requires a high level of commitment from regional leaders and from those co-ordinating and implementing the process on a day-to-day basis. To establish this commitment from the start, it is important to create a common understanding about why the process is being undertaken, how it will be done and what the general outcomes should be.

This commitment should be re-strengthened and radiated throughout the process. It needs to be recognised that participatory planning will always have its difficulties and frustrations. Therefore, the commitment should embrace the participatory process as a whole from the beginning to the very end. It has to encompass the conditions needed to secure success including awareness-raising, efforts needed to make the planning operational, as well as having financial resources to cover the whole process.

To establish this understanding and shared commitment, the following need consideration:

- **Who is going to be the owner of the process?** In the wider sense, the owner of a participatory planning process is the local community itself or the population of a wider/narrower area. In the narrower sense, the owner of the process is the decision-making body representing the local community. The owner of the process holds responsibility for the process as a whole and has a major role in setting the goals and expectations related to the participatory process itself and the final product. It also makes decisions on issues like institutional set-up, fund-raising and making use of its final outcomes.

- **Who is going to manage and facilitate the process?** The organisational set-up and management of the process needs to be agreed upon. This means that the key organisations to be involved should be identified and their roles clarified. Tasks of co-ordination, communication, managing and organising the process have to be divided. A facilitation schedule that guides, and a facilitator to support the participatory process have to be agreed upon. That requires a clear sequencing and shaping of the process.

- **The first steps of the process need to be defined.**

  Have a meeting with the Initiating Group in which the context and set-up of the process is going to be elaborated. This can be at a second meeting, but might also be done during the same start-up meeting in which the Core Group is established. During this meeting, deal with the following issues:
  - assessing the overall situation that calls for a participatory planning exercise – clarifying why we need to apply a participatory approach;
  - briefly discussing what we already have: existing planning documents, their values and shortcomings as core group members see them; the local knowledge, experiences, expectations and human capacities available related to the participatory approach;
– providing the participants with an appropriate understanding of the participatory learning procedure and the likely emerging difficulties;
– preparing a list of possible key players to be involved in the process further on; this will reveal a wider group of key actors of the participatory process from among the key figures of the most important interest/target groups of the area concerned;
– clarifying the major outcomes and the specific impacts of participatory planning - that is, empowerment on the one hand and a development plan (strategy/programme) shared by the community, on the other;
– agreeing upon a ‘preparatory task list’ fixing the next steps until the official start of the participatory planning exercise and establishment of the appropriate community/micro-regional level organisations/institutions; volunteers from the group should take on the implementation of tasks.

Step 4: Get the context understood

As introduced in Section 1, Micro-regional planning and development takes place within the context of National and European policies and programmes as well as global economic trends. It is important for the Initiating Group to be aware of these policies and programmes and how they impact on, or can be used to support, micro-regional development. For example, if it is clear that the micro-region has a good opportunity for attracting LEADER programme funding this can be an important motivation for co-operation to develop a good regional strategy.

One of the reasons for micro-regional (rural) economic and social decline is that there is insufficient understanding of and responsiveness to changing market conditions. An important aspect of the participatory planning processes is to help different sectors and subsectors become aware of these external trends and develop strategies for responding.

For this, the Initiating Group and later the LAC and Co-ordinating Group need to be up-to-date on the wider context of policies, programmes and market trends.

Ways to develop this understanding of the wider context include:
– brainstorming (see Subsection 3.1.4) with informed micro-regional people;
– inviting input from the Country Development Council or national-level government agencies;
– linking with experts in universities; and
– using the internet to gain information about different policies and programmes.

Step 5: Outline the planning process

Before starting to work with the wider community on the participatory planning process, the Initiating Group needs to have a general idea of how the process will work. For example: over what period of time will it run, who will be involved, what key community participation events will be conducted,
what resources will be needed and are available and what will be the outcomes? This outline of the process may of course change once more people are consulted and new ideas are collected. However, it will be easier to communicate with the wider community if concrete ideas and proposals can be presented.

It is important to consider how the planning process now might need to be adjusted/adapted to people’s availability, daily work schedule or other local features, i.e. local celebrations, already existing meetings that can be involved, high seasons for agriculture when people are not available, etc. The Initiating Group should come to an agreement on the main elements of and deadlines for the process.

Have a brainstorming session (see Subsection 3.1.4) about the possible different elements/activities of the process. Think about the role, the content and the expected participants of the different activities/events that are planned. Put the activities defined into a time frame. Additionally, ask the participants to identify the first round of stakeholders to be invited to the first large participatory event.

**Step 6: Explore institutional options**

The participatory process will need an organisational/institutional structure to support its implementation (see Subsection 1.3.4). Different groups will make up part of the organisation, each with their own tasks and responsibilities. The groups will have to find the best way for working together and communicating throughout the process.

The Initiating Group will only operate during the early stage of the process. One of its important tasks is to engage key micro-regional stakeholders in deciding on what sort of organisational arrangements will be needed to support the planning and rural development process over the longer term.

As a guide, the following three main functions will need to be supported by whatever organisational arrangements are agreed upon.

- A *decision-making committee* (Local Area Committee): local leadership and other – also non-governmental – participants representing certain interests in the region. This body will be the ‘institutional home’ to guide and monitor the process.

- A *Co-ordination/Facilitation Group* (action group, planning group): a group of people who will do the actual work (executing/leading the planning process) most actively. This group embraces the most involved persons, as well as experts and specialists active in the region.
- **Thematic Working Groups** (participatory groups, focus groups, etc.): partly independently, partly guided and supported with facilitation by the project group, these groups will elaborate specific topics. These groups consist of different people from the community with specific interests or knowledge on a certain topic. Most likely, many people involved in the planning working group will take part in one of the thematic working groups. These groups are formed later on in the process.

**Capacity building: Training on participatory techniques and facilitation skills [BOX 20 – NEED TO REFER TO THIS BOX IN THE TEXT...]**

Members of the decision-making body and of the planning group have to be able to facilitate participatory meetings, sessions, focus group discussions, etc. They will also have to be able to work together as a team. They have to be able to use a number of methods and tools. Mayors need to be equipped for the decision-making process, co-operation with non-governmental organisations, leadership, dealing with the public/PR.

Depending on the experience with participatory planning processes and methodology, of the persons involved, a certain level of preparation and development of skills will be needed. During the Orientation Workshop these needs will have to be defined. The Orientation Workshop can be followed by a separate training event on the topics identified.

The objective of training in this phase is to prepare the working group and decision-making body for the implementation of the process, and to build facilitation capacity in the working group/project organisation. The facilitator will train the people in developing the needed skills.

The main topics the groups might need extra training in include:
- management of the process and organisation of activities;
- communication;
- the process itself (process plan);
- methods for mobilisation of the local community;
- participatory activities, methods and tools, facilitation skills; and
- co-operation, responsibilities, team work and roles.

The composition of the decision-making committee is something that is important to discuss during the Orientation Workshop, to be formally established in a later meeting. The concrete composition of the planning groups may also be identified as a result of the Orientation Workshop, though it must remain open later on so that other people should be able to join when the process has already reached a wider involvement in the region.

Propose a suitable institutional structure and ask the opinion of the local stakeholders. Try to use already existing institutions (committees, boards etc.) Together with the participants, form the different groups on paper and define the roles of the persons involved. Try to label the different groups with the activities defined in the previous step.
Tips
The composition of the Local Area Committee is crucial to the success of participatory planning. Therefore, all members have to be committed to the participatory process and not just to the final outcome of it. The LAC could include the following representatives:
- the most important decision-makers (like the leaders of area-related associations, mayors, etc.);
- representatives of the most influential stakeholder groups (such as entrepreneurs, various groups of farmers, etc.);
- delegates of civil society organisations as representatives of social and cultural groups of the area; and/or
- representatives of other interested parties directly or indirectly affected by the participatory process and its outcome.

In order to acquire adequate knowledge about the whole range of interested parties represented in the LAC, a rough stakeholder analysis has to be implemented, followed by a search for appropriate bodies and delegates of the analysed stakeholder groups. These people are to be invited to the LAC.

Key Event – ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

At some point, you may find it useful to organise a small Orientation Workshop as an occasion to deal with the rest of the steps to be taken in this phase. Include in this workshop the already identified key people and further people who are likely to become actively involved; 15 – 20 people would be ideal.

The objectives of this workshop could include:
- to further deepen the understanding of the participatory approach;
- to discuss the wider context;
- to explain and agree on the process;
- to identify the local institutional/organisations with a suitable background for the process; and/or
- to perform a team-building exercise with the Initiating Group.

As a first step, ensure a clear understanding of the aims of the process. This should include some information about the participatory methods to be used. This is an important element, since the most significant learnings will derive from the participatory planning methods during the process.

At this point, you can see whether the process is receiving a general welcome in the region. In the case of a positive reception, make a quick evaluation of the expectations of the people in high positions in the region. By the end of the session, you should be able to gain the commitment of the key people. One of the most sensitive points of the process is to make the local key stakeholders committed to a participatory process. The way of achieving this may vary depending on the daily practices and understanding of these people.
Give a short and focused introduction about the main objectives, benefits and practices of participatory planning. Give some practical examples, possibly from your own experience. There is no need to go into details here, but some of the methods used might be presented. Ask about the level of participation they have so far reached in their planning practice.

Deal with the question of how to mobilise the community. Work out a plan which deals with the issues of how to generate participation: get enough participants, get the right participants, make people motivated to contribute.

2.2 Phase 2
Focusing the Planning Process

In the initial phase, a small Initiating Group will have got things going and there will be some proposals and rough ideas about how the planning process should proceed. This phase takes this further by engaging with a much wider group of stakeholders. By having this wider input, agreement is reached on what should be the focus of the planning process (for example, all sectors or only certain ones), how a broader range of stakeholders can contribute and the necessary organisational arrangements.

This phase should take the planning process from being the ‘idea’ of a few to a widely supported process underpinned by a legitimate and effective decision-making and co-ordinating organisational structure. During this phase, much of the thinking done by the Initiating Group will be ‘checked out’ with the wider community. Consequently, some of the steps will, for the Initiating Group, be repetitive. However, it is critical to have the wider community on board and ensure that they and the leaders of the process agree on the way forward.

During the focusing phase, you identify the scope of stakeholders that are affected by the process, the main issues, problems, successes of the region and you choose the main fields of development to be dealt with by the process.

Focusing is very important in order to adequately handle expectations and to identify the most effective and necessary process activities, to involve the right people and to ensure widespread understanding and support of the process.

During this phase, it is suggested that a key event be a Focusing Workshop. This would involve 60 to 100 people and take from half up to one day. Establishing this as a high profile event strongly supported by micro-regional leaders linked to good media coverage is an effective way of engaging with the wider community.

As illustrated in the detailed explanation of the Focusing Workshop [see below, following the six steps] many of the steps in this phase can in fact be com-
pleted during the workshop. If such a workshop is not held you will need to think of different mechanisms for achieving each of the steps.

**Step 1: Explain the planning process to a wider group of stakeholders**

It is important to ensure that the wider group of stakeholders understands the proposed outline of the planning process. Transparency at all stages of planning is of utmost importance. A lack of full understanding could result in wrong expectations and dissatisfaction. This could harm the development project/process itself. Distrust among people regarding participatory techniques is easily formed but correcting it is much more difficult. Key words in this stage are understanding, trust and involvement.

This group of stakeholders (most probably invited to the Focusing Workshop) will have been identified by the Initiating Group. As described below, this wider group will be asked to do a more detailed stakeholder analysis.

At this stage, at least explain:
- the concept of participatory rural development;
- the main planning steps to be taken;
- the foreseen level of participation and the methods used;
- the main moments for feedback and the means of communicating; and
- the organisation of the project (contact persons/responsible persons).

**Step 2: Expand the stakeholder analysis**

A stakeholder analysis will have been undertaken to a limited extent by the Initiation Group in phase one. Now is the time to do a more detailed analysis with input from a much wider group of people. As well, generating information about who the stakeholders are (see Box 21) and what their issues are in the process of stakeholder analysis helps to build understanding and trust between all the different groups that will need to work together. It enables different groups to feel that their issues have been recognised, and needs to be included in the planning process. With a stakeholder analysis, one can identify all the stakeholder groups and individuals who are affected by the process, see what their interests and attitudes are and plan actions to enhance their commitment and to soften conflicts.

**EXAMPLE: Some major stakeholder groups in the two pilots:**
- mayors, as the chief representatives of the member communities of both MRs;
- the most influential actors of political and economic life regardless of the sector the latter works in (e.g. leading entrepreneurs, managers of chief enterprises, local MPs, etc.);
- big and small stakeholders in the tourism industries of the MRs, agencies;
- actors working in agriculture:
  - ‘winners’ or the big players of the sector,
  - ‘losers’ (less successful actors) needing new knowledge, approaches,
  - administrators such as village managers, and
  - chief players in the upstream and downstream industries.

In other words: municipalities, minority municipalities, groups of entrepreneurs, civil society organisations, labour offices, churches, village managers, wine judges, producer groups, tourism entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, animal welfare offices, local authorities, county and regional development councils, banks, product councils, national park directorates, retired people, representatives of educational and cultural life, etc.
The objectives of the stakeholder analysis are:
- to identify what groups or individuals are affected by the development process;
- to consider what their approach and attitude to the process are;
- to see how they can contribute to the process, to what extent they are related to the process, and at which level of participation they can be involved;
- to determine what conflicts might exist among them; and
- to define what actions can be taken to mitigate conflicts and to raise commitment.

**Tips**
In case of a complex, integrated and long-running process, it is very important to clarify the expectations of the stakeholders. With card techniques (see *Subsection 3.1.12*), one can do this very easily within 10-20 minutes. The process facilitator gives a short feedback on it.

**Step 3: Identify main issues and concerns of different groups**

In order to define the scope of the process and to identify the fields of development that the strategy has to focus on, one has to understand the main issues of the region. Rural development is a very broad area so of course there are many different issues that can emerge. In part, planning is a prioritising exercise and this step can help to reach consensus on what the most important issues or areas for the planning process to focus on are (see example in *Box 22*). The focus, for example, may be on particular sectors, or perhaps a major constraining factor in development, such as education or infrastructure.

Therefore, it is important to gather together the:
- main successes reached so far in rural development,
- main challenges of the region,
- key issues/problems of the region, and
- main opportunities.

This is most effectively done during the Focusing Workshop using the card technique (see *Subsection 3.1.12*).

**Example**
The main issue in Paks was the alleged danger of nuclear pollution having negative impacts on consumers’ trust both regarding agricultural products and that of the tourism industry. Attention was paid to this issue when interview schedules were organised, when focus-group discussions were conducted, etc. to assess its direct and indirect impacts as much as possible, thus being capable of drawing relevant conclusions on the competitiveness of the related sectors.

Similarly, the issue of trust proved to be of crucial importance in the Kiskőrös MR although the subject that raised this issue was utterly different. Here, in the region of mass artificial wine production the most important task was to assess the affected areas of economic and social life and to make a co-ordinated action plan for all of the affected areas/parties in order to regain a positive image of wine, the chief product of the MR.

**Step 4: Clarify and refine the planning process**

As a result of the Focusing Workshop it will be much clearer to all involved what the issues are, who would like to participate in the process and what needs to be done. With this knowledge, the Initiating Group (or the Co-ordinating Group if more formal structures have already been established),
supported by other interested people can clarify and refine exactly how the next phases of the planning process will be conducted.

There are many different process methodologies and tools described in the literature of participatory planning that can be used as part of the planning process. A few key methods have been introduced in this guide and are outlined in the resource annexes. The challenge for the Initiating or Coordinating Group is to work out how best to use these different methods and tools and to design a clear and logical process. It is important to share this plan with the wider group of stakeholders and to involve participants in adjusting the process plan to best fit into the situation of the region. As already mentioned it will often be necessary to engage the support of an experienced participatory planning facilitator.

**Step 5: Agree on institutional arrangements and identify roles and responsibilities**

During the focusing phase, it will be necessary to agree on the institutional arrangements that will support the rest of the planning process. The main arrangements have already been introduced in earlier sections of the guide. The Initiating Group in consultation with other government, business and community leaders should have already developed a clear proposal for institutional arrangements that will be appropriate for the micro-region. These should be discussed in a wider forum to ensure there is general agreement and that there aren’t any concerns that may lead to the legitimacy of the arrangements being questioned by key stakeholder groups.

It is also important that the wider group of stakeholders see the overall structure in order to understand the tasks and responsibilities involved, and for those wanting to get involved in the participatory work, to be able to find the adequate platform.

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**Lessons learned**

When the mayors of the MR Association voted for the principle of solidarity and decided to implement a participatory planning exercise in the area of the entire statistical MR, they voted for a longer running interest and this was probably the right decision. However, they underestimated the difficulties this decision would generate later on, during the participatory exercise. The capacity of the workforce of the MR Association was not in line with the task chosen. MR managers rooted in the rural area of the MR without having enough informal contacts (‘social capital’), or work experiences in the central town of the MR; consequently, despite the huge efforts made, they failed to include the most important actors of Paks into the participatory planning procedure. This also had to do with some hidden urban-rural or centre-periphery conflicts in the Paks-Dunaújváros MR; Paks, as the only central town with a nuclear power station in the country, is both a special and a very urban place with a relatively new community recruited in the 1970s to work at the nuclear power station. The same problem did not occur in Kiskőrös in spite of the size of its MR as well as the population of its central town being roughly the same. Kiskőrös functioned as a kind of ‘market town’ for its rural hinterland (the surrounding villages and small towns) and thus had more extensive and organic links than Paks. Kiskőrös differed in that its past and present relationship with its surrounding villages and towns was the same, in terms of the workforce being rooted in the central town, for example. These circumstances prevented the Kiskőrös staff from having to struggle with the same problems as their fellow managers in the Paks-Dunaújváros MR.

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**Focusing workshop in Kiskőrös**

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All of the main sectors and fields of the region should be represented in the Focusing Workshop. It is important to gain the commitment of these people and to involve them actively in the process. The roles and responsibilities of the organisational units of the process have to be clear by the end of the Focusing Workshop. Different stakeholders or participants must have accepted clear responsibilities for part of the work or for specific topics.

Finalising the organisational arrangements and responsibilities will be an important follow-up task after the Focusing Workshop.

**Step 6: Establish a communication plan**

To ensure the success of a participatory process, a good communication strategy is indispensable. The aim of a communication strategy is to ensure ongoing commitment and support from all key stakeholders to all aspects of the process. It usually includes:

- Background - a brief description of the background to the programme and the outcomes to be achieved; this allows the communication strategy to exist as a stand-alone document;
- Objective(s) - what the objective(s) of the communication strategy are;
- Target audience(s) - who the target audience is for the communication strategy;
- Key messages - what the key messages are that you want stakeholders to understand and act upon;
- Communication tools - what communication tools have been identified as suitable for delivery throughout the process; and
- Communication Strategy Action Plan - an attachment to the communication strategy that identifies the target audience, aims, methods, actors and timeline involved, and the costs associated with each action.

The plan should be updated from time to time as the process activities deepen in their content (see Subsection 3.1.13).

**Key event: FOCUSING WORKSHOP**

The Focusing Workshop is the first ‘broad workshop’, where a wider group of local stakeholders is invited. Decisions on the round of people to be invited were made at the Orientation Workshop. The group to be invited can range from a selected list of participants to all members of the community who are interested. The objective of the Focusing Workshop is to identify the
The scope of the project in terms of content, process and involvement (see procedures in Table 2).

The workshop also aims to get different local stakeholder groups committed to the development process. Furthermore, lots of ideas and outputs will be defined by this workshop which will be deepened by the Co-ordination Group after the workshop.

**TABLE 2: FOCUSING WORKSHOP TIMETABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Explain the planning process.</td>
<td>- Show the process plan with the help of an overhead projector or laptop &amp; projector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Give a short introduction about the main objectives of the project/process. Explain why the participatory approach is innovative in its methodology compared to the previous planning practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Conduct a stakeholder analysis.</td>
<td>- Ask sub-groups to identify all the stakeholder groups that have to be addressed and involved in the development process. This might include formally not organised, but practically existing interest groups like bicyclists, pregnant women, handicapped people, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Think of the possible conflicts among these groups and plan activities to cope with the conflicts and to enhance the commitment of each stakeholder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Define the relevant participation level for the stakeholder groups. Be clear about the difference between levels of participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-60 min</td>
<td>Identify main issues and concerns of different groups.</td>
<td>- Depending on the available time and number of participants, you can form sub-groups of 5-7 people to work in parallel on either the same or different topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- You can use the card techniques: Ask individuals of the sub-groups to write items (challenges or problems or opportunities, etc.) on cards (one on each card) for a few minutes, and then ask the sub-group to cluster the cards. Ask each group to present their findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Work out the process plan.</td>
<td>- Ask sub-groups to identify activities that have to be done in order to deal with the main issues of the region and to exploit the opportunities. Cluster the ideas and define the main fields that the project should deal with through participatory planning techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Give everybody a copy of the proposed process plan. Ask participants to think over and give ideas about the process plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Agree on institutional arrangements.</td>
<td>- Explain the necessary institutional arrangements that were decided upon in the small Orientation Workshop. Explain the place of different institutions/stakeholders in the organisational structure, their role and their responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ask participants to give feedback concerning the institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Identify roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td>- Ask participants to sign their names to the main fields of the process for which they are interested in co-operating. Ask them to mark whether they would like to participate in the participatory work, and to note their contact information (telephone, address, e-mail). Hang empty sheets of papers on the wall to let participants sign in for participation in the working groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Elaborate a communication plan.</td>
<td>- Ask participants to identify communication channels that can be used to address all the stakeholders and keep everybody adequately informed. Form sub-groups to think about the best means of communication during the planning process and ask them to present their ideas. Encourage any initiatives; for example, gathering e-mail addresses, establishing an e-mail group or homepage, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Name different forms of communication needed: communication between groups, (how many/which groups) and communication with the community - PR. Which level of communication is needed, at what moments is it needed and what is the goal (the subject) of communication? Also deal with how to manage communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Phase 3
Making a Situation Analysis

A good micro-regional plan needs to be based on a very thorough understanding of the regional situation. Local economic trends for different sectors need to be well understood, and emerging social and environmental issues and the underlying reasons for them must be explored. It is easy to come up with a planning ‘wish list’ but if this is not based on a good understanding of the local situation it will be difficult to prioritise and the regional strategy may end up focusing on the wrong things. Very often, programmes and projects don’t succeed because they are designed with an insufficient understanding of the local realities. Consequently, the underlying causes for particular problems will not have been properly understood and hence the wrong solutions become introduced.

The other common problem with planning is that masses of data are collected but very little analysis is undertaken so all the data are relatively meaningless.

In this section, a participatory approach to situation analysis is described, called Participatory Situation Analysis (PSA). The idea of PSA is to engage the micro-regional community to analyse and learn about their own situation. It is much more than just experts gathering information. Rather, it has to do with the empowerment of local stakeholders during a participatory process; tools and approaches are given in order to repeat the process any time or to use these in other cases. Therefore, every step of the process is done by or at least together with local people.

Step 1: Prepare for the situation analysis

A participatory situation analysis requires a very thorough preparation and planning process in order to be efficient, comprehensive and compelling to those concerned, whether they are a workforce or a target group to be surveyed.

Having the right capacities is again crucial and this involves training skills for facilitation (see Box 24). A provisional institutional arrangement might also be needed to make task division clear for every person who takes part in the process.

Identify a **PSA Support Group** who will co-ordinate participatory meetings and workshops. The group should comprise local activists who are interested/experts in the given field.

Then identify **thematic working groups** to focus on the main issues of the situation analysis, like tourism, small-scale agricultural production, wine...
production, service sector, etc. It may involve the same members as the PSA Support Group, but is now focused and dedicated to a certain field of interest. The thematic groups will carry out interviews, group meetings, etc. and will analyse the information. These groups should make a detailed schedule for the first round of meetings. Other preparations are: make checklists, make arrangements to work as a disciplined team (cross-check information), find key informants, etc.

Participants of the Focusing Workshop have identified the main fields where analysis and development should be carried out. The stakeholder analysis shows the set of individuals and groups concerned. From this information it is possible to draft a first plan for the participatory meetings. Nevertheless, it is a process of ‘learning by doing’ where according to information supplied by the first few meetings you may want to revise your plan or add new elements.

Tips
You may find background information on:
- previous agriculture and rural development plans and programmes;
- county spatial development plans; and/or
- county and regional development concepts and programmes.

Step 2: Gather background information

Obviously, integrated rural development planning is not at point zero in a certain (micro-)region. It would be a waste of time and energy to neglect all the data and information that are already available. Therefore, the first step of a participatory situation analysis is to gather all the existing background information that might be useful for the planning process.

Working groups could make an inventory of existing information about the region. This includes:
- the analysis of previous plans and strategies;
- gathering available statistical data; and
- looking for other sources of information.

The analysis of previous plans and strategies should focus on: fields of development, successes, the applied level of participation, and lessons learned. When analysing statistical data, always try to draw trends, possibly using statistics of earlier years as well.

For the evaluation of previous strategy documents, one may want to use the checklist included in Sub-section 3.1.13. It may also be helpful to summarise background information and to present it during stakeholder discussion meetings and spread it as a written summary for all the members of the working groups.
Tips
When you start gathering information and statistical data about the region, it may be useful to consider the so-called ‘80-20 rule’. This is based on the practical experience that discovering 80% of the information usually requires 20% of your time and energy, while the missing 20% of the information will take 80% of your time and energy. Thus in the first round, you may be satisfied with the easily available 80% and then if special information is needed, you can choose to focus on it specifically.

Step 3: Explore local knowledge and perceptions

The heart of a PSA is the exploration of local knowledge through various techniques, like group discussions, interviews and questionnaires (see sub-section 3.1. It is very important to plan in detail which stakeholders to survey and how. After an initial plan, it is possible to elaborate draft interview sheets and questionnaires.

The goal of these activities is to collect information about the current conditions in the region, specific interests and initiatives, the perception of the local community of problems and trends, the wishes and needs of the members of the community. There is a large quantity of ‘soft’ data likely to come up from these surveys. Other but not less important goals of the process of participatory situation analysis are to generate local knowledge and a common understanding of the situation, to initiate communication and partnerships among local stakeholders and to maintain a learning process in the region.

The benefits of group discussions are numerous:
- The members of the group come to a common understanding and/or bring up hidden conflicts.
- The members of the group start thinking in a more structured way about problems and solutions.
- Information about the interests and viewpoints of a certain stakeholder group is gained.
- Co-operation and partnership can be generated and the commitment of the members of the group achieved.

Organise focus group discussions first in order to see the attitudes and conflicts of certain stakeholder groups. This will deliver a lot of ‘soft’ information. Based on these results, the support groups can decide on the best tools and practices to use with the survey. Group meetings can be used to do SWOT analyses (Analyses of Opportunities, Threats, Strengths and Weaknesses) and problem tree exercises (see sub-section 3.1.5), as well as to gain ideas for improvements.
For certain types of information sources, compile questionnaires. These aim to survey people who are difficult to gather together or visit, to reach larger groups and more people at once, or to clarify or complement information derived from group discussions. It is usually necessary to interview key informants in the region. The focus group discussions may also point to some key persons who are very important to interview in order to see the situation more clearly and to gain these people’s commitment for the development process.

Example: Social and economic impact assessment

Social and economic impact assessment is a rather difficult exercise. On the one hand, one single project rarely has an impact assessable on the scale of the local/micro-regional economy or society. It is a realistic task, however, in case of large-scale projects, such as large infrastructural development or green-field investments providing hundreds of jobs thus enhancing the capacity of the local/micro-regional labour market and generating major structural changes on the demand market of labour. Such projects, however, usually go beyond the competence of rural development planning.

Similarly sound impacts can be generated with the help of rural development planning/programming if the exercise is aimed at creating a local action plan financed on a programme basis. So far, it has been the LEADER-type experimental programme that has exclusively provided an example for programme financing in Hungary, to be continued in the framework of ARDOP. In the strategy and action plan of LAGs, the measures should be implemented via individual/joint projects of the same field/character and/or projects providing synergic impacts. The co-ordination of the individual projects is secured by the plan/programme and its special implementing rules (animating, generating projects, providing assistance and advisory services for potential project owners, etc.) that enhance the effectiveness of the plan to a great extent.

In case of appropriate funding, the set of similar and/or joint projects can generate structural changes in the local or micro-regional economies by, for example, introducing new activities (food processing, crafts, rural tourism, etc.) or re-strengthening enterprises directly or indirectly.

For example, a bicycle route can provide indirect spin-off effects by attracting more tourists into the area, leading to the development/support of small service industries, whilst a measure aimed at promoting the joint investments of catering and other tourist services represents a direct intervention channel towards the targeted activities. The impact of the two measures re-strengthened by synergy is a stronger tourist sector in the area with dual effects on the local economy and society. Diversification gets stronger, some new jobs might be generated, existing jobs saved, the income of the population may stagnate or grow, the competitiveness of micro-enterprises could improve, altogether resulting in a more balanced social structure, an enhanced way of life with fewer social tensions.

Tips

Key informants useful to interview may include:
- experts who know the local situation well,
- entrepreneurs having a major influence on the region,
- high-position local and regional politicians,
- heads of micro-regional boards/associations, and
- leaders of civil society organisations.

Box 26 enumerates the different lessons learned about participation during this process. Luckily, in spite of the problems mentioned, when people came, they were usually active in discussion groups. Also, the last points mentioned were not typical although they were significant.

Lessons learned about Participation

As invited participants showed up rather unevenly, focus group discussions reflected the following shortcomings:
- Few participants showed up as a result of the lack of capacity of the planning team to advertise these events more effectively and/or to find ‘agents’ in all sub-regions who would invite potential participants in person.
- The poor interest shown could also be the consequence of two or more parallel events; people, of course, did not allow interested parties to participate in more than one meeting.
- People from the surrounding settlements failed to be attracted due to their reluctance to invest energy, money and time to participate in an event away from their dwelling place.
- Mistrust emerged in some focus-group discussions, particularly though not exclusively involving entrepreneurs, reflecting a failure to transmit the message about the importance of participatory planning.
**Step 4: Undertake additional investigations**

During the process of the participatory situation analysis it may turn out that additional information is needed on certain fields. Not all information can be generated by local stakeholders or officials. For certain issues, additional facts, figures or insights are needed to ensure an appropriate quality of the plans. This can be market research, information about existing practices in farms or firms, land-use structures or ownership data, funding possibilities, etc. It is important to realise in time what additional data requirements there are, in order to initiate timely collection. To work cost- and time-efficiently, the ‘80-20’ rule (refer to Subsection 2.3.2) should be kept in mind. Additional investigation can be made in the form of studies, data collection or lectures of outside experts.

**Farm modelling in the pilot regions**

During the PRIDE-H project, researchers of KGI - Szent-István University performed a more in-depth study on the agricultural structure of the two pilot micro-regions. The study surveyed local stakeholder groups, and then focused on some farms that more or less represent the average farm of its kind in the region. Farm data about inputs and outputs were analysed in detail in order to assess the economic viability of the farms at present and in the future (applying EU support mechanisms). Such farm models can be used to support the most feasible scenarios for the future. It also fulfils the function of making farmers aware of the economic potential and to think strategically about the future. Activities to support future scenarios could take on different forms; e.g., changing the production (products/techniques), changing the farm structure (size/layout), expanding the farm to include other activities (i.e. agri-environment, farm tourism), etc.

The pilot study learned that farm modelling in Hungary is still at a stage of infancy. This means that normative figures for different farm types are hardly available. It also showed that reliable figures regarding land use/ownership are not easily available.

**Step 5: Synthesize the information**

Analysis of the information gained from all the different sources is a crucial point of the process (see example in Box 27). It is always a sensitive question as to who should carry out the synthesis of information. It is usually easier to ask the thematic working groups to only conduct the participatory meetings than to have them do the synthesis as well. On the other hand, our goal is to keep the knowledge in local hands as much as possible and to maintain the learning process.

Ask every support group to make a synthesis of their work when it is almost finished. There can be sessions held with the participation of the members of the groups who conducted group discussions, interviews, etc. Pay attention to the adequate use of ‘soft’ information, too (see Box 29). You can do problem tree analysis for the field of each support group (refer to Box 28).

Synthesize the results of the support group sessions in a joint workshop. Find linkages among the thematic problem trees thus creating an overall micro-regional problem tree. Make an overall SWOT analysis, too. Cluster the activities that were brought up during the process to be carried out in order to solve problems.
2.4 Phase 4
Developing a Micro-regional Vision

Visioning is a way of finding common goals to be reached in the future and common ground for different interests. Before forming the vision, it is useful to assess possible scenarios; i.e. potential directions in which the region may develop according to external and internal trends. Obviously, it may involve negative directions as well. On the basis of the vision, we can identify main activities that need to be carried out to move development into the direction of the vision.

**Step 1: Give feedback on PSA**

The knowledge brought up by PSA has to be spread so every opportunity will be taken to give feedback to groups of stakeholders. It also aims to generate a common awareness of the problems, issues and opportunities of the region. This will be the base upon which to build strategies.

**Step 2: Analyse scenarios**

As an underlying basis for visioning, scenario analysis is a good exercise. The basic principle of scenario planning is to understand as well as possible likely future trends based on an analysis of the consequences of the most likely factors to occur in the future. Basic questions are for example: What would be the scenario for the region if the major regional income-earner collapsed? What would be the alternatives? What would be the scenario for a ‘do nothing’ response?

Scenario analysis involves constructing stories about different plausible future situations affected by external influences and trends (Box 30 provides an example). Essentially, scenario analysis involves asking ‘What if?’ It gives the participants insight and understanding into the way their region develops and into the consequences development can have.

**Step 3: Generate a vision**

In simple terms, a vision is a shared practical picture of the desired future. Having well-developed and widely-shared long-term visions is critical for providing a common focus and ensuring that you are ‘pulling and pushing in the same direction’.

**Box 30**

Example of different scenarios:

Three scenarios for the Kiskőrös micro-region developed in the workshop:
1. Agricultural production collapses, there will be no other income possibilities; most of the active population migrates to cities.
2. Agriculture flourishes again through local, specific products and bio-production.
3. Certain sectors of agriculture survive and remain profitable and other income sources will develop as well, like tourism.
Very often, planning begins by focusing on problems and on how to overcome them (typical of the logical framework approach). While it is certainly a useful part of the planning process to identify problems, problem-based planning can become negative and miss new opportunities. Also, people tend to function from the basis of how they would like things to be in their lives in the future and not just on problems. A commonly shared vision may stand as a goal to be reached by the community (see Box 31 and below for tips on this process).

As your initiative gains momentum, it is often important to keep re-focusing on your process vision - it isn’t something you ‘do’ and then forget about. It is also important to think of the secondary layer - ‘the visions on how to achieve the visions’. Again, keep listening for new and alternative ways that can be fed into the next elements of the ‘planning strategically’ phase.

**Tips**

- Find creative ways to get an understanding of what people would like to see happen. Don’t limit yourselves to the realm of today’s practicalities. Often, by being daring, you can pick up possibilities you would otherwise have missed (also called ‘blue sky mining’).

- What vision do you have for this region 10, 20, 50 or 100 years down the road? What are the outcomes you would like to see in place?

- With all of these individual visions, you need to collectively determine a shared and common vision. There may be several visions relating to different aspects of your focus: e.g. ‘social’, ‘enterprise’, ‘participation’.

- Don’t use jargon. Your vision statement needs to state clearly what you want to achieve. All participants and contributors need to be able to refer easily to it, to understand it and to be re-enthused or inspired to either maintain or begin involvement in the initiative.

- Putting pictures to the vision often makes it more tangible and attainable and helps to maintain focus and enthusiasm.

It is useful to come up with a very concise ‘Vision Statement’ that makes the story easily understandable. A good example is when in the 1960s the NASA started its space programme. Instead of a long and complicated explanation concerning the means and goals of the programme, they simply stated: ‘We
want to put a man on the Moon’. This was something everybody could understand and visualise easily without going into details.

To have some fun and to encourage creativity, the groups can write down a crazy idea - a possibly unrealistic but nevertheless adequate, funny vision. In Kiskőrös one of the crazy ideas was that the region would become the centre for producing cars run on alcohol.

**Step 4: Identify key actions/strategies to follow**

Identifying key actions with the participants is a step in the direction of translating abstract ideas into a more tangible result. It is a good opportunity to brainstorm on intervention fields and main activities that will lead to the realisation of the vision.

Once decisions have been made about key strategies and directions, the next step is to establish clear objectives, actions and responsibilities. This is a detailed level of planning that can often be done with a smaller group and then shared more widely for feedback.

As far as possible, it is important to establish objectives that can be assessed and tracked over time. For each objective, identify the actions that need to be carried out and who can take responsibility for them.

**Key event : VISIONING WORKSHOP**

The second ‘big workshop’ aims to form the vision of the micro-region with a wide range of local stakeholders. Having finished with the participatory situation analysis, there are ideally an increased number of people – besides the thematic working groups – who have become involved in the process. It is useful to ask the members of the committees and working groups to invite people they know personally. If each member can invite one or two extra persons, the result will be a group of 50-100 people. This number is obviously dependent on the size and situation of the region. The number of people participating in the workshop should guarantee that the vision formed by the end of the workshop will have regional acceptance, so that it can be a base for further planning.
Tips
Managing the expectations is very important for every workshop. With card techniques (see Subsection 3.1.12) you can do this very easily within a few minutes. The participants thus feel that they are active partners in the workshop and they all know what they would like to reach together.

TABLE 3: VISIONING WORKSHOP TIMETABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 30-45 min. | Give feedback on PSA.                 | - Give a general orientation on the participatory situation analysis for those who have not yet been involved in it or are only familiar with a segment of the process.  
- Then ask people from the thematic working groups to give a short review of the results. This should include 'soft' information as well, referring to the general attitude of participants, informal conflicts, etc. |
| 60 min.    | Analyse scenarios.                    | - Draft three different scenarios in small groups. The small groups should write their scenarios on bigger (approx. A5 size) cards (one scenario per card). Usually some of the scenarios are more negative, but avoid doing simply a negative and a positive scenario. In the best case, there are more scenarios, each presenting a possible development direction. A scenario should contain:  
  1. a concise title that speaks,  
  2. a brief description, and  
  3. a list of the internal and external factors that lead to the predicted situation.  
- A person from each small group should briefly present the group's scenarios. The facilitator can cluster the similar ones and form a few (usually 3-5) common scenarios for the region. |
| 60 min.    | Generate a vision.                    | - Ask the small groups to describe how they would like things to be in the future. The basic question is: What would I like to see in the region in 5 (or 10) years? It is possible to do this in an imaginative way. For example, ask people to imagine they are giving a presentation at a conference at some point in the future in which they describe why their development process has been successful. Try to be optimistic, but realistic at the same time.  
- Each group can form a crazy idea as well. It helps to be creative and to set a friendly atmosphere. |
| 30 min.    | Identify key actions/strategies (specific objectives) to follow. | - Ask people to identify (at least 5) key actions that need to be taken in order to reach the vision and also to identify the responsible body for the actions. The small groups can use the mind mapping technique (see Subsection 3.1.8) to help speed up the process. Ask the groups to write down their vision on a flip chart.  
- Each sheet should contain:  
  - at least 5 major changes that the group would like to see in 5-10 years,  
  - at least 5 actions that have to be taken, also naming the responsible institution/person, and  
  - a crazy idea.  
- Ask somebody from each group to present their papers. |
2.5 Phase 5
Elaborating Strategies

Strategies involve all the objectives and actions that have to be taken in order to reach a vision. In the participatory process, they have to build on the results of the participatory situation analysis.

The main fields to be covered by a strategy have been identified in the Focusing Workshop and key subjects and activities have been defined during the PSA and visioning activities. Elaborating strategies builds on the previous phases, with the following results:

- PSA sessions result in a clustered issue/problem/objective map and development opportunities.
- External investigations, if done, give answers to specific problems.
- The scenario analysis gives an answer to the question of how the region may react to external trends, and in what directions the region might develop.
- Visioning gives us the wishes of the community, in which direction the region would like to develop, and the end goal of the development process on a wider scale in time.

Step 1: Identify sub-strategy working groups

Thematic working groups can focus on sub-strategies (e.g, tourism working group) more efficiently.

Form thematic working groups that will work out the sub-strategies. See Box 32 for an idea of what a sub-strategy should include. The thematic groups may contain the same people who conducted the PSA process and were involved in synthesizing its findings.

Step 2: Get an overview of all the results

The first task of the strategy working groups is to gather together all the information and results that emerged from the process. It may need some further synthesizing work. The final result should have:

- a clear overview of all the hard and soft information gained,
- all the problems and issues clustered in a logical and hierarchical way, and
- all the objectives, ‘actions to be taken’ listed.

Example: content of a (sub-)strategy

- Introduction, premises, expectations
- Description of the principles and methods used
- A short description of the situation in the micro-region
- A summary of the findings of the PSA, including soft information
- Priorities and objectives
- Clusters of measures and activities that should be done
- Activities concerning the implementation of the strategy, responsible people
- A communication plan for the period of the implementation

Box 32
Taking the time to identify the key issues and opportunities enables critical thinking about both the obstacles you will have to negotiate and the opportunities you can grab. Understanding and working with these will allow you to work smarter and will assist in the attainment of your vision. The more diverse ‘the heads’ you have contributing and analysing, the better the range and quality of the analysis. Ensure that you have the broad range of interests and expertise represented when canvassing for issues and opportunities.

**Tips**
- Look at the broad spectrum, including trends, issues, institutional structures, people, consumers, moods, resources, markets, workplaces, livelihoods, lifestyles, historical developments, conservation, power and authority.
- What are the key issues that your region has to deal with?
- What are the key threats to realising your vision? How can you manage these? What could happen if you ignore them?
- What opportunities will greatly assist you in realising your vision? What are some of the opportunities and links you should develop or enhance?
- Gather data to justify, support and confirm perceptions, as well as to identify contradictions. Link back to data collected and analysed whilst examining the regional and wider context in the ‘setting up’ component.
- Test your perceptions with the wider industry and community.

**Step 3: Set priorities**

Analysing and understanding the results of the PSA makes it possible to set priorities and define or separate the overall and specific objectives of the sub-strategies.

Summarise and cluster main problems and issues of the region in the given field of the sub-strategy and set priorities. Use the problem and objective trees to see the hierarchy of objectives. You can use planning tools like the LOGFRAME matrix to help define the hierarchy, to structure the actions, and to make the expected results more visible, as well as reflecting about risks and conditions.

Ensure that your decisions are well informed by both the earlier gathering and analysis of information as well as by the ideas of the contributors. This will pay dividends in terms of both the quality of your decisions and the confidence you can have in them. You will also be in a better position to clearly and rationally discuss your initiative.

Be aware that frustrations of not actually committing your organisation to a decision often result in losing people: they have other demands and other things to do with their time, and many can only tolerate ‘planning’ for so long. Unless they see demonstrated merit and action in pursuing the initiative, they will drift away or leave abruptly.
**Tips**

- In dealing with tough decisions, remember to reflect back and use the work you have done in seeking out and analysing information, and consider the values with which you are operating.
- A well-developed understanding of the options available, decisions made and the justification for these should lead to a reduction in the interference of both small 'p' and big 'P' politics.
- You will need to understand the principles of conflict resolution to ensure there is equity in the decision-making process.
- Remember also to consider the ‘consequences of inaction’. Whilst big decisions are not always easy to make, the process may be assisted if you consider the consequences of inaction.
- Often a ‘best-bet decision’ based on information, analysis and collective experience is better than putting off a decision until you have ‘all the data’.

**Step 4: Formulate and finalise strategies**

When all the information is available, synthesized and structured, the strategy has to be documented. There are conventional forms and contents for formulating strategies which are usually useful to follow.

When you have decided on the priorities and the hierarchy of objectives, start formulating the strategy, which actually means writing down what has been learned and what actions have been decided upon in a logical structure. Decide on the structure, using guides, previous plans and experiences. Take care of the coherence of the document and the logical links of the chapters.

When the strategy working groups have elaborated their parts, it is possible to put all the pieces together and to finalise the document with some editing work. The decision-making committee should read and approve the strategy. In case the process had political and financial support, it may have to be given to certain political boards for approval. Then it can be disseminated and communicated according to the communication plan.

Furthermore, important points are:
- Ensure that the strategy articulates: the underlying values and motivations which inform the vision; the vision itself; the issues and opportunities (detailing how analysis of information has supported them); and decisions made about the directions or strategies to be undertaken to reach the vision, including how you will keep people informed and manage feedback.
- You may need to have a series of documents varying in detail and format targeted at the range of individuals, organisations, investors, etc. you need and want to inform.
- Consider different ways of communicating the strategy.
– Remember to always work within the bounds of ‘keeping ourselves and others informed’; i.e. constantly telling the story.
– In short: write it, print it, distribute it, talk about it, incorporate feedback, finalise it … then use it. Later you will need to review it and ensure it is still on target.

Step 5: Disseminate the strategy

There exist different ways to disseminate the strategy:
– perhaps a short public forum where people can hear and discuss it;
– a series of detailed conferences where people can dissect the technical information which informed the strategy and decisions;
– piggy-backing on other stakeholders’ events: e.g. local government council meetings, commerce and industry conferences, agricultural shows;
– writing newsletters; and/or articles in community and business sections of newspapers;
– radio and television;
– the Internet; and/or
– organising a strategy workshop.

Key event - STRATEGY WORKSHOP

The third ‘big workshop’ aims to disseminate the strategy, i.e. the result of the common work. At this workshop, the context and structure of the overall strategy is presented to the wider public. The aim is to make the complex strategy the common knowledge of the community. In terms of implementation, there is still room to plan actions in order to generate commitment and to give concrete points for the future. Another aim is to generate the interest/motivation of people to get involved in actions.

TABLE 4: STRATEGY WORKSHOP TIMETABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 min.</td>
<td>Present the sub-strategies.</td>
<td>– The subgroups themselves present the sub-strategies (actions and operational objectives) to the wider community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>Evaluate the methods.</td>
<td>– Ask the sub-groups to write down successes and lessons learned concerning the participatory planning techniques. Ask them to evaluate how their facilitation skills developed and what advice they can give for those who may want to conduct a similar process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min.</td>
<td>General ideas about implementation.</td>
<td>– Introduce the approach for the implementation of sub-strategies through actions. Explain how to prepare projects, how to get financing, and the importance of co-operation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 60 min.| Action planning.                     | – Generate partnership and motivation by forming action groups for concrete actions from the sub-strategies. Involve entrepreneurs and people involved in the elaboration of the sub-strategies as much as possible.  
  - Work out an action plan according to the priorities. Decide on: 
    - who the responsible body or person for each action is;  
    - when the actions should take place; and  
    - approximately how much it costs and what the possible resources are.  
  - Mark milestones. Divide responsibilities. |
| 30 min.| Closing                              | – Close the process of participatory planning. Emphasise that the process is ongoing, that the end of the project does not mean the end of the process. |
2.6 Phase 6
Implementation

It is a major challenge to find the best utilisation of the documented strategy. The danger is that it ends up on a desk or bookshelf without actual realisation. Therefore it is important to plan, facilitate and continuously reinforce the implementation phase. The way of implementation can differ according to the structure of financing. In most cases, integrated programmes are financed from many different sources. It makes the realisation of the strategy more difficult and risky due to frequently changing support schemes available as well as the sharp competition of applications. However, there are programme-based support schemes (e.g. LEADER+) which do not require fund-raising activities but a quite extensive institutional structure and partnership.

Step 1: Strengthen partnerships

At the strategy workshop, action groups have been formed for the implementation of certain fields of the strategy. These action groups can organise meetings and workshops for the potential project owners and people dealing with issues covered by the scope of the planned strategy. The meetings can be organised according to themes. At this stage, it is very important to find and assist all the partnership and co-operation possibilities, since these have a positive effect on the content of the projects as well as the funding possibilities. A side-effect can be that seeing each other’s projects may encourage and enrich other project ideas.

Grab all of the potential projects and ideas that have emerged during the planning process and contact the originators. Be open to new project proposals.

Step 2: Investigate implementation opportunities

This step is especially relevant in case the programme is not financed as a whole. There are usually eligible funds for most of the projects, but it is an unrealistic assumption that each potential project owner is aware of all the opportunities. It is important to provide interested people with simplified, clear and comprehensive information on funding possibilities.

Organise small thematic workshops where you invite potential project owners and partners. Identify further co-operation and partnership possibilities. Help project owners to find the best funding. To identify possible people and organisations to invite, you should use the relevant parts of the development plan that identifies the scope of the target groups interested in different themes. According to the findings of the thematic workshops you might widen the co-operation and partnership possibilities.
Tips
Checklist for project elaboration:
- what exactly? - content
- why? - rationale
- how? - management
- for how much? - budget cost-benefit analyses
- how sure? - feasibility study, risk analysis
- what is expected? - results, impact

Step 3: Plan projects in detail

Many projects and their associated actions enable achievement of the strategy. The projects have to be well-thought-out and need to be integrated with the broader needs of other strategies and policies that are being shaped in the region. Good references are the Project Cycle Management Manual of the EU and another manual, elaborated by VÁTI.

Tips
- Projects need to be well-planned and well-developed. Seek the assistance of specialists outside your group.
- Determine and then illustrate how the projects are interlinked in achieving the strategy (remember the community, economic and environmental foci).
- Reflect the changes in your operating conditions. Link into relevant aspects of regional/State/Commonwealth strategies and policies (e.g. regional catchment strategies, State business-incentive programmes, national telecommunications initiatives); these are often well-informed and/or can bring resources to your region.
- Constantly check that actions are indeed necessary; unnecessary actions are an easy way to burn out resources and people without achieving desired results.
- Match projects with a mentor, specialist or reference group for assistance.

Planning the projects in detail is a precondition for high quality, successful applications. You can organise workshops for elaborating similar projects (projects that will apply for the same type of funding, for instance) and then elaborate them together step by step (using the relevant application forms if available).

When planning the project in detail, one could use the LOGFRAME matrix method. This provides a very strict and logical structure, which lead to clear, well-structured applications. Use prepared and printed-out LOGFRAME formats.

Now is the time to determine what resources and support you need - and to work at harnessing them. Having planned well, you can be confident of clear-

Capacity building
Identify training needs concerning elaboration of project ideas and project proposals/applications.
Be up-to-date on funding possibilities!

Box 33
ly promoting the projects that make up your initiative to potential sponsors, investors and contributors of skills.

**Tips**
- Secure previously-made offers of finance, materials, information and skills by returning with your plan and refined thinking.
- When applying for grants or sponsorship, be aware that whilst some are set and have little flexibility, there may be opportunities to negotiate independently for a partnership that better fits your plans.
- Target and organise your lobbying efforts - who can you influence and what will it take? Which members of your MSP have significant influence in the business sector, government spheres, etc.?
- Explore sponsorship both within and outside the region.
- Develop a skills inventory so you can match up the skills you already have and highlight skills you need to ‘rope in’, develop and/or pay for. Determine the costs involved.
- Ensure that a proper and transparent process is followed in the appointments of volunteer and paid staff.

**Step 4: Prepare applications, manage and implement projects**

When you have a bench of detailed project proposals and information about funding possibilities, you can organise workshops or provide consultation opportunities for filling in the application forms and to get all the annexed information. Certain parts of the application (e.g. the business plan, or a cash-flow analysis) may need the assistance of professionals and consultation with authorities. Box 34 also suggests looking to past projects to learn from them.

The appropriate structure for implementing your project may be different from the ‘interim structure’, which is geared for managing the development and planning phases of the process. Again, take the time to investigate, canvas and introduce the appropriate structure. Key aspects include: relevance of the project to the region (including the spoken and unspoken politics); the contribution it can make to good co-ordination; and its ability to encourage the development of relationships and partnerships with other organisations.

**Tips**
- Remember that you spent some time assessing potential organisational structures in the ‘setting up’ component (in Sub-sections 2.1 and 2.2); reflect on those assessments now.
- Clarify roles and ensure that all members and the wider community/stakeholders clearly understand the project.
- Ensure that the community is kept informed on how and why the structure was chosen and what to expect.
Ensure that all the responsibilities neither fall on just a few nor are actively acquired by just a few.

Ensure that the structure chosen supports people ‘doing’ the associated projects.

Ultimately, people and their commitment to the initiative and to all the decisions and actions that move it along are what make a successful process and project.

The key players in a process need to dedicate time to determine how to take care of themselves and their team.

**Tips**

- Ensure that you don’t just ‘expect’.
- Determine how people like to be rewarded/acknowledged and thus become more effective.
- Give feedback and ask for feedback; then make the necessary modifications - don’t ignore it.
- Keep people informed as to how the decisions are being made and what progress is being made (e.g. through open days, radio, media releases) — also continue to provide opportunities for their involvement.
- Celebrate all achievements, whether small or big: gaining funding for a small project; getting people to the open day; receiving significant contributions; getting a visit from a neighbouring region or interstate tour; recruiting new staff; and having the quarterly meeting.
- Combine training and personal/professional development with acknowledgment and fun. For example: organise inter-regional and interstate tours, hold a training session with partners in one of the region’s holiday spots, or have a barbecue at the end of the meeting.
- Ensure there is adequate support and acknowledgment for honorary contributors.

### 2.7 Ongoing Phases

**Capacity Building, M&E and Learning**

#### 2.7.1 Capacity Building

The aim of a participatory planning process is not only the production of a good strategy and implementation of some projects, but also enhancing the local capacity for self-managed development actions and planning. The process ends, and unlike traditional development projects, the knowledge stays in local hands for any further progress. Thus, capacity building is a very important element of participatory planning.

The most effective way to build capacity is through ‘learning by doing’. That’s why we organise small working groups for every phase of the process, in which local people conduct and do the actual work. The role of the facilitator is to provide all the essential information to enable a general understanding of
the tasks and methods. In case of more complicated actions, actual training and practice sessions may be required, and thus more time investment as well. While conducting the work, the facilitator is also available to help and fine-tune the actions.

In this way, local actors acquire the know-how of rural development and surely the development process will not end after one planning project is finished.

A summary of the capacity-building actions to be taken during each phase of the project-development process can be seen in the following table:

**TABLE 4: CAPACITY BUILDING DURING THE PROCESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>For whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Getting started</td>
<td>- Getting to understand participatory planning, introduction to participatory techniques and facilitation skills, how to run a workshop</td>
<td>Local core group of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Situation analysis</td>
<td>- Training on participatory techniques and facilitation skills, tools for analysing and synthesizing the results</td>
<td>PSA working groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Visioning</td>
<td>- Methods and tools to be used in the visioning workshop</td>
<td>PSA working groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Strategy elaboration</td>
<td>- Methods and tools to be used, clear definitions. Checklist of a good strategy.</td>
<td>Thematic working groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Implementation</td>
<td>- Methods and tools for elaboration of project ideas. Checklist of elaborating a project. - General know-how of writing applications for funding. - Getting to know funding possibilities.</td>
<td>Thematic working groups, project owners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assisting people to develop their capabilities gives something back to those who have contributed and helps balance the books.

**Tips**
- Teams need all types of people. Take time to value the differences and acknowledge the contributions to be made.
- Develop a skills inventory — what is required to get the job done, and what are the skills of the people involved? - and determine where these are complementary.
- Determine the training and development required.
- The rotation of board/committee members is healthy and enables individuals to develop their capabilities in a supportive environment.
- Sharing the work, often with a guide or mentor, is a practical and powerful way to foster development.
- Investigate the various training and development programmes (e.g. local government/landcare facilitation/development commission) — make contact with these to see how you can participate or whether they can prepare and deliver a programme for you.
- Approach government programmes and business sponsors for resources to develop and deliver programmes.
- In determining your collective skills, tease out the skills individuals have. Don’t just go by their title or dominant occupation, look for and then utilise the capabilities of each person. For example, they might: be a good time manager, be great at organising (e.g. many mothers have honed these skills!), be relaxed talking to all sorts of people, listen well, summarise well, capture the key points, have a good economic brain, present information
clearly, have leadership qualities, be good at facilitation, have strong analytical skills, be good at compiling and interpreting statistics, be able to delegate, have media skills or contacts, be good at linking people and networking, possess effective negotiation skills, or excel at project management or community participation.

2.7.2 M&E, learning and adapting

Monitoring and adapting is a critical aspect of anything we do and not something just tagged on at the end. It enables us to improve our process and our results. The oft-heard cries of ‘Why did they re-invent the wheel?’ ‘Why are they putting good money after bad?’ and ‘Why don’t they learn from both their own and others’ mistakes and successes?’ should herald your desire for, and ongoing commitment to, learning and adapting.

The following actions are important in order to implement a monitoring and adapting system (IFAD, 2002):
- Create a learning culture and environment.
- Define success criteria (performance questions and indicators).
- Develop and implement monitoring mechanisms.
- Review and evaluate progress and identify lessons.
- Feed lessons learned back into strategies and implementation procedures.

Create a learning culture and environment
To learn, people need to reflect critically about what is happening, they need to question assumptions and they need to be open to constructive criticism, new ideas and failure. For an individual or a team to learn effectively, it is necessary to create a positive learning environment and culture. This means that people are encouraged to raise questions and challenge established thinking, that time is put aside for reviewing progress and that there are incentives for people to work towards improvement. Many different things can contribute to either a supportive or non-supportive learning environment. The style of leaders and facilitators is particularly important in this regard. Other factors include whether people feel their ideas are being taken seriously and acted upon and whether people feel they are in a safe environment for expressing their own uncertainties.

Define success criteria (performance questions and indicators)
How will you know when you have succeeded? Success can be determined for different parts of the process: success with your management structure, success in developing and nurturing partnerships, success in individual projects, success in maintaining commitment, or success in keeping others informed.

You also need to determine what resources you need to commit to evaluation and how you will communicate both the process and the results.

Tips
- Ensure that all projects have a portion of their resources dedicated to evaluation.
- Seek specialist assistance. Many industry groups and government agencies have staff dedicated to ‘continual improvement’ — engage their services. You could, for example, get them to run short workshops on key elements of learning and adapting, or provide a critique on your monitoring and evaluation programme.
- Seek information from others about the monitoring and evaluation process — aspects of their process may suit your initiative.

Systems are complex and you can’t measure everything (nor should you). However, by measuring some ‘indicators’ you get an idea of what is changing, worsening, improving, etc and thus an indication of whether you are being successful. Using indicators to gauge your progress will determine if and when you need to change either the way you currently do things or how you are planning to do things.

**Tips**
- Be clear about what you need to monitor in order to provide the objective information required for gauging progress.
- Depending on what you are monitoring, you need to select indicators for inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- Select indicators for different sectors and categories e.g. small business, regional, individual projects. Select indicators that will aid you in determining whether you are reaching the community, environmental and economic objectives of the initiative.
- Use SMART indicators: i.e., indicators need to be Simple, Measurable, Accessible, Relevant and Timely. Moreover, they should be: able to provide a representative picture; easy to interpret and show trends over time; responsive to changes; capable of having their significance assessed by users; analytically sound; available at reasonable cost; and able to be updated.

**Develop and implement monitoring mechanisms**
To effectively monitor a planning and implementation process, various systems need to be in place. For example, there must be procedures for monitoring various indicators, ways of storing and analysing this information and meetings to discuss the implications of the results. Very often, monitoring and evaluation fails because the basic elements of the system have not been put in place. Good monitoring and evaluation requires a systematic and methodical approach, as well as creativity.

In practical terms, monitoring and evaluation can be seen as an early warning system, enabling the project and/or process to be re-thought and modified. Considering it in these terms helps establish its relevance to what you are working to achieve.

Continued monitoring requires commitment and perseverance; thus, the responsible organisation needs to determine how it will facilitate this, including what support it can give to participants.
Tips
- Do monitoring whilst ‘doing’ — it works best if it is an integral part of the project/initiative.
- Determine and communicate the monitoring responsibilities of individuals, groups and agencies. Regular updates can be useful.
- Provide opportunities for the community to understand what information is being collected, how it is being assessed and how it can guide future action.
- Allocate time and resources to follow-up.

Review and evaluate progress and identify lessons
Strategic planning generally involves a high degree of future uncertainty; for this reason, ongoing evaluation is needed to continually assess the effectiveness of the strategy and the actions.

Tips
- Analyse the information collected. Identify issues, trends and themes which will help you assess your progress.
- Determine the information gaps and then fill them from relevant sources.
- Determine whether your goals and objectives are still relevant.
- Determine whether your strategic directions are still relevant and effective.
- Determine whether your group processes and structure are relevant and effective.
- Determine whether the wider context has changed. How does it affect your MSP? What changes do you need to make?

Lessons learned
In order to be effective during the participatory exercise, it is important that the LAC monitors regularly the reports of the Planning Team. If regular reports are missing, it could provoke some problems as happened in the Paks-Dunafoldvár MR. Micro-regional managers neither felt competent to intervene and hire new people to replace workers who quit, nor did they report the new situation to the LAC. They had to face the consequences in an open discussion when one of the most important stakeholders, a local leading figure of the tourism industry, criticised the work done. He found the bias towards small-scale entrepreneurs unacceptable. This situation could have been avoided by regular monitoring and timely interventions. In this case, the Planning Team should have taken over the tasks left open due to workers leaving or they should have found a replacement who could have organised a focus-group discussion with the big and small stakeholders.

Lessons learned are insights and new knowledge that emerge from practice and experience that can be used to improve future action. Good monitoring, evaluation and reflection processes should lead to valuable lessons for the future. It is important to focus on capturing these lessons and documenting and communicating them in a way that will help to improve the overall process.

Feed lessons learned back into strategies and implementation procedures
The process of monitoring and evaluation is not just about reporting. A successful process includes responding to the information and analysis, making the necessary changes, and ensuring that the lessons have been understood, internalised and shared. Again, if stakeholders do not see learning and changes being made where appropriate, they can become disillusioned and frustrated (as happened in the example in Box 35) and may remove themselves from the initiative.

Tips
- Don’t just limit ‘adapting/changing’ to projects. From your now better-informed position, make the necessary changes to all aspects of your initiative, including process, structure, management, reporting and communicating.
- Remember to ‘tell the story’ of how you have adapted or are encouraging people to adapt. Often, people have not had the opportunity to share this understanding, so their commitment to change may understandably be a bit shaky.
- Feed the learnings back into practices you are currently undertaking or may undertake in the future.
- Share the learnings on both the fine-tunings you are making to your initiative/project and the actual process of monitoring and evaluation. To increase the relevance to other groups, perhaps highlight aspects you wish others had been able to share with you earlier in your process.
3. Resources

This section describes the methods and tools that were used in the planning process and provides information on where to find further information.

3.1 Planning Methods and Tools

(This section draws on IFAD, 2002 and Dore et al 2002)

3.1.1 Facilitation of group processes

Purpose
In order to make effective use of planning methods and tools, it is important to have good facilitation skills. Facilitation is needed at various levels, varying from supporting long-term and complex participatory processes involving multi-stakeholder groups, to facilitating one-off meetings with small groups. Skills in group dynamic management, analysis and synthesis, conflict resolution and the like are important.

Facilitation is the conscious process of assisting a group to successfully achieve its task while functioning as a group. In other words, facilitation means enabling members of a group to take part in a process in an effective way.

Tips / Comments

Preparation & Introduction
- Be clear about the objective and intended outcomes.
- Be well prepared but flexible.
- Have very clear instructions and focused questions for each session.
- Keep it as simple as possible.
- Be very time conscious; don't be over ambitious about what can be achieved.
Group Interactivity
- Avoid over-facilitation.
- Use activities to create an atmosphere that breaks down barriers between people and reduces the feeling of threat.
- Alternate between small groups and plenary sessions, but don’t overdo it.
- Build a common language

Recording
- Record all material on flipchart paper and stick finished sheets to the walls.
- Have helpers to write up discussions in detail.
- Write up the workshop as soon as possible.

Involving others in facilitation
- When working with larger groups, have assistant facilitators who are trained in the techniques being used and well prepared for this role.
- Delegate roles and responsibilities.

Frustrations and concerns
- Be responsive to people’s concerns or frustrations.
- Give people time to relax and unwind.
- Frustration and conflict are healthy parts of a workshop - learn how to manage them and don’t be frightened.
- Take risks with workshops and don’t worry too much about getting it perfect. People like to talk together and share their ideas; if they have had this opportunity, the chances are they will have found the workshop worthwhile.

3.1.2 Running a workshop, some tips

1. Explain the background and context for the workshop, and the intended outcomes.
2. Get participants to introduce themselves and, if appropriate, conduct some sort of ‘ice-breaker’ that establishes a relationship between participants and generates a few laughs.
3. Explain the agenda and process of the workshop and the role of the facilitator.
4. Invite participants to make a statement about what they would like to see achieved from the workshop.
5. Run a series of activities that will enable the objectives of the workshop to be achieved.
6. Clarify the outcomes from the workshop and agree upon future actions.
7. Ask participants to provide a written evaluation of the workshop (optional).
8. Close the workshop by inviting participants to say what the workshop has meant to them.
9. Write up the workshop and provide a report to participants as soon as possible.
3.1.3 Rich Picturing

Purpose
To make a pictorial representation of the elements that need to be considered or are important to a particular (project) situation, including stakeholders and issues, and the interactions and connections between them.

Steps
1. Using a large sheet of paper and symbols, pictures and words, draw a "picture" (or "mind map") of the situation (project/group) that you wish to discuss.
2. Start by asking people to draw all the physical entities involved; for example, the critical people, organisations or aspects of the landscape.
3. Ask people to present their rich picture by describing the key elements and key linkages between them.
4. If there is more than one group, compare their pictures and cluster the ideas that are similar and those that diverge. In this way, you can identify the most important issues to discuss, such as critical topics to focus on or key stakeholders to include.

Tips / Comments
- A rich picture helps to open discussion and come to a broad, shared understanding of a situation. It does not tell you what has changed, although this may come up in discussion.
- Think carefully about whom to include in a group. If you want to have a representative picture, then the composition of the group will be different than if you want to have focused perspectives to compare.
- You can also use an existing map of the micro-region, on which the different items/pictures can be drawn.

3.1.4 Physical / Locality Mapping

Purpose
To provide a visual representation of information in a particular geographical context based on stakeholders’ perceptions of any focus issue:
1. physical, such as available resources and their use, key problem areas, (proposed) innovations, where land-degradation problems are and where improvements have been noticed, or regarding a specific topic like maize trials; or
2. social, ownership- or gender-differentiated use of natural resources, etc.

Steps
1. Ask the individual or the group to draw the boundaries of the geographic unit being discussed. Participants can decide how they want to represent this – on paper with writing or using local materials such as sticks, stones or seeds. Remember that whatever material is chosen, you will always need a paper-based copy to enable comparative analysis.
2. If it adds to the discussion, three-dimensional elements can be added, transforming the map into a model that emphasises landscape-level aspects of issues.
3. On whatever medium is chosen, ask the participants to draw the outline of the local area; for example, roads, towns, rivers and property boundaries. One way to do this, if you have the proper resources, is to project an overhead map onto a large sheet of paper and then to trace the required information.

4. Having prepared the map, which could be as large as a wall, people can then add their information either directly or by using sticky notes. Let them record what is most significant to them, and then ask for more detail if something you find interesting is missing. One use of a sketch map is for social mapping of household levels of wellbeing.

5. Several modifications to the map may be needed before those involved are happy with the final result. Include additional written comments such as quantities of interest, if necessary.

6. Once a "base" map has been made, subsequent meetings can use it to make comparisons.

Tips/Comments
- Remember that only those issues that have a geographic distribution are useful to analyse with maps. Maps are useful for obtaining a better understanding of an area being studied, and for providing information and ideas on local perspectives of, for example, resources or access to services/facilities.
- The larger the number of topics to be included, the more complex the maps will be. For this reason, it might be better to make several maps, with one issue/indicator per map. However, this is very time-consuming and storing such maps can pose difficulties.
- Sketch maps represent how people see a physical area or a particular issue and its importance, and are, therefore, not as precise or scale-accurate as formal maps. Also, people will only show on a map what is of value to them. So, for example, where a mining company’s map of an area would emphasise the locations of ore deposits and navigable rivers, the local map of the same area but drawn by villagers may show communal areas, sacred places, pasture lands, burial grounds and agricultural lands.

3.1.5 Brainstorming

Purpose
This tool can be used to gather many ideas quickly from a group of people by letting them freely express their creative and critical thoughts. It can often be used as a first step in a discussion that is then followed by other methods. In principle, brainstorming can be done individually or in a group.

Steps
1. Define the problem you want to solve clearly and ask the group to think of as many ideas as they can about the topic in question. You can give them several minutes for this.
2. Go around the group asking each person to briefly state his/her idea. The ideas can be captured using rich pictures, mind mapping or card techniques. Everybody’s ideas should be treated equally at this stage. Do not let people start debating each other’s ideas.
3. Once all of the ideas have been noted somewhere visible to everyone (e.g., on a flip chart or chalkboard), then there can be some analysis.

4. The emerging issues, topics and questions can later be grouped, sorted and prioritised.

**Tips / Comments**
- It's a quick and enjoyable process. It stimulates involvement and cross-fertilisation of ideas. However, most ideas are contributed from a few quick-thinking people.
- Note that this method does not, on its own, suffice as a data gathering or analysis method.
- The method can work with small or larger groups and can take as little as five minutes, depending on the subject, detail needed and number of people. A brainstorming session should not take very long, as it really is only meant to get out ideas that can be discussed in detail later on.
- People find it very difficult not to comment or evaluate when ideas are generated in a brainstorm. Set a rule at the beginning that all judgements made during the brainstorm will be ruled out until a later discussion. As with most group discussion methods, some participants may dominate. To avoid this problem, you can distribute cards to all individuals on which they brainstorm their thoughts or ask them to brainstorm in sub-groups.
- To avoid that only a few people get involved, you can include some individual thinking time before the brainstorming session starts.
- This method is commonly used in combination with other methods; for example, to start a focus group session.

### 3.1.6 Problem and Objective Tree

**Purpose**
To identify a core problem and its effects and root causes, and to clarify and come to an agreement on core objectives and necessary activities to tackle the problem. This method helps initiate the process of producing or revising a log-frame matrix in a participatory and understandable way. From a M&E perspective, this method is critical at project start-up to revise the existing log-frame and reach clarity about the precise objectives and outputs that will be monitored. (The problem tree is a core tool in the Logical Framework Approach.)

**Steps**

**Problem Tree**
1. Start with a brainstorm on all major problems existing within the framework of the situation analysis. With the group, decide on which is to be the starter problem. This does not mean discarding the others but simply selecting one as a core problem. This is often formulated in quite general terms, for example, "deforestation" or "decreasing food security".
2. Draw a tree and write the starter problem on the trunk. If you want to look at more than one problem, then you will need to draw one tree per problem. Each tree requires considerable time.
3. Encourage people to brainstorm on the causes of the starter problem. Ask for major problems that cause the starter problem. Alternatively, to avoid a
few people dominating, hand out three to five blank cards per person and ask everyone to write down one idea per card. Present the cards and use them as the basis for the discussion on prioritising problems.

4. To focus on the root causes of the problem, discuss the factors that are possibly contributing to it. Examine each factor in relation to each of the other factors and ask, "Is it caused by or a cause of the other factor?" If it is caused by the other factor, draw a line with an inward arrow between the pair. If it is the cause of the other item, draw a line with an outward arrow between the pair. Draw the arrow only in the direction of the strongest effect. Do not use two-way arrows. If there is no interrelationship do not draw a line between them at all. When you are finished, the factors with the most outward arrows will generally be the factors that will drive change - the root causes.

5. Focus attention on these root causes and write them onto the roots of the "tree".

6. For each root cause, write down its causes on roots lower down. Use the brainstormed ideas for this.

7. Following the same procedure as in Steps 2 and 3, look at what the effects/impacts of the problem are and write down the primary effects on the branches of the tree.

8. For each effect, write down its secondary effects on secondary branches higher up to obtain cause-effect chains.

9. Follow this exercise with an "objectives tree" to identify what actions are needed to tackle the (causes of the) problems as expressed in the problem tree.

**Objectives Tree**

1. Taking the problem tree above as your base, invert all the problems in order to make them into objectives. This process then leads into an "objectives tree" with the central objective simply being the inverse of the central problem.

2. Ask participants then to look at these objectives and discuss which of these can be tackled by the project.

3. The problem and objectives trees are a first step towards producing a logical framework matrix

**Tips/Comments**

- The two "trees" provide a comprehensive though simplified view of cause and effect relationships. In this way, the process of creating a logical framework can become more accessible to primary (and other) stakeholders, making it easier to involve them in revising the project design or developing their own activities.

- Linkages are represented with lines or arrows. If arrows are to be used, make sure that everyone is clear about what arrows mean as they are not a universally understood symbol.
3.1.7 Ranking and Prioritising

Introduction
Ranking is critical when comparing elements or information on the basis of strength, importance or other predefined criteria. A simple example of ranking is to ask participants to each assign a number from one to ten to a particular project activity according to his/her view of its effectiveness. This can stimulate discussion among the wider group on project progress. By going further to assign each element a value in relationship to the others, you are then prioritising through identifying the relative weight, strength or value of each.

Social Mapping or Wellbeing Ranking

Purpose
To identify households on the basis of predefined indicators related to socio-economic conditions. This method concentrates on a relative ranking of people’s socio-economic conditions (e.g., relatively well-off and worse-off), rather than making an absolute assessment.

Steps
a. First, clarify what "household" means locally, since local definitions of terms like "household", "compound" or "extended family" vary considerably.
b. Then discuss what constitutes wellbeing locally. Ask if there are differences between households and what types of differences these are. This usually leads to some discussions about broad groups or levels of wellbeing in the community.

Option 1. Social mapping
a. Prepare a base map on which all the households of the area being analysed are located (e.g. a village, a neighbourhood, a rural zone, etc.).
b. Ask the participants to code each household according to its level of wellbeing in comparison to others. Each level can be given its own symbol or colour code. Make sure you cross-check the coding of each household by ensuring there is consensus about the code. In this way, a base map can be made in which households are clustered according to different rankings of wellbeing. Include a legend on the map that explains the symbols and codes.
c. Now focus on the indicators in which you are interested (e.g. "school attendance of children", "involved in a certain project activity", "member of a micro-credit group"). Code each household according to its status.
d. The base map can then be used to monitor the wellbeing of each household from year to year and to relate the households to changes introduced by a project. This makes it possible to examine whether there are any impacts occurring on wellbeing or other socio-economic indicators in focus and, if so, how the impacts may affect different social groups.

Option 2. Wellbeing ranking with cards
a. Each household name is written on a card.
b. The cards are then sorted into different piles of similarly ranked households. You start with any two households, asking people to compare them
in terms of which is better off than the other. If they have different levels of wellbeing, then they are placed in different piles of cards. If they are more or less the same, they go in one pile.

c. One by one, other households are compared to the first two. This can lead to the identification of new levels if they are worse-off or better-off than the households already classified. They may be identified as having a similar level of wellbeing to an existing group of households and thus go to an existing pile. Number each pile per informant, so that you know in which pile each household was placed.

d. This needs to be repeated three times and then an average score calculated, to remove interviewee knowledge biases. Calculate the scores for each household according to each informant as follows (with Pile 1 being the best off pile):

\[
\frac{\text{number of households in a pile} \times 100}{\text{total number of piles}}
\]

Compute average scores for each household as the total of its scores divided by the number of its scores. Households must have two scores to be included, so if only one person knows where to place a household, there is insufficient information on them to be included. Write the average score for each household in large numbers on index cards. Put the index cards in order from lowest to highest average score (best-off to worst-off). Divide the ranked cards into groups where there is a clear cluster of scores. It is these groups that you can then use for your sample.

**Tips / Comments**

- Social mapping can provide an overview of any socio-economic aspects, such as leadership, professions, skills and experiences in a community, as well as its wellbeing. However, wellbeing ranking focuses on a community’s perceptions of wellbeing, such as status, size of land and family, income, etc. In both cases, with your base map and your clustered households, you can focus on any monitoring issue such as "access of poor/middle/higher-income households to water supply and sanitation facilities".

- Both methods are also useful for a purpose or quota sampling procedure, by making a selection from different wellbeing classes.

- By discussing what wellbeing means at each monitoring event, it is also possible to track changes in the criteria of wellbeing to see if people’s aspirations are shifting.

- This method is most useful when ranking in groups of a limited size. You can use it in larger communities, focusing on neighbourhood-specific rankings, but it will be difficult to compare results between sections.

**Matrix Scoring**

**Purpose**
To make a relative comparison between different options of a specific issue or solutions to a problem, and to make a detailed analysis of how much and why people prefer one option above the other. Matrix scoring shows how well options meet predefined criteria.
Steps
1. First be clear about what you are comparing and place these options/issues in a row, along a horizontal axis. The more there are, the longer the scoring will take so, if necessary, prioritise items to be scored.
2. The group next discusses the advantages and disadvantages of each item/solution/issue to generate the criteria that will be used to compare each of the options. Each criterion is placed along the vertical axis to create a matrix. If you find that the number of criteria is very large, either ensure you have enough time to finish the discussion or ask the group to prioritise key criteria on which to focus. Ensure that the criteria are all worded in the same way, all either in positive terms or in negative terms. Mixing the two types of criteria will cause confusion in the next stage.
3. Then start the scoring. The items are compared for each criterion. Decide how much will be the maximum score. There are different ways to establish the number of points to use for scoring. You can allocate a maximum of points per box – for example, 15 as "the best" – or specify a total number of points to allocate per criterion across the boxes - for instance, 25. Participants can use stones, seeds or numbers for the scoring, with more stones indicating higher scores and therefore better ability to fulfil that criterion. Usually, consensus is reached through discussion. Avoid individual voting in the matrix scoring exercise as this defeats the purpose of stimulating discussion to reach consensus on preferred options and understand the reasons for preference.

Tips / Comments
- Besides the resulting matrix, one of the greatest values of this method comes from the discussions that are provoked as participants come to a decision about the final score of each option (as well as on settling upon the criteria for scoring). In the discussion, the reasons for preferences and rejection of options emerge.
- Matrix scoring can also be useful to identify key indicators that can then be monitored regularly using other methods. The indicators are selected from among the criteria (i.e. the advantages and disadvantages of each option) that have been identified.

3.1.7 Focus Group discussions

Purpose
To use group discussion in order to collect general information, clarify details or gather opinions about an issue from a small group of selected people who represent different viewpoints. It can also be used to build consensus.

Steps
1. Determine the participants (four to eight people is ideal). Depending on your purpose, you can work with a homogeneous or heterogeneous group. Alternatively, use a number of focus groups, each one fairly homogeneous, but the groups being different from each other. This enables interesting comparisons.
2. Present the group with a broad question (e.g. "What impact do you think a particular intervention has had in achieving sustainable land use?").
3. Discuss this question for the time period agreed upon beforehand, one or two hours maximum. There should be minimal intervention by the facilitator other than to make sure that everybody has a say. Perhaps you might need to repeat the question using different words from time to time or to probe if something is not clear.

4. Take detailed notes of the discussion. Focus groups are best if facilitated in pairs - one person to facilitate the discussion and the other for note-taking. You can also record the discussion but this will have the usual problems of time-consuming transcription and group inhibition.

5. One way to be sure that the information collected is reliable is to keep conducting different focus group sessions until the data becomes repetitious.

**Tips/Comments**
- If facilitated well, this method can bring out detailed information. It generally stimulates rich responses and also provides a valuable opportunity to observe discussions and to gain insights into behaviours, attitudes, language and feelings.
- However, facilitation of a focus group requires considerable skill – both in moderating the group and in adequately recording the responses. Group dynamics, due to individuals being too shy, dominating, disruptive, etc. can hamper the discussion.
- This method can be used to obtain a consensus view. However, a small group of people cannot represent all views held by, for example, an organisation or community. On the other hand, if the group is not homogeneous enough, there can be great disagreement. So think carefully about the composition of the group.
- This method can generate focused insights more quickly and generally more cheaply than through a series of key informants or formal social surveys.

### 3.1.8 Action Planning

**Purpose**
To identify the specific tasks, resources, timetables and responsibilities required to achieve a particular objective.

**Steps**
1. Ask the participants to develop a table with tasks, resources, date and responsible persons across the top.
2. Then complete the details for all the tasks that will be required to achieve a particular project objective.

**Tips/Comments**
- After having completed the action plan, it is good to take a step back and look with a critical eye if the actions are achievable in the time set for them. Often, one is too ambitious or thinks that actions can be executed at a faster pace than is possible in reality.
3.1.9 Mind Mapping

Purpose
To cluster similar ideas, to see links between them and to pick out the most important issues when discussing or brainstorming. As in rich picturing, this is a good way of making sure that all aspects of a situation have been considered.

Steps
1. On a flip chart, chalkboard or whiteboard, start with the central issue or question placed in the middle of the page.
2. As ideas emerge, print one or two word descriptions of the ideas on lines branching from the central focus (in a dendrogram, like a tree). Allow the ideas to expand outward into branches and sub-branches. Put everything down that comes to mind even if it is completely unrelated; in other words, put down all ideas without judgement or evaluation. Another possibility is to brainstorm as a second step and ask the group to read out the most important issues one-by-one to get the main branches.
3. Keep your hand moving. If ideas slow down, draw empty lines, and watch your brain automatically find ideas to put on them. Or change colours to re-energise your mind.
4. Sometimes you see relationships and connections immediately and you can add sub-branches to a main idea. Sometimes you don’t, so you just connect the ideas to the central focus. Organisation can always come later; the first requirement is to get the ideas out of your head and onto the paper.

Tips / Comments
- Start with an open, playful attitude; you can always get serious later. Capture the explosion of ideas as rapidly as possible. Key words, symbols and images provide a mental shorthand to help you record ideas as quickly as possible.
- Use wild colours, fat coloured markers, crayons, or skinny felt-tipped pens in order to break boundaries. Stand up and mind map on an easel pad to generate even more energy.

3.1.10 PRA

Purpose
Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is an approach to the analysis of local problems and the formulation of tentative solutions with local stakeholders. It makes use of a wide range of visualisation methods for group-based analysis to deal with spatial and temporal aspects of social and environmental problems. It mainly deals with a community-level scale of analysis but is increasingly being used to help deal with higher level, systemic problems.

PRA grew out of a range of methodologies including agro-ecosystems analysis and rapid rural appraisal in the 1970s and ’80s, in which the emphasis was placed on finding ways to express the diversity of local knowledge through facilitation by outsiders. It evolved from two distinct traditions: planners seek-
ing to overcome the limitations of externally-dominated blueprint planning; and empowerment-oriented activists seeking to make their social transformation ideals more pragmatic. PRA is increasingly being used autonomously by communities but is now so diverse in application that it is hard to speak of a single methodology. The term is somewhat misleading because the combination of techniques are equally applicable in urban settings and are not limited to appraisal — they are linked to planning processes and are being adapted for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

PRA provides a structure and many practical ideas to help stimulate local participation in the creation and sharing of new insights. The emphasis on ensuring community feedback broadens the group of people involved. It is increasingly linked to participatory planning processes (e.g. using adapted forms of logical framework analysis). Although PRA was not intended to collect statistically significant information, it is increasingly used in combination with other methodologies to fulfil more scientific information needs and is easily made complementary.

There is no single way to ‘do’ PRA, although there are core principles and over 30 methods available to guide teamwork, do sampling, structure discussions and visualise analysis. The combination and sequence of methods will emerge from the context. “Optimal ignorance” (WHAT IS THIS?) and triangulation of findings guide the fieldwork in recognition of the need to know enough without knowing it all and to ensure that the qualitative insights are cross-checked by different sources using different methods.

The core principles of PRA are:
- sustained learning process: enhancing cumulative learning for action by participants is the focus and has three outputs: identifying strategies for improvement, motivating people to undertake these strategies, and enhancing their capacity for solving problems;
- different perspectives in group-based analysis: PRA explicitly seeks insights from and an understanding of the needs of different individuals and groups, which may be conflicting but will better show the complexity of local situations;
- key role for facilitators: to include different perspectives often means challenging local traditions of communication, which requires sensitive facilitation (often someone from outside the area but also increasingly a role taken on by someone with a local stake in the process);
- systemic and methodological basis: creating a structured process that explores problems within the wider context and not just focusing on a narrow slice of reality - from description to analysis and action; and
- context-specific: unique social/physical conditions means building a process of discussion, communication and conflict resolution - which by necessity evolves out of the specifics of the local context.
3.1.11 Buzz groups

Purpose
Buzz groups allow for everybody to express their opinion and therefore generate many ideas, comments and opinions. While buzzing, participants are able to exchange ideas and draw on their wide collective experience. Buzz groups can be in pairs, trios or more depending on the activity.

Steps
1. Put the subject or question forward and ask the participants to form sub-groups in order to discuss the item for a certain time period.
2. Ask a representative of each group to put forward the results of the discussion and ask the other groups for feedback.

Tips / Comments
- Feedback may take time. One way to shorten this is to encourage participants to shout out key suggestions and ideas randomly in plenary. Another way is to have one group present its ideas with other groups, though restricting them to only contribute new ideas, thus avoiding repetition.

3.1.12 Card technique

Purpose
Card techniques (also called the Delphi technique or metaplaning) are used to organise, cluster and rank information. This is one of the most useful and widely used techniques in workshop settings because of the ease with which many ideas can be quickly collated and organised.

Steps
1. Ask the participants to put each idea, issue or piece of information on a card (or sticky note) which come up concerning the subject or question put forward.
2. Then, group connected items together and give a name or description to each cluster.
3. Having done this, it is possible to rank each cluster. There are many different ways of organising this activity.

Tips / Comments
- The card technique is generally used in a small group or workshop although it can also be used by an individual trying to analyse information.
- Make sure that everybody has the same understanding of the items put forward on the cards.

3.1.13 Developing a Programme Communication Strategy

Communication is a major component of a successful programme. Without effective communication, key stakeholders in a programme may miss out on vital information and may not understand why change is needed. The best
way to approach communication is to develop a clearly planned approach or strategy.

1. What is a Communication Strategy?
The aim of a communication strategy is to ensure ongoing commitment and support by all key stakeholders to all aspects of the programme. It usually includes:

- **Background** - a brief description of the background to the programme and the outcomes to be achieved. This allows the communication strategy to exist as a stand-alone document.
- **Objective(s)** - what the objective(s) of the communication strategy is (are).
- **Target Audience(s)** - who the target audience is for the communication strategy.
- **Key Messages** - what the key messages are that you want stakeholders to understand and act upon.
- **Communication Tools** - What communication tools have been identified as suitable for delivery throughout the programme.
- **Communication Strategy Action Plan** - an attachment to the communication strategy that identifies the target audience, aims, methods, who, when and the costs associated for each action.

2. Why would you develop a communication strategy?
A communication strategy is developed to:

- raise awareness and understanding of the project throughout its development, in particular, how you intend to manage and communicate the key messages and content of the project to identified stakeholders and the target audiences;
- provide the programme sponsor, steering committee and senior management with a documented framework detailing which communication mechanisms/tools would be most appropriate for the identified stakeholders and target audiences;
- ensure the regular communication of issues, implementation of issues and project updates to key stakeholders;
- provide a mechanism for seeking and acting on feedback to encourage the involvement of the key stakeholders, and to assist in ‘selling’ the project to them.

3. How do you develop a communication strategy?
For a large project, a communication strategy should be developed by conducting a number of meetings or brainstorming sessions involving (as a minimum) the programme manager, programme team members and key departmental communication/media staff. For a small programme, the manager may develop the communication strategy.

*What you need before you start:*

- knowledge and understanding of the programme;
- knowledge and understanding of the key stakeholders; and
- knowledge and understanding of appropriate/types of communication methods.
Based on the above information and the discussions held, the aim is to develop each of the following elements for the Communication Strategy Action Plan:
- Target Audience;
- Key Messages;
- Communication Mechanisms/Tools;
- Implementation Details - who, when and cost.

Who is the Target Audience?
The target audience is developed by examining the stakeholders for the project. It is essential to assess their information needs in relation to their roles and responsibilities within the project. Also, consider which media and information networks your target audience uses for their information needs and decision-making processes. Furthermore, it is important to have an idea about the size and diversity of your target audience.

What are the Key Messages for stakeholders?
Identify the three or four key points you want stakeholders to understand and act upon. Formulate these key messages in such a way that the target audience will appreciate them. The result that you wish to obtain from disseminating your messages (informing? motivating? changing an attitude or practice? etc.) also determines how you formulate your messages.

Which Communication Tools are most suitable?
There is a whole range of communication methods and tools that can be used to convey information to stakeholders. The most effective and appropriate tools may vary between stakeholders in the same project, or vary from one project to another and similarly, from one project Phase to the next.

A variety of tools may be worth considering, including verbal, electronic and written communication and information dissemination tools. Media are often categorised as mass media or interpersonal communication. Mass media such as radio, television and printed materials can be very useful when a large audience has to be reached within a relatively short time.

These mass media can:
- set the public agenda and influence what people talk and think about (but not what they should think);
- transfer knowledge, especially when there is a need for it or it fills a vacuum; and/or
- form and change opinions if the receivers do not already have one. If they have already made up their minds, mass media cannot easily influence them.

Interpersonal communication tools – such as discussions, training activities, exchanges of e-mail, conversations, etc. – allow for more feedback and can address the individual needs of the target groups much better. Such interpersonal communication tools are much more suitable than mass media if you want to change attitudes and behaviour of the target groups. However, in terms of time and money spent per individual member of the target audience, most
forms of interpersonal communication are more expensive than the preparation and use of mass media.

**What are the Implementation Details?**
For each action in the Communication Strategy Action Plan, it is necessary to specify:
- who will be responsible for implementing each action;
- when the action must be implemented; and
- what are the costs associated with each action.

Table 2 summarises the elements of the Communication Strategy Action Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience / Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Communication Tools</th>
<th>Who to Action?</th>
<th>By When?</th>
<th>Costs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the Target Audience by considering the following:</td>
<td>- What do you intend to communicate to the stakeholder(s) groups?</td>
<td>- What communication methods / tools are most appropriate for the stakeholder(s) groups? (e.g. electronic, verbal, written communications?)</td>
<td>- Who will be responsible for implementing each action?</td>
<td>- When must the action be implemented?</td>
<td>- What are the costs associated with each action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who will benefit from the project?</td>
<td>- What are the key points stakeholder(s) groups need to understand and act upon?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who should be involved in the implementation of the project?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who are the sub-groups and the target audience within them?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.1.14 Checklist for Evaluation of Strategic Programmes in Micro-regions**

**a) General**

Main issues to be dealt with in the evaluation:
- **Uniqueness**
  Is the strategic programme based on the unique qualities or comparative advantages of the MR?
- **Completeness**
  Is the strategic programme covering all relevant sectors?
  Are the preconditions for achieving endogenous growth (knowledge development, innovation, co-operation, networks) properly addressed?
- **Coherence**
  *Vertical*: is there a clear internal logic in the programme? Are the different steps of problem analysis > scoping > clustering > finding solutions > selecting solutions > setting priorities, properly linked?
  *Horizontal*: are the different components of the programme properly balanced and integrated?
- **Feasibility**
  Is the strategic programme broadly supported by local government, organisations and people?
  Are ambitions and resources in balance?
  Based on the programme: is it clear what projects to start when, by whom and with whom?
To get answers to these questions a checklist covering the different steps of the programming process has been developed.

b) Situation analysis

- **Area description: is the following information available?**
  - location and geography: boundaries, bordering areas, main towns and villages, distance to main economic centres, size, topography, soil types, major rivers and streams;
  - land use: towns, villages, agricultural land, forest, nature reserves;
  - infrastructure: roads, trails, drainage systems, drinking water, electricity, sewerage, telephone (quantitative and qualitative information);
  - population: number of inhabitants, population density, age structure, education level, employment (rate and main sectors);
  - agriculture: number of farms, type of farms, farm structure;
  - small- and Medium-sized enterprises: number of enterprises, size, structure;
  - service sector: level of facilities, type of facilities, access to facilities; and
  - administration and institutions: government organisations, interest groups, business associations, co-operatives, cultural organisations, etc.

- **Data collection and use**
  - Are necessary data included?
  - Are there loads of papers and tables without analysis or very selective use of key-data as part of analysis?
  - Are data used to present a static situation or are they used to show trends (i.e. demographic development, farm size, school enrolment, etc.)?
  - Is use of the data limited to official statistics or are additional data collected as well?
  - Are key-data compared to other MRs, the County or Regional level to demonstrate specific features of the MR (either positive or negative)?

- **Analysis of strengths and weaknesses**
  - Are problems analysed as a chain of causes and effects, having different levels? By properly relating causes and effects, a kind of ‘problem tree’ can be compiled.
  - Are the relationships between different weaknesses investigated or is the problem analysis limited to listing problems without relating them?
  - Is the problem analysis biased towards facilities and infrastructure or are ‘softer’ issues like knowledge, innovation mechanisms or co-operation structures included in the analysis?
  - Are problems/weaknesses ranked or prioritised?
– Is the analysis complete in terms of subjects covered?
– Are local people and organisations involved in the problem analysis? If yes, at what level is their participation?

c) Strategic programming

– Policy context
– Are relevant policies, programmes and projects at national, regional and county level described?
– Are earlier rural development efforts described? Is it clear whether they were successes or failures, what learnings can be gleaned from them?

– Defining solutions
– Is the scope (i.e., what will be included in the programme and what will be left out) of the programme properly defined? Two examples: (i) problems that cannot be solved by interventions at micro-region level must be left out of the programme, (ii) problems covered by others are to be left out of the programme.
– Are the (clusters of interrelated) weaknesses (in for example sub-programmes) properly grouped?
– Are solutions elaborated similarly to the ‘problem tree’, as a chain of measures and results, having different levels? Or do solutions look like shopping lists?
– Are different strategies explored? (Strategies are defined here as: possible clusters of related objectives and measures to fulfil a certain purpose.).
– Are local people and organisations involved in the step of defining solutions? At what level is their participation?

– Selection and prioritising
– Are selected strategies based on the comparative advantages of the area? Refer here to the analysis of strengths and weaknesses.
– Are they in line with other policies, programmes and projects?
– Is the selection of strategies based on feasibility studies?
– Is a cost-benefit analysis part of the selection process?
– Is the selection based on a (tentative) assessment of the environmental impact of the different strategies?
– Are different programme components in balance? In other words, strengthening one field should not be done at the cost of undermining strong points in other fields.
– After selecting strategies, are clear priorities set between the different components of the programme? This is very important as resources are always limited and should therefore be concentrated to a certain extent.
– Is a clear and realistic time schedule included?
– Are local people and organisations involved in the step of selection and prioritising? At what level is their participation?
- **Finance**
  - Is a financial chapter included?
  - Do selected strategies and measures match the possible resources? (i.e., is there a distinction made between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ budget commitments?).
  - Is the programme focusing on one single financial source or is a mix of sources targeted?
  - Which part of the required budget is coming from internal sources (from the Micro-regions or MR-partners)?

- **Organisation and management**
  - Is an organisational chapter included?
  - Which organisations, business associations, groups, etc. were involved in the decision-making?
  - Which organisations, business associations, groups, etc. will be involved during implementation of the different sub-programmes?
  - Is it clear how roles are divided?
  - Is a clear management structure available?
  - Are progress indicators, means of verification and reporting systems included?
3.2 Where to get information and help

Further Information about Participatory Planning and Multi-stakeholder Processes

International Agriculture Centre MSP Resource Portal [www.iac.wur.nl/msp](http://www.iac.wur.nl/msp)

Hungarian Organisations

For capacity building, methodological support and other support in the field of participatory rural planning, the following organisations can be approached.

**VÁTI Rural Development Office**
Magócs Krisztina, Jávor Károly, Sain Mátyás
1016 Budapest, Gellerthegy u. 30-32.
Tel.: 1/224-3100
E-mail: kmagocs@vati.hu, kjavor@vati.hu, msain@vati.hu
Web: [www.vati.hu](http://www.vati.hu)

**RKK – Centre for Regional Studies, Central and Northern Hungarian Research Institute**
1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 13.
Tel.: 1/413-6066, 1/413-6067
E-mail: kovacs@rkk.hu
Web: [www.rkk.hu](http://www.rkk.hu)

**MARD Rural Development Department**
Kocsondi Tamás, Nagy Adrienn
1055 Budapest, Kossuth tér 11.
Tel.: 1/301-4000
E-mail: kocsondit@posta.fvm.hu, nagyad@posta.fvm.hu
Web: [www.fvm.hu](http://www.fvm.hu)

**Institute for Environmental Management (SIU-KGI)**
H-2103 Gödöllő, Páter K. u. 1.

**MARD REVIs (Regional Rural Development Offices)**

*Central-Hungarian REVI*
1054 Budapest, Alkotmány u. 19.
Tel.: 1/354-1381, 1/354-1382; Fax: 354-1381
E-mail: fulekyc@posta.fvm.hu

*North-Great Plain REVI*
4032 Debrecen, Bőszörményi út 68.
Tel.: 52/534-963, 534-960; Fax: 52/534-962
E-mail: bereczm@posta.fvm.hu
North-Hungarian REVI
3530 Miskolc, Mindszent tér 1.
Tel.: 46/509-050, 509-051; Fax: 46/509-052
E-mail: krakkaij@posta.fvm.hu

South-Great Plain REVI
6721 Szeged, Tisza Lajos krt. 41.
Tel.: 62/622-255; Fax: 62/622-256
E-mail: szudaz@posta.fvm.hu

Central-Transdanubian REVI
8000 Székesfehérvár, Gyümölcs u. 20/3
Tel.: 22/501-335, 501-336, Fax: 22/501-335
E-mail: nemesk@posta.fvm.hu

North-Transdanubian REVI
8900 Zalaegerszeg, Petőfi u. 24.
Tel.: 92/596-690, 596-691; Fax: 92/596-692
E-mail: porkolabj@posta.fvm.hu

South-Transdanubian REVI
7400 Kaposvár, Ady E. u. 2.
Tel.: 82/512-423, Fax: 82/512-422
E-mail: gabriella.nagy@ddrevi.somogy.hu

Useful Homepages

EU homepages:
- LEADER Community initiative: www.rural-europe.aeidl.be
- European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund (DG Regio):
  www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm
- European Social Fund (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)
  www.europa.eu.int/comm/empoloyment_social/index_en.htm
- European Agricultural and Guarantee and Guidance Fund (DG Agri)
  www.europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/index_en.htm
- Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (DG for Fisheries):
  www.europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/index_en.htm
- More information about EIA can be found at:
  www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia/ (under ‘Legal Context’ and ‘Guidance and Research’)

Hungarian homepages:
- Information on the LEADER type pilot programme: www.fvm.hu
- The Operational Programmes and the Programming Complements of the National Development Plan can be downloaded from: www.nfh.hu
Managing Authorities (MA) of different OPs:

- Agricultural and Rural Development Operational Programme
  Managing Authority: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
  www.fvm.hu

- Economic Competitiveness Operational Programme
  Managing Authority: Ministry of Economy and Transport
  www.gkm.hu

- Environment Protection and Infrastructure Operational Programme
  Managing Authority: Ministry of Economy and Transport
  www.gkm.hu

- Human Resource Development Operational Programme
  Managing Authority: Ministry of Labour and Employment
  www.fmm.gov.hu

- Regional Development Operational Programme
  Managing Authority: National Office Regional Development
  www.nth.hu

Information about sustainable development
http://www.oecd.org/topic/0,2686,en_2649_37425_1_1_1_1_37425,00.html

The following link gives practical information on how to facilitate participatory learning processes with various stakeholders. It provides theoretical foundations, methods and tools for creating learning processes, facilitation tips, examples, literature and links: www.iac.wur.nl/msp/home.php

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmes/tenders</th>
<th>Useful links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Civic Programme</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nca.hu">www.nca.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Programme on Culture</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nka.hu">www.nka.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KITEA-MEH</td>
<td><a href="http://www.meh.hu">www.meh.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ofa.hu">www.ofa.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mobilitas.hu">www.mobilitas.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institution for Adult Education</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nfi.hu">www.nfi.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Education and Communication Programme Office</td>
<td><a href="http://www.konkomp.hu">www.konkomp.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERREG</td>
<td><a href="http://www.interreg.hu">www.interreg.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interre">http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interre</a> g3/index_en.htm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Agricultural Center</td>
<td><a href="http://www.iac.wur.nl/msp/">www.iac.wur.nl/msp/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phare</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pharereg.hu">www.pharereg.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Wide Fund</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wwf.hu">www.wwf.hu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other possibilities:
- tender observer
  www.pafi.hu
- country level resources (regional development target programme, TEKI, decentralised resources)
3.3 References


Note: An extensive bibliography of useful books and web sites on facilitation, participatory planning and multi-stakeholder processes can be found at www.iac.wur.nl/msp
### 3.4 Glossary and Main Abbreviations

(Adapted from IFAD, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Obligation of government, public services or funding agencies to demonstrate to citizens that contracted work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans. This may require a careful, even legally defensible, demonstration that the work is consistent with the contract terms. Projects commonly focus on upward accountability to the funding agency, while downward accountability involves making accounts and plans transparent to the primary stakeholders. Ensuring accountability is one part of the function of monitoring and evaluation (learning and management are the other two).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors / Stakeholders</td>
<td>Individuals, groups, organisations or agencies who play a role or have an interest in the outcomes of a particular situation or initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>A specific and chosen way of advancing or proceeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>A process (which may or may not be systematic) of gathering information, analysing it, then making a judgement on the basis of the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumption</td>
<td>External factors (i.e. events, conditions or decisions) that could affect the progress or success of a project or programme. They are necessary to achieve the project objectives, but are largely or completely beyond the control of the project management. They are worded as positive conditions. Initial assumptions are those conditions perceived to be essential for the success of a project or programme. Critical (or &quot;killer&quot;) assumptions are those conditions perceived to threaten the implementation of a project or programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>The individuals, groups or organisations who, in their own view and whether targeted or not, benefit directly or indirectly from the development intervention. In this guide, “stakeholders” is the term used for the main intended beneficiaries of a project/programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>The ability of individuals and organisations to perform functions effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>The processes through which capacity is created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Here the term is used very generally to refer simply to the individuals and social groups who collectively make up the social groupings of a locality, region or nation. Use of the term is not intended to necessarily imply a sense of social cohesion or identity between those different individuals and groups, although this may exist. While the boundaries are blurred, ‘community’ is generally used to refer to individuals or social groups outside the formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community participation</strong></td>
<td>Generally considered to be the active participation of community members in local development activities. In practice, however, the term refers to a wide range of degrees of local involvement in external development interventions, from token and passive involvement to more empowerment-oriented forms of local decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost-benefit analysis (CBA)</strong></td>
<td>The comparison of investment and operating costs with the direct benefits or impact generated by the investment in a given intervention. It uses a variety of methods and means of expressing results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>Comparison of the relative costs of achieving a given result or output by different means (employed where benefits are difficult to determine).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical reflection</strong></td>
<td>Questioning and analysing experiences, observations, theories, beliefs and/or assumptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Downward accountability</strong></td>
<td>The process by which development organisations are accountable to their partners and poor and marginalised groups. It entails greater participation and transparency in organisations’ work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect</strong></td>
<td>Intended or unintended change resulting directly or indirectly from a development intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>A measure of the extent to which a project attains its objectives at the goal or purpose level; i.e. the extent to which a development intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficacy</strong></td>
<td>The extent to which the project’s objectives were achieved or expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>A measure of how economically inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into outputs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>A systematic (and as objective as possible) examination of a planned, ongoing or completed project. It aims to answer specific management questions and to judge the overall value of an endeavour and supply lessons learned to improve future actions, planning and decision-making. Evaluations commonly seek to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and the relevance of the project or organisation’s objectives. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, offering concrete lessons learned to help partners and funding agencies make decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitator</strong></td>
<td>A person who helps members of a group conduct a meeting in an efficient and effective way but who does not dictate what will happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td>The transmission of evaluation findings to parties for whom it is relevant and useful so as to facilitate learning. This may involve the collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from experience. Specifically in the context of evaluation, to return and share the evaluation results with those who participated in the evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>The higher-order programme or sector objective to which a development intervention, such as a project, is intended to contribute. Thus it is a...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grassroots organisations</strong></td>
<td>The organisations based in communities that (may) represent the primary stakeholders vis-à-vis the project and can be implementing partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td>The changes in the lives of rural people, as perceived by them and their partners at the time of evaluation, plus sustainability-enhancing change in their environment to which the project has contributed. Changes can be positive or negative, intended or unintended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact assessment</strong></td>
<td>The process of assessing the impact of a programme in an intervention area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>work approach (LFA)</strong></td>
<td>Lexical analysis, stakeholder analysis, developing a hierarchy of objectives and selecting a preferred implementation strategy. It helps to identify strategic elements (inputs, outputs, purpose, goal) and their causal relationships, as well as the external assumptions (risks) that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logical framework matrix</strong></td>
<td>Also known as &quot;logframe&quot; or &quot;logframe matrix&quot;. A table, usually consisting of four rows and four columns, that summarises what the project intends to do and how (necessary inputs, outputs, purpose, objectives), what the key assumptions are, and how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means of verification</strong></td>
<td>The expected source(s) of information that can help answer the performance question or indicators. This is found in the third column of the standard logframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodologies</strong></td>
<td>The overall process for doing something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milestones</strong></td>
<td>Significant outputs to be undertaken during the project, within a targeted time frame. They map out the key steps for the project and set the deadlines for each of these along the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Models</strong></td>
<td>The general design, pattern or framework of logic and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>The regular collection and analysis of information to assist timely decision-making, ensure accountability and provide the basis for evaluation and learning. It is a continuing function that uses methodical collection of data to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing project or programme with early indications of progress and achievement of objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E)</strong></td>
<td>The combination of monitoring and evaluation which together provide the knowledge required for: a) effective project management and b) reporting and accountability responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>A specific statement detailing the desired accomplishments or outcomes of a project at different levels (short to long term). A good objective meets the criteria of being impact oriented, measurable, time limited, specific and practical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational plan</strong></td>
<td>See &quot;(Annual)work plan and budget&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>The results achieved at the level of &quot;purpose&quot; in the objective hierarchy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td>The tangible (easily measurable, practical), immediate and intended results to be produced through sound management of the agreed inputs. Examples of outputs include goods, services or infrastructure produced by a project and meant to help realise its purpose. These may also include changes, resulting from the intervention, that are needed to achieve the outcomes at the purpose level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>One or more processes in which an individual (or group) takes part in specific decision-making and action, and over which s/he may exercise specific controls. It is often used to refer specifically to processes in which beneficiaries take an active part in planning and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
implementation, learning and evaluation. This often has the intention of sharing control over the resources generated and responsibility for their future use.

| **Partner** | The organisation in the project country with which the funding agency collaborates to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives. Partners may include host country governments, local and international NGOs, universities, professional and business associations, private businesses, etc. |
| **Performance** | The degree to which a development intervention or a development partner operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans. |
| **Performance question** | A question that helps guide the information seeking and analysis process, to help understand whether the project is performing as planned or, if not, why not. |
| **Precondition** | Condition that must be fulfilled before a project can become effective. |
| **Programme** | In a ‘process sense’, a programme is a set of projects which aim to achieve a particular strategic direction |
| **Project** | An intervention that consists of a set of planned, interrelated activities designed to achieve defined objectives within a given budget and a specified period of time. |
| **Project cycle management** | A tool for understanding the tasks and management functions to be performed in the course of a project or programme’s lifetime. This commonly includes the stages of identification, preparation, appraisal, implementation/supervision, evaluation, completion and lesson learning. |
| **Project management** | The process of leading, planning, organising, staffing and controlling activities, people and other resources in order to achieve particular objectives. |
| **Power and empowerment** | Having the political, legal or financial resources to be able to influence a particular course of events. Empowerment means a group or sector of society having or gaining powers. |
| **Purpose** | The positive improved situation that a project or programme is accountable for achieving. |
| **Qualitative** | Something that is not summarised in numerical form, such as minutes from community meetings and general notes from observations. Qualitative data normally describe people's knowledge, attitudes or behaviours. |
| **Quantitative** | Something measured or measurable by, or concerned with, quantity and expressed in numbers or quantities. |
| **Relevance** | The extent to which the objectives of a project are consistent with the target group’s priorities and the recipient and donors’ policies. |
| **Resources** | Items that a project has or needs in order to operate, such as staff time, managerial time, local knowledge, money, equipment, trained personnel and socio-political opportunities. |
| **Result** | The measurable output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive or negative) of a development intervention. |
| **Review** | An assessment of the performance of a project or programme, periodically or on an as-needed basis. A review is more extensive than monitoring. |
but less so than evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Risk</strong></th>
<th>Possible negative external factors, i.e. events, conditions or decisions, which are expected to seriously delay or prevent the achievement of the project objectives and outputs (and which are normally largely or completely beyond the control of the project management).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample</strong></td>
<td>The selection of a representative part of a population in order to determine parameters or characteristics of the whole population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation analysis</strong></td>
<td>The process of understanding the status, condition, trends and key issues affecting people, ecosystems and institutions in a given geographic context at any level (local, national, regional, international).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholders</strong></td>
<td>An agency, organisation, group or individual who has a direct or indirect interest in the project/programme, or who affects or is affected positively or negatively by the implementation and outcome of it. In this guide, stakeholders is the term used for the main intended beneficiaries of a project/programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder participation</strong></td>
<td>Active involvement by stakeholders in the design, management and monitoring of the project. Full participation means all representatives of key stakeholder groups at the project site become involved in mutually agreed, appropriate ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic planning</strong></td>
<td>A broad description of the activities that would normally be carried out as part of project development, from start to finish, and the milestones that would generally be achieved along the way, such as implementation agreements, registration, etc. The plan should also explain the different aspects that need to be addressed as part of project development, and illustrate basic principles that are to be followed. The sequence of and relationship between main activities and milestones should also be described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervision</strong></td>
<td>A process in which the legally responsible organisation administers the loan, periodically reviews progress towards objectives, identifies key obstacles, helps find workable solutions and makes strategic changes, as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable development</strong></td>
<td>Improving social wellbeing and economic opportunity whilst caring for the environment. This includes maintaining and enhancing environmental quality and ecological integrity and not diminishing opportunities for future generations by thoughtless spending of natural capital endowments. OECD defined this in 2001 as: Sustainable development stresses the long-term compatibility of economic, social and environmental dimensions of human wellbeing, while acknowledging their competition in the short term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>The likelihood that the positive effects of a project (such as assets, skills, facilities or improved services) will persist for an extended period after the external assistance ends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>A specified objective that indicates the number, timing and location of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target group</strong></td>
<td>The specific group for whose benefit the project or programme is undertaken, closely related to impact and relevance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Triangulation</strong></td>
<td>Use of a variety of sources, methods or field team members to cross-check and validate data and information to limit biases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td>Any object or quality desirable as a means or an end in itself. Values are often best expressed in terms of behaviour. For example, a set of governing 'behaviours' might describe how we want to behave with each other; how we expect to regard our customers, community etc; how we will 'play the game'; or the lines we will and will not cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vision</strong></td>
<td>A statement of some future improved state that the initiative will contribute to. It could embody the basic motives or reasons for beginning an initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work plan</strong></td>
<td>A detailed document stating which activities are going to be carried out in a given time period, how the activities will be carried out and how the activities relate to the common objectives and vision. The work plan is designed according to the logical framework and contains a description in each cell of the work plan table of each activity and output, its verifiable indicators, the means of verification and its assumptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Main Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Common Agricultural Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEEC</td>
<td>Central and Eastern European Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLG</td>
<td>Dienst Landelijk Gebied (Dutch for ‘Land and Water Management Service’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAGGF</td>
<td>European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Environmentally Sensitive Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATT</td>
<td>General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAC</td>
<td>International Agricultural Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-accession (EU programme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER</td>
<td>Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l’Économie Rurale (EU progr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Local Area Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAG</td>
<td>Local Action Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOGFRAME</td>
<td>Logical Framework (a structured schedule of objectives, results and activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>Micro-regional Association of Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARD</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATRA</td>
<td>Maatschappelijke transitie (Dutch for ‘Transition of Society’) MATRA Fund subsidised projects between The Netherlands and accession countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Micro-region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Micro-regional Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSP</td>
<td>Multi-Stakeholder Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUTS</td>
<td>Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques (EU statistical units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHARE</td>
<td>Pre-accession programme originally focused to Poland and Hungary but extended to all EU candidate countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIDE</td>
<td>Practice of Integrated Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>Participatory Situation Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDMR</td>
<td>Rural Development Micro-Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVI</td>
<td>Regionális Vidékfejlesztési Iroda (Hungarian for Regional Rural Development Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPARD</td>
<td>Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRD</td>
<td>Sustainable Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRDP</td>
<td>Sustainable Rural Development Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEKI</td>
<td>Spatial Equalisation Support (Hungarian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFC</td>
<td>Targeted Provisions for Regional Development (Hungarian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VÁTI</td>
<td>Hungarian Institute for Regional Development and Urbanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFC</td>
<td>Rural Development Programme (Hungarian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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