

Writing convincing research proposals and effective scientific reports

a learning module



Part A: Writing a convincing proposal

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Writing convincing research proposals and effective
scientific reports

A learning module

Part A: Writing a convincing proposal

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We would also like to thank Dr Denis Keytere, Director General of the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Uganda, for allowing Mr Sylvester Dickson Baguma to participate in this exercise.

This module is a direct response to a request made by Graduate Fellows of ILRI. The content of this module was drawn from a large number of sources. We are grateful for the authors of these various publications. The content of the module was presented during a training session for the Graduate Fellows in Addis Ababa and Nairobi. The feedbacks received from participants certainly added value to this module.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who either directly or indirectly contributed to the content as well as the development of this module. This is a work in progress and we would welcome any suggestions and comments.

Authors

Foreword

The growth in agricultural research investment was very rapid in the 1970s and slowed down since the mid 1980s. The rate of expansion of research staff has been more rapid than that of funding, resulting in a growing proportion of research funds being used to pay salaries and an acute shortage of operating funds for undertaking research. As national public sector spending on research is falling, many National Agricultural Research Systems are heavily depending on donor funds to support research. This situation is more acute in sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world. In order to keep the research agenda moving, it is critical for individual agricultural research scientists and their organizations to find new sources of funds. While the available research resources are declining, there has been a universal move towards the use of competitive funding for research. Many institutes also started moving towards results based contractual arrangements. That means a successful researcher will have to write convincing proposals to secure funds and be able to widely publish the results (outputs and outcome) of their work to attract more resources.

During one of the interactions between the management of the Capacity Strengthening Unit, and the Graduate Fellows of ILRI, the students identified the need for additional training in areas such as experimental design and data analysis, oral and poster presentation, scientific writing and proposal writing, project management, and leadership training. ILRI also noted that although a large number of theses were produced by the Graduate Fellows, they were not prolific enough in writing scientific papers and journal articles. This module is a response to this request. The training module was primarily intended to assist the Graduate Fellows to write convincing proposals to access the available competitive funds, and also to write and publish the results of their work widely. Once the Graduate Fellows leave ILRI, we also want them to train their own colleagues in the systems they come from. To enable this, the learning module is designed to include learning objectives, handouts (teaching notes) and the PowerPoints used during the presentations for every session. Where relevant, exercises and additional references are also provided. The materials are presented in the form of 'Reusable Learning Objects' so that the users can make use of the relevant sections based on the target group and purpose.

The materials have been drawn from many sources, but the key ones are the training module prepared by the former ISNAR ('How to write convincing proposals' 2003) and a book titled 'Writing and presenting scientific papers' (Malmfors et al. 2004).

Although the primary audiences of this module are ILRI Graduate Fellows, the materials can be easily adapted by our national research partners. The users are expected to modify and change the content to suit their specific context and need. We are planning to update this module periodically to respond to the changing needs and circumstances. Hence, any feedback and constructive comments from the users are very much appreciated.

Ponniah Anandajayasekaram
Manager, Capacity Strengthening Unit
ILRI

Introduction to the workshop

Workshop objectives

Writing convincing research proposals and effective scientific reports:

A learning module



Goal of the training workshop

To strengthen the skills of:

- Project proposal writing and resource mobilization in agricultural research and
- Effective scientific writing



Objectives of the workshop

- To provide participants with knowledge and skills to be able to conceive projects and write them up in a way that will convince donors to fund them
- To improve participants' ability to mobilize resources for agricultural research
- To impart necessary knowledge and skills for effective scientific writing



Expected outputs of the workshop

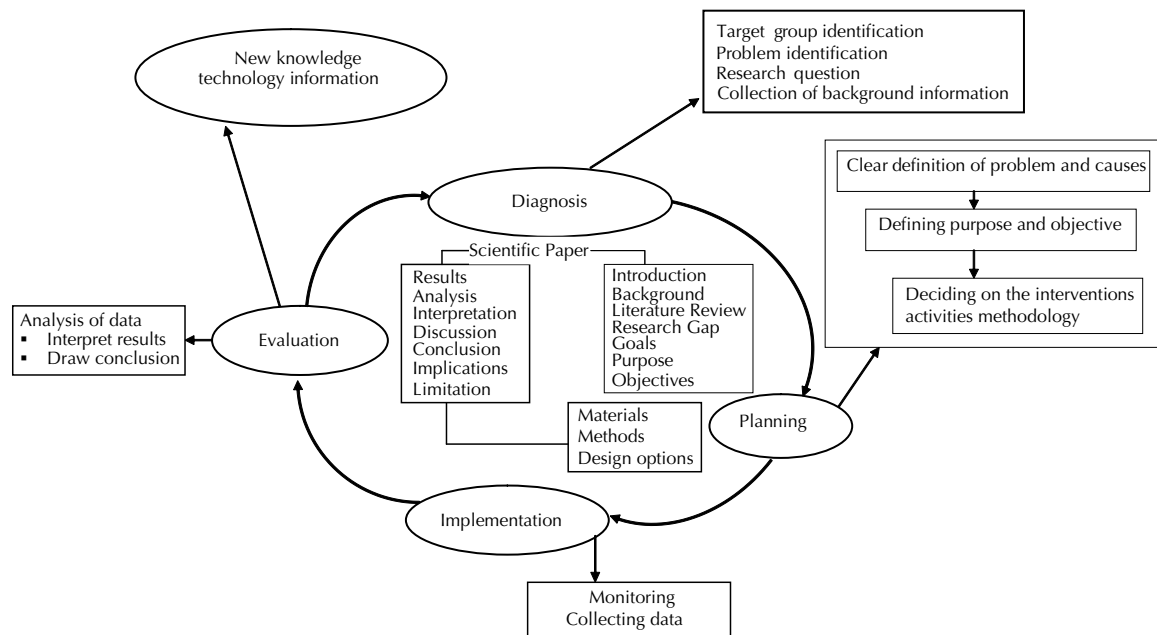
- Improved knowledge and skills in research project proposal writing
- Participants able to mobilize resources required for conducting agricultural research projects
- Participants able to produce high quality research papers/communication products

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Thank you!

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Project cycle, research process, scientific paper



Trainer's guide

Session 1: Paradigm shifts in agricultural research and development and emerging challenges

- Session objectives By the end of this session participants will:
- Be familiar with the ongoing transformations and paradigm shifts in the agricultural research for development
 - Have a good understanding of the emerging challenges confronting the R&D system

- Training materials
- Flip chart
 - White boards
 - Assorted chisel marker pens

Time needed 1.5 hrs

Method of facilitation


Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary presentation	Paradigm shifts in agricultural research and development and emerging challenges	45 minutes
Group exercise	Participants share their experiences in four groups	60 minutes
Plenary presentation	Trainer leads participants in discussing answers to the group exercise	30 minutes

Session 1: Summary of presentation slides: Paradigm shifts in agricultural research and development and emerging challenges

1.1

Session 1


Challenges of the R&D systems and changing paradigms



1.2

Objectives of the session


- List and explain the changing paradigms in research for development
- Identify and describe the emerging challenges of agricultural research for development systems



1.3

Major goals of agricultural research

- Produce agricultural technologies to contribute to rapid economic growth
- Provide options for adaptation to changing global economy; changing policies and; emerging environmental concerns
- Contribute to the reduction of poverty by increasing the supply of staples
- Increasing international competitiveness of national economies



1.4

Guiding principles of agricultural research for development

- Innovation Systems Perspective (ISP)
- Value Chain Approach (VCA)
- Impact Orientation (IO)
- Research for Development (R4D)

Complementary and mutually reinforcing

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1.5

Changing context

- Ongoing transformations
- Changing paradigms
- Emerging challenges

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1.6

Reform agenda within the R&D arena

- Redefinition of role of government in agricultural R&D
- Decentralization/Privatization of agricultural R&D activities.
- Broader and active stakeholder participation—pluralism in service provision, networks and partnerships.
- New funding arrangements.
 - Separation of financing from service provision and research execution
 - Changing the funding base to competitive funding.
- Orientation of R&D to be more outward looking, client oriented and impact driven.
- Embracing “systems” perspectives.

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1.7

Reform agenda (contd..)

- Increased recognition of cross-sectoral linkages
- Globalization of research and emerging regional and continental bodies
- Increased use of networks and partnerships
- Commercialization of smallholder agriculture
- Changing attitude and mindset of change agents

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1.8

Exogenous trends contributing to the reform process

- Changes in the political and socioeconomic context
- Changes in the market context
- Changes in the demand for R&D services
- Change in research technologies, methodologies and approaches
- Changes in the organizational context

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1.9

Emerging agri-food systems

- Massive increase in food moving across national borders
- Rapid rise and economic concentration of supermarkets
- Creation of private standards in addition to public standards
- New technologies to extend shelf-life of produce
- Non-price competition among supermarket chains
- Increased differentiation of food products by class
- New forms of relationships between suppliers and buyers

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1.10

Paradigm shifts in agricultural R&D

- Led by
 - Approaches for technology development
 - Framework for organizational analysis
 - Changing expectations

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1.11

Approaches to agricultural research

- Traditional linear model for research and extension
- Farming systems perspective (OFR/FSP)
- Participation/Participatory research methods
- Action research
- Rural livelihoods
- IAR4D*
- Agri-food systems/Value chain*
- Positive deviance

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1.12

Approaches to agricultural research (contd..)

- Knowledge development, dissemination and use continuum
- Doubly green revolution
- Rainbow revolution
- Knowledge quadrangle – participatory innovations, information, knowledge and education quadrangle with ICT playing a critical role

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1.13

Organizational analysis

- NARIs
- NARS (loose conglomerate of agencies and actors involved in agricultural research)
- AKIS (R,E,T in one system; knowledge triangle)
- Innovation systems perspective*

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1.14

Innovation system

Innovation, innovation system and
innovation systems perspective

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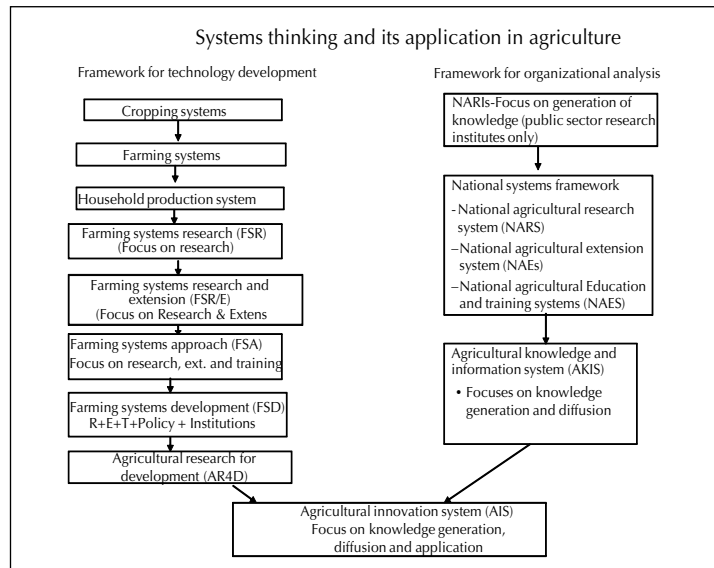
Application of systems thinking in agriculture

- Framework for technology development and dissemination (TDD)
- Organizational analysis within R&D

Both are interlinked

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1.17

Factors contributing to the adoption of ISA in agriculture

A number of factors contributed to the adoption of AIS:

- Successful application of the concept in the industrial sector
- Inadequacy of the existing framework to be all inclusive in terms of coverage
- Multiple sources of innovation model
- Inadequacy of the linear model to explain the process of innovation
- Increase demand for demonstrated developmental impact — Impact orientation.

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1.18

Innovation vs Invention

- Invention – delivers new technology/knowledge as solution to a problem – things new to the world
- Innovation – Economically successful use of invention is innovation, delivers social and economic change
- Knowledge cannot be regarded as innovation unless it is transformed into products and processes that have social and economic use

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1.19

Innovation

- Innovation
 - In its broadest sense, innovation covers the activities and processes associated with the generation/production, distribution, adaptation and use of new technical, institutional, organizational and managerial knowledge.

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1.20

Innovation

- Innovation
 - Deals with product innovation, process innovation, management, organizational and institutional innovation and service delivery innovation.
 - Two important factors are knowledge and networking.
 - Value of knowledge increases with its use, and exchange can only be realised in a cooperative environment.

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1.21

Organizations and institutions

- Organizations are entities created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals. Formal organization is that kind of cooperation that is conscious, deliberate, and purposeful.
- Institutions are the “rules of the game” which prohibit, permit, or require certain actions. Whether formal or informal, they are recognized and generally followed by members of the community.

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1.22

Innovation system

- An innovation system is
 - a group of organizations and individuals involved in the generation, diffusion, adoption and use of new knowledge and their actions and interactions
 - the context and institutions that govern the way these interactions and processes take place.
 - Associated learning
- Not a theory, but an organizing principle
- Can be defined at different levels



It is an analytical construct

1.23

National innovation system (NIS) (Innovation ecology)

- The network of organizations in the public and private sectors whose activities and interactions initiate, import, modify and diffuse technologies (Freeman 1997)
- Those institutions that affect the process by which innovations are developed, delivered and adopted (laws, regulations, customs, norms).
- Incorporates actors, processes as well as products.



1.24

National innovations systems (contd..)

- Reveals that R&D organizations are one type of knowledge agents in a larger system
- Need for multiple roles for R&D organizations
- Importance of institutions and framework conditions



1.25

Agricultural innovation system (Innovation ecology)

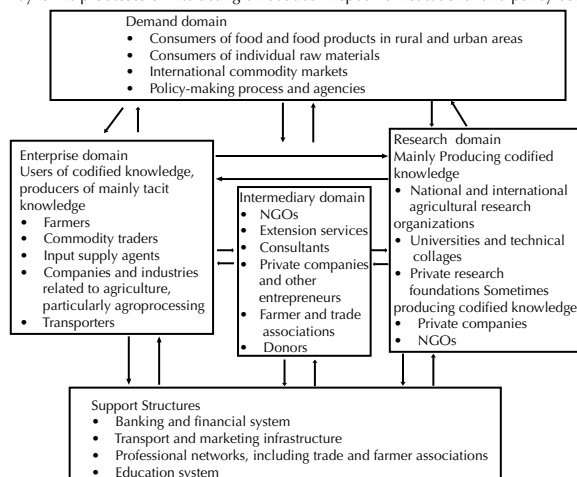
- A collaborative arrangement bringing together several organizations and individuals working towards a desired change in agriculture can be called agricultural innovation system (AIS)

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1.26

Agricultural innovation system

A dynamic processes of interacting embedded in specific institutional and policy contexts



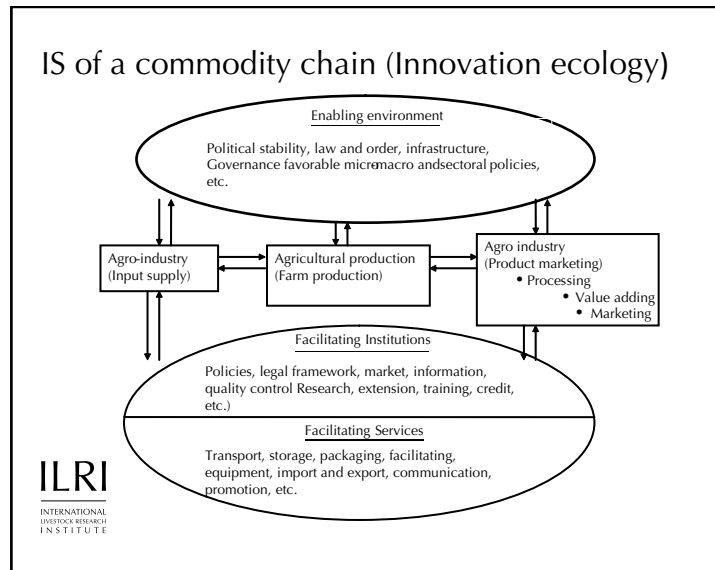
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Agricultural innovation systems include

- Traditional sources of innovation (ITK)
- Modern actors (NARIs, IARCs)
- Private sector including agro-industrial firms and entrepreneurs (local, national and multinational).
- Civil society organizations (NGOs, farmers and consumer organizations, pressure groups).

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1.29

Intervention based innovation systems

- An intervention-based innovation system incorporates
 - the invention system, as well as
 - the complementary economic processes required to turn invention into innovation and subsequent diffusion and utilization
- intervention-based Innovation systems do not occur automatically
 - it is the problem situation that defines a particular innovation opportunity

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1.30

- Intervention-based innovation systems are created for a purpose,
- they will change in content and patterns of interaction as the problem situation evolves and
- they are constructed at micro-and macro levels.
- Although the IS can be defined at different levels (national, sectoral, commodity and problem/intervention), the most relevant innovation system is the one that is constructed to address a particular problem i.e., intervention based

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Innovation systems perspective

- Using the innovation lens in analyzing critical constraints; identifying, implementing and assessing appropriate interventions and; subsequent utilization of knowledge generated.
- Suggests the analysis of three elements
 - Components (organizations and actors)
 - Relationships and interactions (institutions)
 - Competencies, functions and result of such interactions

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1.32

Key features of ISP

- Focus on innovation as its organizing principle
- Makes the distinction between “organizations” and “institutions” explicit
- Learning and role of institutions are critical
- Partnership and networks are integral parts
- Escapes the polarized debate “demand driven” Vs. “supply push”

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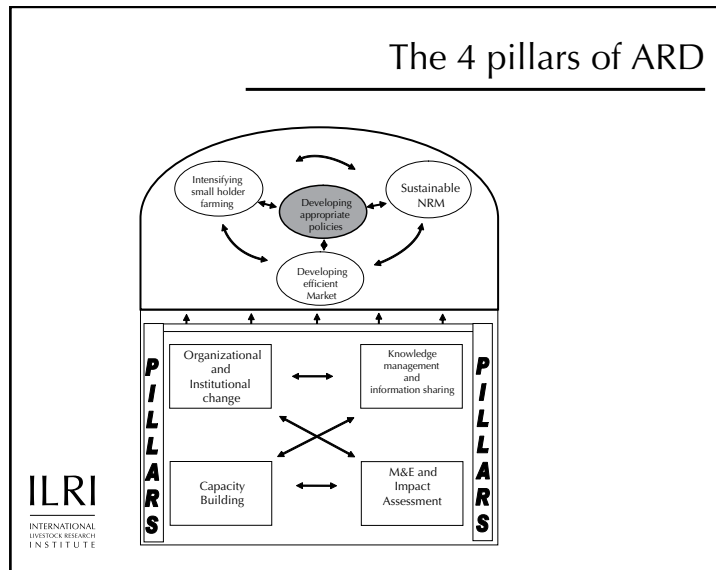
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IAR4D

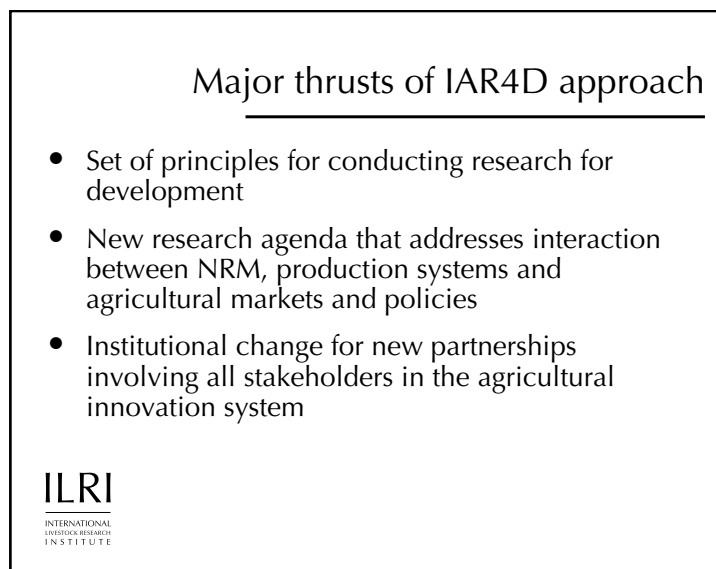
- a new approach to help research contribute more effectively and efficiently to poverty reduction and sustainable NR use
- to mainstream a new way of doing business that ensures that research does not only lead to knowledge and publications, but also and most of all contributes to change and innovation for the betterment of people, while also preserving the natural resource base for future generations

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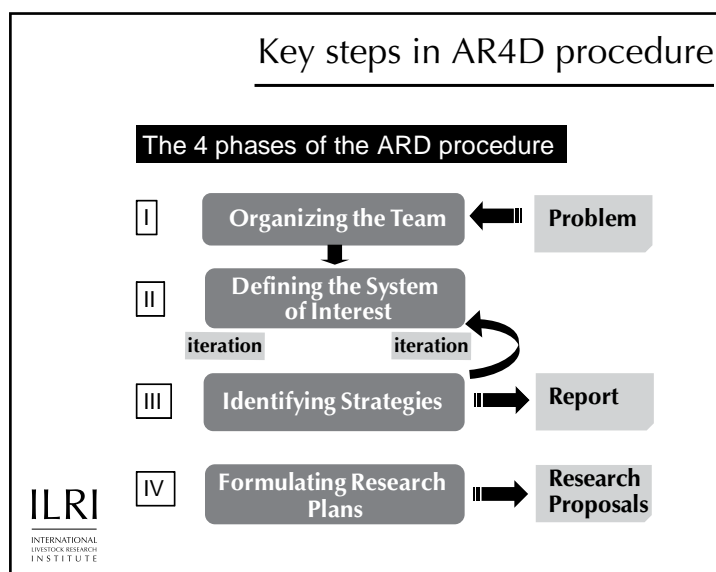
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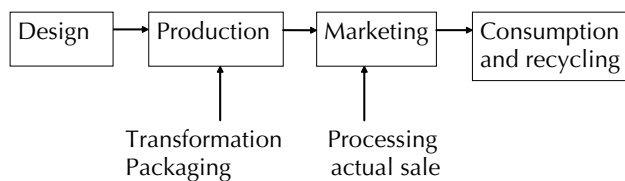
Value chain/Commodity chain/Agri-food chain

- A value chain describes the full range of activities which are required to bring about a product or service from design through the different phases of production, delivery to final consumers, and final disposal after use
- From “hoe – fingers”
- From “Plough – fork”

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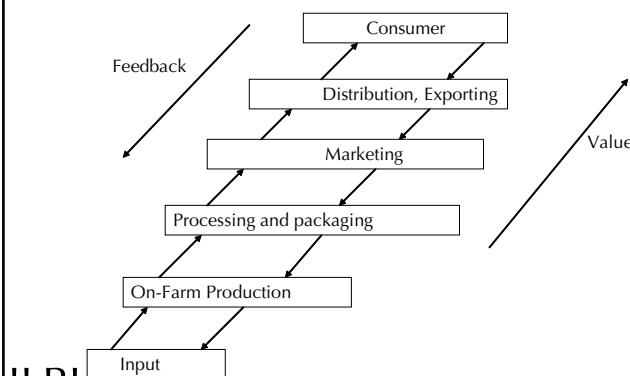
A simple value chain has four basic links



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1.39

Agricultural food chain: Value adding



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1.40

Why is value chain analysis important?

- Value chain analysis plays a key role in understanding the need and scope for systemic competitiveness – growing division of labor, global dispersion of production of components
- Efficiency in production is only a necessary condition for successfully penetrating regional and global markets
- Entry into the various markets: national, regional, and global requires an understanding of dynamic factors within the whole value chain
- Commercialization of smallholder production system and market orientation
- To reap the maximum benefit it is important to understand the nature, structure, and the dynamics of the value chain.

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Value chain analysis cont....

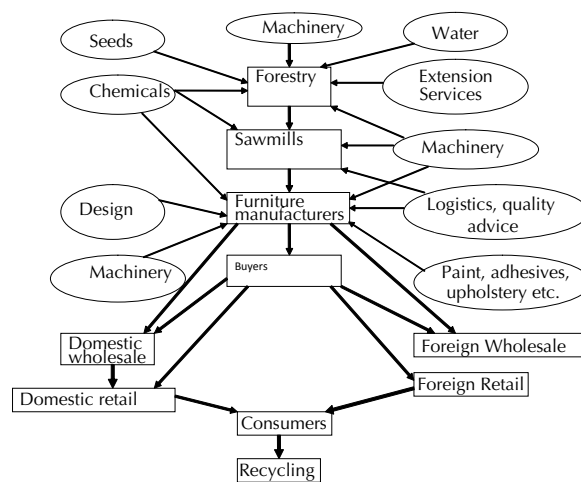
- In the real world, value chains may be much more complex
- Intermediate producers may feed into a number of value chains e.g. the forestry, timber

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1.42

The forestry, timber and furniture value chain

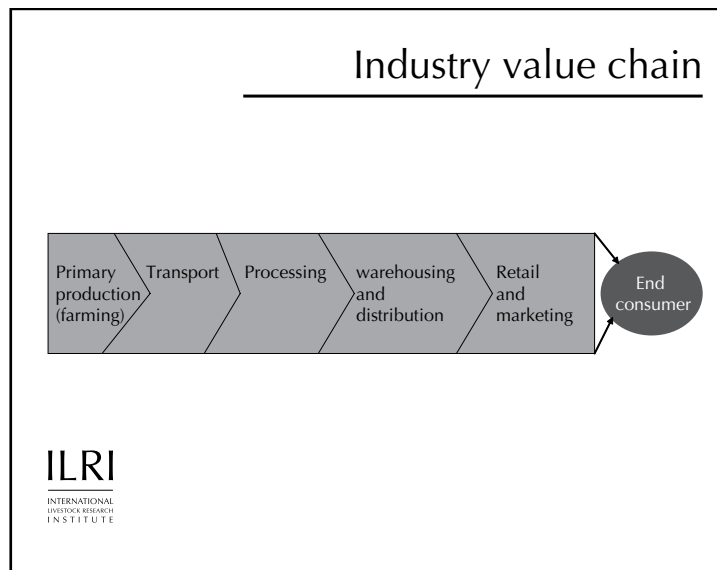


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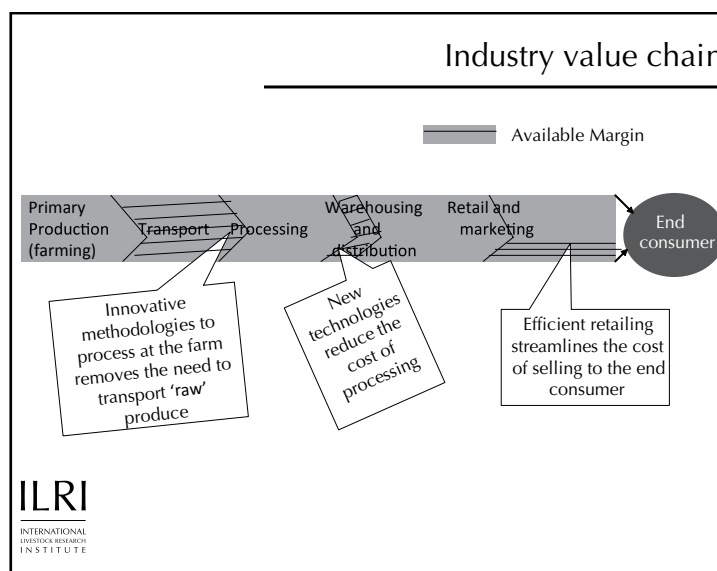
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Extracted from Kaplinsky and Morris (2000)

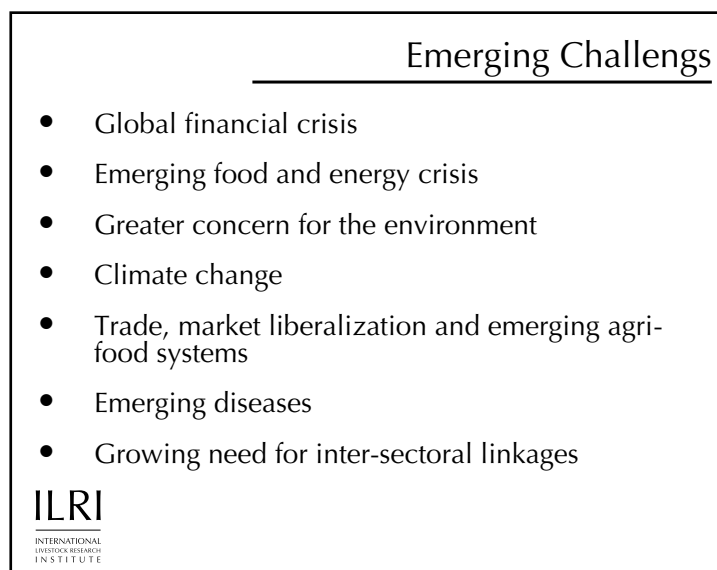
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1.46

Emerging challenges (cont'd...)

- Changing expectations from science, technology and innovation
- Underinvestment in agriculture and agricultural research
- Technological advances in biotechnology and ICT
- Globalization of private agricultural research and innovation
- Meeting commitments and targets

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Main messages

- Approach to research is changing
- What constitutes R4D systems (organizations and institutions) has changed
- Emerging challenges require R4D systems to be dynamic and flexible

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Thank you!

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Session 1: Notes to trainers: Paradigm shifts in agricultural research and development and emerging challenges

1.1 Introduction

During much of the 1970s and 1980s, investments in agricultural research were largely motivated by concerns about growing population, a finite resource base, import substitution and food security at both global and national levels that required a clear focus on increased food productivity. In the 1980s, natural resources management and environmental preservation received much higher priority in the research agenda, as well as food safety in the industrialized countries. In the recent past, with the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty alleviation has come to the forefront as one of the developmental goals. At present, the major goals of agricultural research are: to produce agricultural technologies to contribute to rapid economic growth; to provide options for effective adaptation to a rapidly changing global economy and changing policies; to address emerging environmental concerns and to contribute to the reduction of poverty (and food and nutritional security) by increasing the supply of staple products and by increasing the international competitiveness of national economies (Rajalahti et al. 2008).

For a considerable period, the public sector research investment and research policy has focused on national agricultural research organizations/institutes (NAROs/NARIs). In this paradigm, public funds were provided as a block grant, usually through the Ministry of Agriculture, to a centralized research department or institute who then set research priorities and executed research through a network of research centres under the control of NARO/NARI. In the 1990s, this paradigm has been challenged, since it failed to consider a variety of other public and private organizations that are involved in research policymaking and research execution (Byerlee 1997).

The research approach was also challenged, as the traditional approach (often referred to as the top-down approach) to agricultural research and development was not having significant impact on the development of small-scale agriculture. The researchers and development practitioners argued that an appropriate technology could only be developed if it was based on full knowledge of the existing farming system and livelihood system, and technologies should be evaluated not only in terms of their technical performance in specific environments, but also in terms of their conformity with the objectives, capabilities and socio-economic conditions of the target group of farmers. As a response to these challenges, there is a gradual evolution of the central source model of innovation of the 1970s and 1980s to the current agricultural innovation systems approach. This evolution occurred as a result of the identified weaknesses of the predominant paradigm of the time, and the emerging challenges and needs of the society.

Over the years, the agricultural R&D arena has seen a number of paradigm changes and transformations. In this chapter, we will first discuss the reform agenda within the agricultural R&D arena, then the paradigm shifts and the changes in the global food systems. Currently, the knowledge generation, dissemination and the utilization process within the agricultural sector is guided by four complementary and mutually reinforcing principles. They are the innovation systems perspective, value chain approach, impact orientation and research for development. These concepts are briefly discussed so that the reader is familiar with these developments and effectively use this understanding in developing winning proposals. However, it is worth noting that impact orientation and research for development are implicit in the concept of innovation.

1.2 Reform agenda within agricultural R&D

The policy and institutional context within which agricultural research and innovation occurs have changed dramatically over the years. Rapid changes continue to take place in the structure and authority of governments, the global economy, the structure of the farming sector and in the global and local food industries. The institutional landscape is also changing dramatically with the third parties (such as non-governmental organizations, farmer organizations and civil society organizations) playing an important role in agricultural R&D.

Ongoing reform agenda within the agricultural R4D includes:

- Orientation of research to be more systems based, outward looking, client oriented and, impact driven
- Redefinition of the role of government
- Decentralization and privatization of agricultural R4D.
- Broader and active stakeholder participation and pluralism in service provision
- Increased recognition of cross-sectoral linkages
- Globalization of research and emergence of regional, continental and global coordinating bodies
- Increased use of networks and partnerships
- New funding arrangements including separation of financing from service provision and research execution
- Commercialization and market orientation of smallholder agriculture and
- Changed attitude and mindset of the change agents (research, extension and other service providers)

Given the sweeping reforms that are taking place, the R&D systems are facing a transition period in which they will need to restructure themselves, confront new demands, and adjust to new political, scientific, institutional and economic environment.

1.3 Emerging agrifood system

The last several decades have also seen a profound change in the nature of the global food system. These changes include:

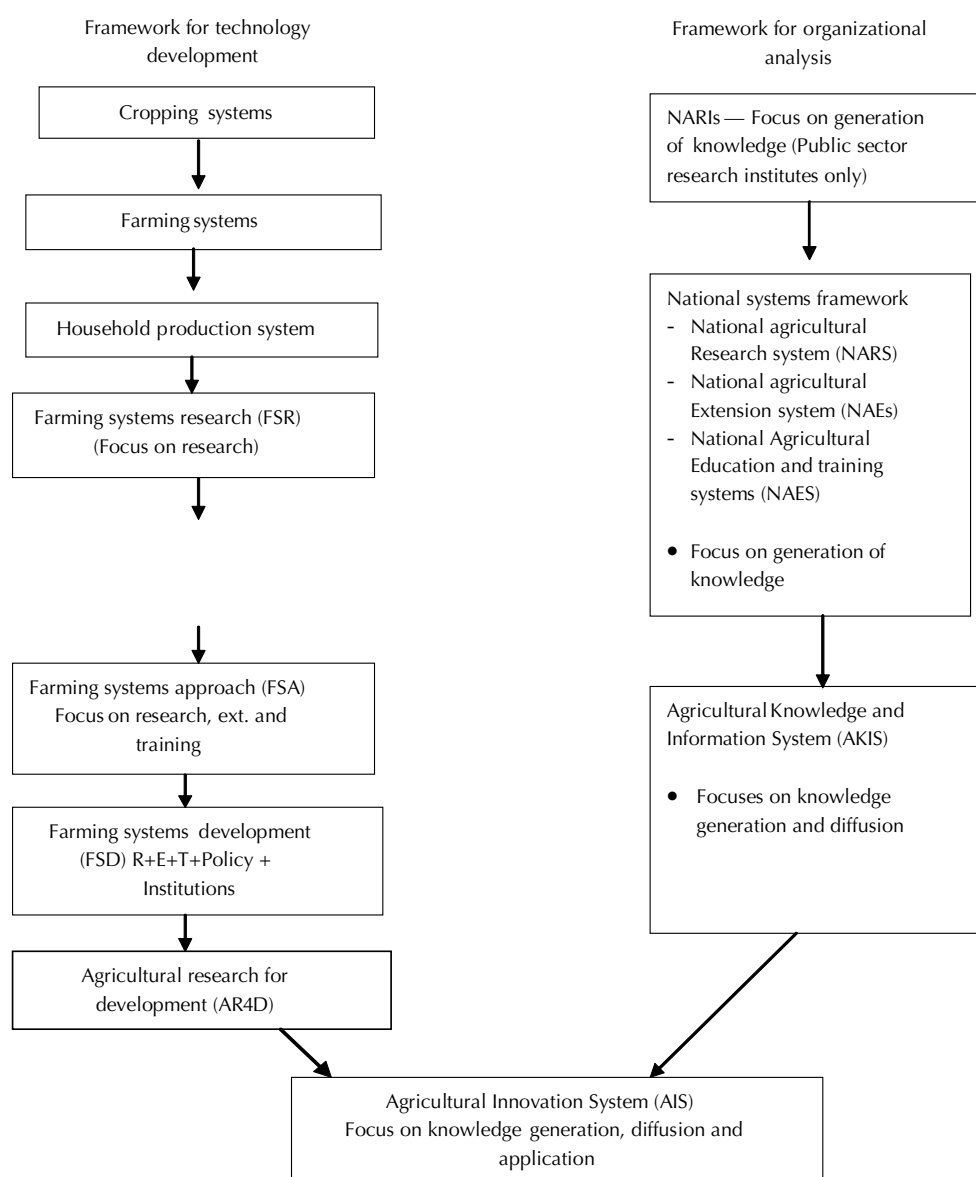
- Massive increase in the volume of food moved across national borders (both formal and informal)
- Rapid rise in supermarkets globally
- Economic concentration in the super market sector
- Creation of a multiplicity of private standards, often built on top of public standards
- Rise in third party certification of food production and entire supply chain
- Development of new technologies designed to extend shelf life of agricultural products
- Shift towards non-price competition among super market chains
- Greater differentiation of food products by class and
- Development of new forms of (contractual) relationships between suppliers and buyers

These changes offer both challenges and opportunities to the smallholder producers. In some instances, they can squeeze small producers out of certain markets, contributing to greater poverty and inequality. On the other hand, if the smallholder farmers respond positively, this can offer new sources of income and a marked improvement in the quality and safety of food.

1.4 Paradigm shifts in agricultural R&D

Agricultural research and development has been undergoing paradigm shifts over the years which is in fact affecting their organizational structure, management style, as well as the way business is done. We have seen a shift from a single commodity and mono-disciplinary base to an innovation system and a multidisciplinary based approach together with a change from top-down research model to participatory approach to research for development.

The system thinking is not new to agricultural research and development. It has been there since the 1970s when a significant shift in paradigm occurred by moving away from the top-down, linear, technology development and transfer model to the introduction of farming systems approach (FSA). Since then, the application has evolved gradually to the various participatory approaches to the current innovation systems approach. Now the use has been extended to the application in the organizational analysis resulting in the 'Agricultural Innovation System' concept. This evolution is traced in Figure 1, and it is the result of the changing needs and expectations of the society.



Source: Anandajayasekaram et al. (2005).

Figure 1. Evolution of systems thinking and its application in agriculture.

The origin and application of the innovation systems perspective (ISP) in agricultural research can be traced to a number of sources. These include: the successful application of the concept in the industrial sector of the developed economies, the multiple source of innovation model for agricultural research and technology promotion as suggested by Biggs (1989); the inadequacy of the linear model to explain the actual process of innovation in the real world; the inadequacy of the existing organizational frameworks to be all inclusive in terms of the coverage of the various actors; and the increasing demand for demonstrated developmental impacts and the expanded mandate and expectations from the R&D communities (research for development).

The main attraction of innovation systems framework stems from the fact that: it recognizes innovation as a process of generating, accessing and putting knowledge into use; explicitly recognizes the interactions and knowledge flows among different actors in the process; emphasizes that institutions are vital in shaping the nature of these innovations and learning as a means of evolving new arrangements specific to local contexts (Sulaiman 2008).

1.4.1 Innovation, innovation system (IS) and innovation systems perspective (ISP)

In the literature, different authors have defined the term innovation differently (ECm 1995; Drukker 1998; OECD 1999; Quintas 1977 cited in ISNAR 2001). The simplest definition is 'anything new introduced into an economic or social process' (OECD 1999). The most useful definition of innovation in the context of R&D is 'the economically successful use of invention' (Bacon 1998). Here invention is defined 'as a solution to a problem'. This allows us to make distinction between knowledge and innovation. Taking a brilliant idea through, on an often painful journey to become something which is widely used, involves many more steps and use of resources and problem solving on the way.

In the past, science and technology generation were equated with innovation. It is crucial in recognizing that innovation is strongly embedded in the prevailing economic structure, which largely determines what is going to be learned and where the innovations are going to take place. Moreover, such innovations are not limited to technological (both product and process) innovations only but also include institutional, organizational, managerial and service delivery innovations. This also emphasizes the notion that the responsibility of agricultural research organizations does not end with the production of new technology or knowledge only. They can claim success when their 'innovations' are being disseminated, adopted and used (Chema et al. 2001).

Innovations are new creations of economic significance. They relate to the production of new knowledge and/or new combination of existing knowledge. The critical point to note is that this knowledge cannot be regarded as innovation unless it is transformed into products and processes that have social and economic use (Edquist 1997). This transformation does not follow a linear path but rather characterized by complicated feedback mechanisms and interactive relations involving science, technology, learning production policy and demand. The use of the term 'innovation', in its broadest sense, covers the activities and processes associated with the generation, production, distribution, adaptation and use of new technical, institutional and organizational, managerial knowledge and service delivery (Hall et al. 2005).

The thinking until the early 1990s was that innovations were created by knowledge and technology production processes and through formal R&D initiatives by firms and technology creating agents such as universities and public-private research institutes. The assumption was that the market would draw upon the technological resources it needs, as and when necessary. The demand for knowledge

would be identified by the formal R&D systems, produced and passed down to those who necessarily apply it because of its usefulness (Hartwich and Meijerink 1999). In reality, however, innovations are not only associated with or stem from major scientific discoveries, but also often develop as a fairly minor scientific and technological advances and can occur without any research (e.g. through learning and adaptation process). Therefore, innovations can be generated by different organizations, group or individuals and the conventional research institutions is only one such entity.

Innovation system

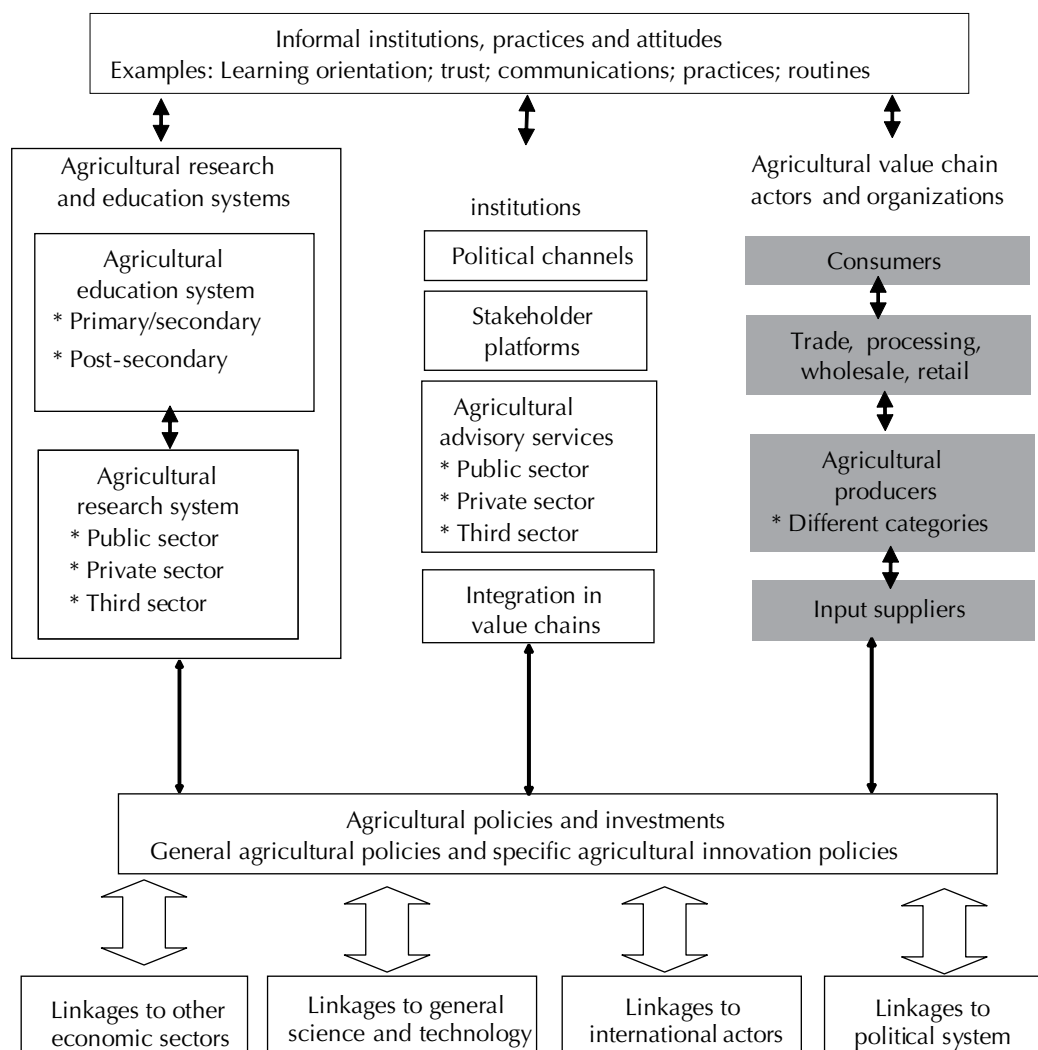
An innovation system is a group of organizations and individuals involved in the generation, diffusion, adaptation and use of new knowledge and the context that governs the way these interactions and processes take place. In its simplest form, an innovation system has three elements: the organization and individuals involved in generating, diffusing, adapting and using new knowledge; the interactive learning that occurs when organizations engage in these processes and the way this leads to new products and processes (innovation); and the institutions (rules, norms and conventions, both formal and informal), that govern how these interactions and processes take place (Horton 1990). People working on similar issues, be it in a specific commodity sector, at a particular location or in any problem area, tend to form a chain or network that can be described as innovation system.

Agricultural innovation system

A collaborative arrangement bringing together several organizations working towards technical change in agriculture can be called 'Agricultural Innovation System'. Such a system may include the traditional sources of innovations (indigenous technical knowledge); modern actors (NARIs, IARCs, advanced research institutions); private sectors including agro-industrial firms and entrepreneurs (local, national and multinationals); civil society organizations (NGOs, farmers and consumer organizations, pressure groups); and those institutions (laws, regulations, beliefs, customs and norms) that affect the process by which innovations are developed and delivered. Agricultural innovation system can be defined at three levels: national, commodity-based, and intervention-based. A typical national agricultural innovation system is presented in Figure 2. An AIS within an agrifood chain is presented in Figure 3. An intervention-based innovation system can be developed based on the nature of the problem and the context in which the innovation is applied (see section 5 for details).

Intervention based innovation system

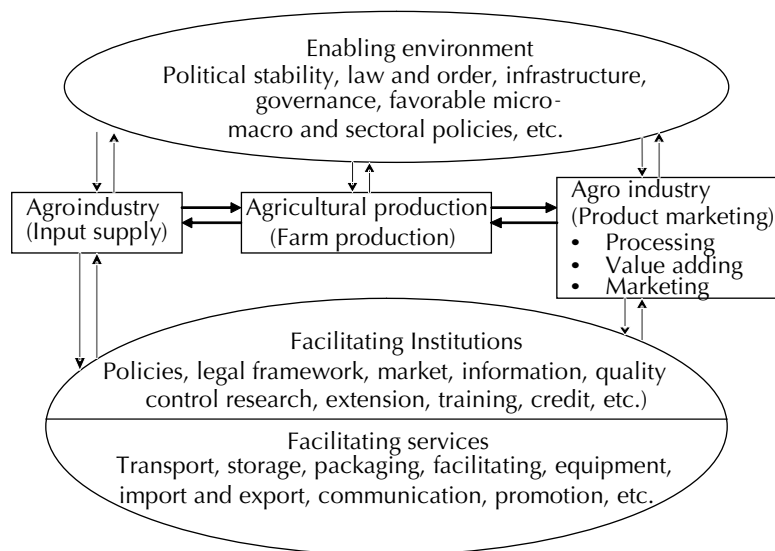
It is important to make sure that the innovation system is not confused with the invention system. Innovation system incorporates the invention system as well as the complementary economic processes required to turn invention into innovation and subsequent diffusion and use. Innovation systems do not occur naturally; it is the problem situation that defines a particular innovation opportunity. Hence, innovation systems are created for a purpose, they will change in content and patterns of interaction as the problem sequence evolves and they can be constructed at micro- and macro levels. Thus, although the innovation systems can be defined at different levels (national, sectoral, commodity and problem/intervention), the most relevant innovation system is the one that is constructed to address a particular problem. As Antonelli (2001, 2005) argues, innovation systems are constructed to solve 'local' innovation problem and they are constructed around a market problem (along the value chain) that shape innovation and not problems that shape the growth of science and technology.



Source: World Bank (2007).

Figure 2. A national agricultural innovation system.

Innovation systems are constructed to address specific problems. These systems are very specific in nature and deal with the connection between the relevant components of the ecology as well as ensure that the flow of information is directed at a specific purpose. Depending upon the problem at hand, there can be multiple innovation systems supported by the same innovation ecology. Moreover, since the solution of one problem typically leads to different and new problems, we would also expect that, as the problem evolves, the actors in the system as well as their interconnectedness will also vary. Thus, while the ecologies are more permanent, the problem-focused innovation systems are transient or temporary in nature. Once a particular problem sequence is solved, the associated system can be dissolved. The dynamism of an economy/value chain depends on the adaptability with which innovation systems are created, grow, stabilize and change as problem sequence evolves (Metcalfe 2008, 442). A problem-focused innovation system can be trans-boundary in nature or cut across national boundaries and may be spatially unconstrained. This problem-focused, transboundary, and dynamic nature of the innovation system is the most relevant one for the R&D community.



Source: Anandajayasekaram et al. (2005).

Figure 3. AIS in an agrifood chain/agri business system.

Innovation systems perspective

Innovation systems perspective implies the use of innovation lens in the design, implementation and evaluation of the activities of the various actors involved in the innovation process. Innovation systems perspective (ISP) sees the innovative performance of an economy as depending not only on how individual institutions (firms, research institutes, universities etc.) perform in isolation, but on how they interact with each other as elements of a collective system and how they interplay with social institutions such as values, norms and legal frameworks. ISP suggests the analysis of three elements: the components of the system, principally its actors; the relationships and interactions between these components; and the competencies, functions, processes and results such components generate. Therefore, the analytical implications of ISP are that there is a need to consider a range of activities and organizations related to research and development and how these might function collectively and the need to locate R&D planning and implementation in the context of norms and the cultural and political economy in which it takes place, i.e. the wider institutional context.

The key features of ISP are (Hall et al. 2005):

- Focus on innovation (rather than research/technology/knowledge) as its organizing principle;
- Helps to identify the scope of the actors involved and the wider set of relationships in which innovation is embedded;
- Escapes the polarized debate between 'demand driven' and 'supply push' approaches;
- Recognizes that innovation systems are social systems, focusing on connectivity, learning as well as the dynamic nature of the process;
- Leads us to new and more flexible organizations of research and to a new type of policymaking for science, technology and innovation;
- Emphasizes that partnerships and linkages are integral part of the innovation system;
- Emphasizes that learning and the role of institutions are critical in the innovation process; and
- The dynamics do not depend on the agents 'expanding the frontier of knowledge' but on the innovative abilities of a large number of agents. This dynamics depends on the strength of information flows and the absorptive capacity of the individual agents of institutions and of

society as a whole. The innovation processes depend on the interactions among physical, social and human capital, but mostly on the absorptive capacity of individual agents (Ekboir 2004).

A good understanding of the concept of innovation, innovation systems and the innovations systems perspective is vital to develop successful proposal as most of the funding agencies are looking for developmental impacts of research.

1.4.2 Agricultural research for development (AR4D)

The agricultural research for development takes a systems approach that goes beyond integrated natural resources management to encompass the domains of policies and markets and the effects that these have on the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of agriculture. The four pillars of agricultural research for development and their important interactions are presented in Figure 4. The procedure recognizes that the general approach to rural transformation involves intensification of subsistence-oriented smallholder farming systems, better management of natural resources while intensifying their use, developing more efficient markets and enabling policies.

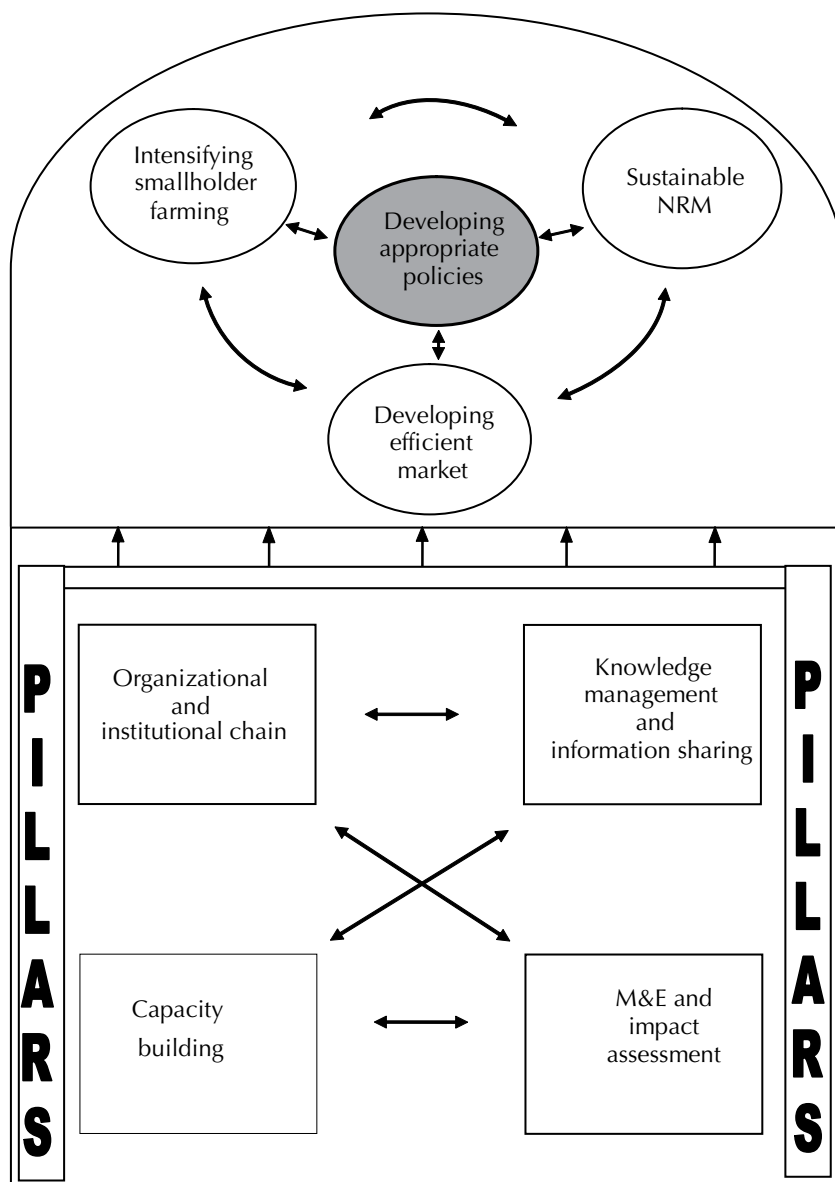


Figure 4. The 4 pillars of ARD and their important interactions.

Agricultural research for development requires additional mechanisms to foster integration of these four dimensions and a new way of doing research and development. Therefore, the support pillars of agricultural research for development include:

- Promotion of organizational and institutional change to enable cross-disciplinary research and development and multi-institutional collaboration.
- Capacity building of the various stakeholders (farmers, scientists, and other relevant stakeholders)
- Information and knowledge management and
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation and systematic approach to impact assessment.

The agricultural research for development in fact utilizes the various participatory methods and tools. The four key steps in the agricultural research for development process are team organization, defining the system of interest, identifying strategies, and plan formulation (Figure 5). These steps are discussed in the following sections based on material prepared by International Centre for Development-oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA).

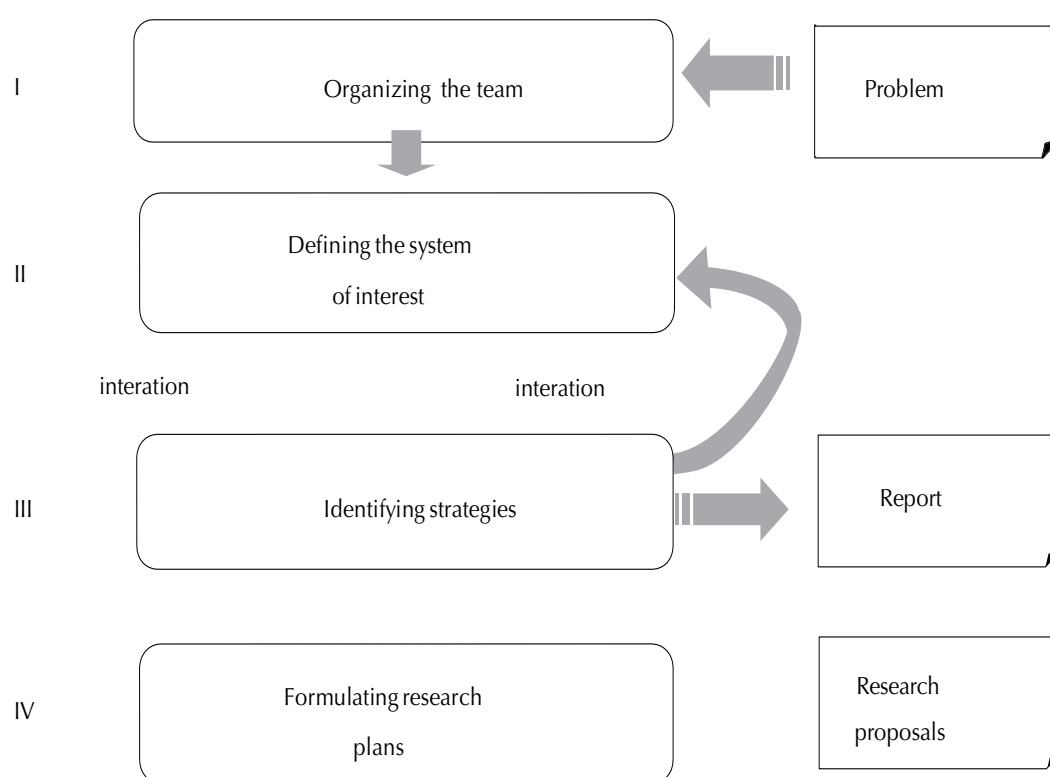


Figure 5. The four phases of the ARD procedure.

Phase I: Team organization

The AR4D procedure starts from the assumption that one or more organizations (including your own) and other stakeholders have identified a problem or area of concern, or an idea for intervention. It also assumes that addressing this problem requires concerted action of these organizations and stakeholders. This may require a team of professionals from these organizations, comprising specialists in the various disciplines needed to address the problem. It is assumed that by using the various diagnostic procedures the ‘clients’ and stakeholders have agreed on a sufficiently well-defined specific problem. Clear planning requires that your team develops a good understanding of the problem statement and the output that the client expects at the end of the process.

At the end of this phase, the team should have produced the following outputs:

- Team is composed, mandates are defined, and resources are made available (at least for planning)
- An agreed upon team work procedure established
- The problem is clearly stated and the expected output is clearly defined
- Work plan is formulated and approved by all partners
- A mechanism for monitoring is established

Phase II: Define the system of interest

Here the team looks at policy issues, markets, institutional issues and other macro-development in and outside agriculture that may have an influence on the problem and on attempts to solve it. It is important to identify the 'system' that needs to change in order to address the problem that was defined in phase I. We have to look at all elements needed for the change within the mandate of the stakeholders involved. It is of little use to suggest changes that the stakeholders do not have the power to change or influence.

At the end of this phase, the following outputs must be in place:

- Description of how the wider 'macro trends' influence the problem
- Redefinition or further elaboration of the problem as seen from different perspectives
- Demarcation of the 'system of interest'

Phase III: Identify strategies

Here there is need to engage all stakeholders involved in the 'system of interest' defined in phase II to identify strategies that will bring about the desired changes, under different scenarios based on the external factors influencing the system of interest. There may be also a need to stratify the target group based on resource endowments, capabilities, strategies and vulnerabilities. It is also important to assess the anticipated effect of these alternative strategies on the environment (sustainability), vulnerable groups (social equity) and the competitiveness of the enterprises of the various stakeholders in the system of interest.

If this 'screening process' shows that strategies have anticipated negative effects, then these need to be addressed through accompanying measures or the strategy should be dropped. Agreeing to some concrete strategies may usually require compromise between different stakeholders. Each strategy should be assessed in terms of their ecological, social and economic implications. These aspects should be considered simultaneously. The relative importance of each of these analytical perspectives is dependent on the problem and usefulness of each in terms of finding a possible/viable solution. This integrated analysis should result in the following outputs.

- Description of two or more alternative scenarios for future
- Definition of what changes are needed in the system of interest to address the problem under the different scenarios
- Typology of the stakeholders affected differently by the problem who require different strategies
- Collective strategy to achieve changes in the system of interest that address the problem
- Careful documentation of the analysis completed.

Phase IV: Formulate plans

At this stage, it is necessary to list the development and research activities needed to realize the strategy. The contribution of each stakeholder in the implementation of the agreed upon strategy defined in

Phase III is identified. As available resources are usually not enough to implement all activities, there may be a need to prioritize the list of activities/options identified. The criteria for prioritization must deal with the balance between the extent to which each activity is likely to contribute to the solution of the problem, the cost and time needed for the activity as well as the risk of failure of the activity.

The final step is the formulation of convincing development and research proposals for the activities of highest priority; and mobilization of resources to implement them. The process of implementation (based on the operational plan), monitoring, evaluation and the eventual impact assessment of the intervention needs to be worked out as part of the planning process. As most participants are familiar with the participatory approaches to knowledge/technology development and transfer process, it may be possible to easily integrate the missing elements from the AR4D process described in this section. But a clear understanding of the process will certainly assist in the development of convincing/winning project proposals.

It is important to ensure that the innovation system perspective, value chain analysis, research for development and impact orientation are effectively integrated in the proposal.

1.4.3 Value chain

A value chain describes the full range of activities required to bring a product or service from conception, through the different phases of production, delivery to final consumers, and final disposal after use (Kaplinsky and Morris 2000). It is worth noting that production is only one of a number of value-added links in the agrifood chain (Figure 6). Some people refer to this chain as from hoe (plough) to the finger (fork). A simple value chain has four basic links.

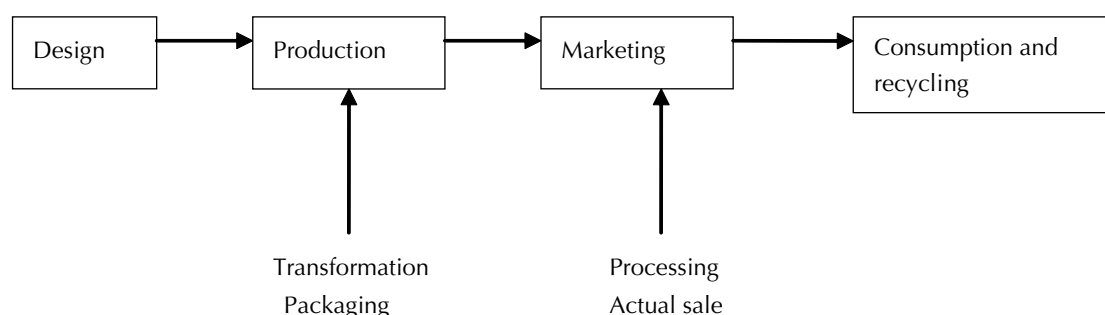


Figure 6. Value links in the agrifood chain.

In the real world, value chains are much more complex than this simple depiction. In many circumstances, intermediary producers in a particular value chain may feed into a number of value chains.

Agricultural value chains are defined by a particular finished product or closely related products and includes all firms engaged in input supply, production, transport, processing and marketing of the product, and their associated activities, interactions and institutions governing the activities and interactions. It entails the addition of value as the product progresses from input supply to production to consumption. It includes input suppliers, producers, itinerant collectors, assembly traders, transporters, wholesalers, processors, exporters, and retailers. The key issue addressed in value chain analysis is vertical coordination: coordinating and harmonizing the vertical stages of production, transformation and marketing

Porter (1985) distinguished two important elements of a modern value chain analysis:

- Various activities which were performed in particular link in the chain and
- Multi-linked value chain or the value system.

Both these elements are subsumed in the modern value chain described in Figure 7.

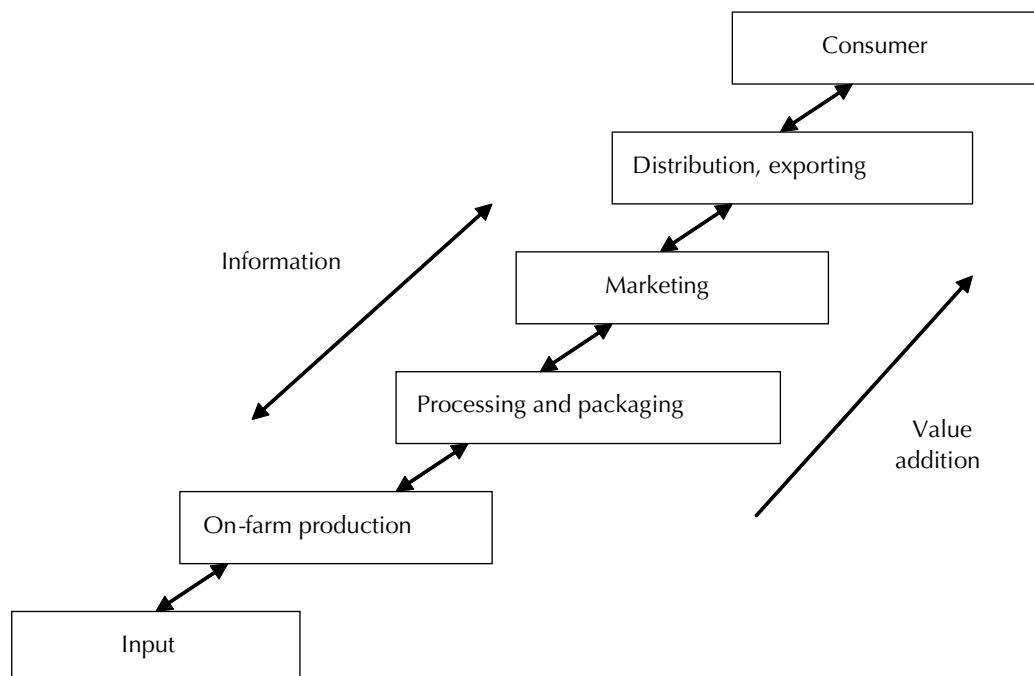


Figure 7. *Agricultural food chain: Value adding.*

In many developing countries, there is heavy emphasis on the commercialization of smallholder production system; and production is increasingly becoming market oriented. In order to reap the immediate benefit, it is important to understand the nature, structure, and the dynamics of the value chain related to the various enterprises engaged in by the smallholder farmers. Given the new agricultural innovation system perspective, we need not only understand the dynamic but should also focus on the enabling environment, facilitating institutions as well as services associated with a given value chain.

1.5 Emerging challenges

In the previous sections, we discussed the organizational and institutional transformations taking place within the agricultural research for development and the associated paradigm shifts to address the broadened agricultural agenda. In addition, the system is also confronted with a number of emerging challenges which shapes the priority agenda. Some of the key challenges currently facing the R&D communities are as follows:

1.5.1 Emerging food and energy crisis

In the recent past, global food prices are increasing at an unprecedented rate and analysts say that they will continue to remain high for a considerable period. Both the demand side and supply side factors contributed to the current price crisis. The demand side factors include: economic growth and the associated changes in life style and eating habits in many countries; diversion of food crops (maize,

sugarcane) for making biofuels: declining world stock piles, financial speculation in commodity markets (a collapse of the financial derivatives market); and of course the increase in population (although at a slower rate). The supply side factors include: increased fuel and fertilizer prices and the associated increase in cost of production (and low input use); biofuel subsidies pushing production towards biofuel rather than food; idle crop land under a conservation program, export bans and tariffs by many grain exporting countries; production shortfalls from natural disasters and the long-term effects of climate change; trade liberalization making many developing nations depend on food imports (subsidized) which are cheaper; loss of crop lands due to mainly soil erosion, water depletion and urbanization and finally declining investments in agriculture.

The continuing increase in fuel prices is pushing countries towards biofuels. As a result of rising energy costs, inputs such as fertilizers become more and more unaffordable for small farmers who are at the centre of response to the world food crisis. Transport costs have become higher and higher once again resulting in higher consumer prices. Thus the rising fuel prices and the emerging food crisis are closely linked.

1.5.2 Environment and climate change

Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, it is generally accepted that the environmental agenda is inseparable from the broader agenda of agriculture for development. Both intensive as well as extensive agriculture lead to environmental consequences. To address the expected climate change challenges and impact, R&D need to play a major role in increasing the adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable groups in different regions. The climate change could create changes in the geographical production patterns, as well as deterioration of natural resource base due to scarcity of water and rising temperature. It will also affect parasites like the tsetse fly and parasitic diseases such as malaria. With the increased risk of droughts and floods due to rising temperatures, crop yield losses are imminent. World agricultural GDP is projected to decrease by 16% by 2020 by global warming.

Although SSA produces less than 4% of the world green house gases, the region's diverse climates and ecological systems have already been altered by global warming and will undergo further damage in the years ahead. Sahel and other arid and semi-arid regions are expected to become even drier. A third of Africa's peoples already live in drought-prone regions and climate change could put the lives and livelihoods of an additional 75–250 million people at risk by the end of the next decade (Africa Renewal 2007). Climate change will create new food insecurities in the coming decades. Low income countries with limited adaptive capabilities to climate variability and change are faced with significant threats to food security.

1.5.3 Trade, market liberalization and the emerging agrifood system

The global and national food systems are increasingly being driven by consumer interests, changing consumption patterns, quality and safety concerns and the influence of transnational corporations and civil society organizations. The changes in the emerging food systems such as rapid rise and economic concentration in supermarkets need for quality standards; a shift towards non-price competition among supermarket chains, biosafety issues and the development of new forms of (contractual) relationships between suppliers and buyers offer both challenges and opportunities. They can either squeeze small producers out of certain markets contributing greater poverty and inequality or can offer new sources of income and market improvement in the quality and safety of food.

1.5.4 Emerging diseases

The incidence and impacts of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria are well documented. Additional threats and challenges are posed by emerging diseases. Approximately 75% of emerging diseases are transmitted between animals and human beings; the increasing demand for meat increases this risk of transmission. Serious socio-economic consequences occur when diseases spread widely within human and animal populations.

1.5.5 Growing need for intersectoral linkages

One of the major constraints to getting agriculture moving in SSA is the general lack of comprehensive policies and weak intersectoral linkages. Now there is growing awareness that a number of sectors such as agriculture, education, health, water and energy are very closely linked. Thus any agenda to transform the smallholder agriculture should follow a multisectoral approach and capture the synergies between technologies (seeds, fertilizer, livestock breeds); sustainable water and soil management, institutional services (extension, insurance, financial services) and human capital development (education and health)—all linked with market development (World Development Report 2008).

1.5.6 Changing expectations of science and technology and innovation

Over the years, there has been a significant change in the expectations of science and technology and innovations, from increasing crop and livestock productivity to creating competitive responsive and dynamic agriculture, that directly contribute to the Millennium Developmental Goals.

1.5.7 Underinvestment in agriculture and agricultural research

Public spending on agricultural research as a proportion of agricultural GDP in Africa declined from 0.93 to 0.69% between 1980s and 1990s (ECA-OECD Review 2005). The current average level of public expenditure to support agriculture is around 4%. CAADP reports estimate that if the MDGs are to be met, 10% of the national budget should go to the agricultural sector and at least 2% of the GDP should go to national agricultural research and development by 2010.

1.5.8 Technological advances in biotechnology and ICT

Conventional biotechnologies have been around for a very long time, while genetic modification (GM) technologies have emerged more recently. GM technologies are making rapid progress worldwide. Biosafety is a highly technical field, which typically requires high initial investments for building the necessary human resource capacity and institutional infrastructure (including laboratories and green houses for risk assessment or testing and identification of genetically modified organisms).

The revolution in ICT technologies and increased access to them in developing countries is enabling a variety of new approaches to capacity building and knowledge sharing and exploitation of these opportunities require additional investments.

1.5.9 Globalization of private agricultural research and innovation

In the recent past, there is a trend towards globalization of private agricultural research. Drivers of globalization of R&D are growing markets for agricultural products and agricultural inputs (reduced restrictions on trade in agricultural inputs), new technological opportunities due to breakthrough in

biotechnology; improved ability to appropriate the gains from innovations, improved policy environment for foreign investments and technology transfer (tax breaks); and growth in demand due to increased income and policy changes (Pray 2008). If carefully nurtured and managed, this may offer additional opportunities for public–private partnership to mobilize additional resources and to move the poverty reduction agenda forward.

1.5.10 Meeting commitments and targets

Over the last several years, countries in the regions are committed to a number of targets and goals. Under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, targets are set for: reducing hunger and poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, improving maternal health and nutrition, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and ensuring conservation and the enhancement of basic life-support systems including land, water, forests, biodiversity and the atmosphere. There is increasing evidence to show that we will not meet any of the targets set for 2015.

In 2001, African heads of state adopted the strategic framework to develop integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa—the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) under the auspices of the African Union (AU). The agricultural agenda of NEPAD is driven by the comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP). This strategy calls for an annual growth rate of 6.5%. At least 10% of the national budget as defined in the Maputo Declaration (February 2003) should be allocated to agriculture.

1.5.11 Global financial crisis

The current financial crisis is contributing significantly to the slow down of many countries resulting in reduction in the capital availability at a time when accelerated investment is urgently needed in the agricultural research and development arena. Although the current food and financial crisis developed from different causes, these two crises have fed into each other and could have significant impact on financial and economic stability and, political security (von Braun 2008).

The projected low economic growth is likely to have negative second-round effects for investment and productivity with direct ramifications for food prices and food security around the globe. IFPRI (2008) has projected that under slow growth and declines in agricultural investment, the prices of major cereals increase significantly. According to projections in SSA, per capita consumption would be 10% lower in 2020 and its share of the number of malnourished children will increase from one fifth in 2005 to one fourth in 2020. The study concluded that if the developing countries and investors can maintain agricultural productivity and investment under recession, they can avoid many of the negative effects of slower growth.

To sum up, there is a need for agriculturalists to grow intellectually and operationally from a narrow focus on agriculture and technological research and dissemination to a better understanding of rural societies and their needs. There is a need to seek greater understanding of alternative pathways for rural economic development, placing the role of agriculture in perspective, and redefining the role, mission, and strategy of the agricultural institutes and agents as facilitators of rural economic growth. This calls for change in the mind-sets of the change agents and greater flexibility and creativity in defining the agenda as well as in defining new public–private–civil society partnerships on the basis of whatever is necessary to improve opportunities, productivity and income generation capacity of poor rural households.

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Trainer's guide


Session 2: What sort of projects do donors like? When and when not to write a full proposal?

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be able to avoid writing projects that donors do not like• Be able to decide on the right time to write a full proposal	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flip chart• White boards• Assorted chisel marker pens	
Time needed	1.5 hrs	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary presentation	What donors want in projects and when to write a full proposal	40 minutes
Group exercise	Participants share and answer in groups of four the structured true or false question	20 minutes
Plenary presentation	Trainer leads participants in discussing answers to the group exercise	30 minutes
Break	Health break	20 minutes
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Introduction: What sort of projects do donors like? When and when not to write a full proposal Structured True or False questions for group work	

Session 2: Summary of presentation slides: What sort of projects do donors like? When and when not to write a full proposal

2.1

What sort of projects do donors or funders like?




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2.2

Circumstances under which scientists write proposal

- Thesis or academic proposal
- Competitive grants
- Proposal for donors
- To secure resources during annual planning

Whatever be the circumstance, you want your proposal to convince the reader




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2.3

Source of funding

- Most of the international funding for NARES researchers and extension workers come from development donors
- There are a few donor agencies specifically interested in research for generating knowledge
 - E.g., Canada-based IDRC – International Development Research Centre
- For the most part, development donors are only interested in research results that can contribute to development goals and objectives i.e research for development (R4D)



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2.4

Development donors want to give their support to ...

- Projects that can make a marked, measurable and rapid improvement in the living conditions of poor or marginalized and vulnerable people
- Projects that can make a marked, measurable improvement in the environment
- Projects with low risks and high returns
- Projects that beneficiaries (end users) have themselves claimed as priorities, i.e demand-driven and client-oriented

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2.5

Development funding partners want to give their support to ... (cont'd)

- Proposals that offer a team composed of strong research partners whose experience and qualifications give them a comparative advantage over others to carry out the project i.e multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder involvement
- Proposals whose level of detail indicates that the authors have given careful thought to the design and implementation of the project – Project logic
- Proposals with a modest yet realistic budget, that is within the means of the target donor
- Projects that are novel or innovative

2.6

Funders will not like

- Over-ambitious projects that claim more than they can possibly achieve in the time specified and for the funds requested
- Projects that call for infrastructure and capital investment, unless the need for these can be very clearly identified and linked directly to the project activities
- Poorly written and poorly presented proposals i.e lack of clarity

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2.7

When and when not to write a full proposal

- Preparing a concept note takes a fraction of the time needed to prepare a full proposal. Proceed to full proposal when;
 - You are responding to a competitive grants program
 - You have submitted an unsolicited (unasked for) concept note to a donor, who has responded by asking you to provide more information
 - A funding partner/donor has asked for more than a 3–7 page concept note, and wants you to submit a full proposal
- The best basis for a full proposal is a good concept note



2.8

What is a concept note?

- A concept note is a short version of a proposal
- It has the same structure as a full proposal
- It has fewer details and takes far less to prepare
- It is a useful format for getting your project ideas
 - approved internally
 - linked with the ideas of your partners
 - communicated to busy donors



2.9

When to prepare a concept note

- You are submitting a sole source proposal
- You want to find out if a donor is interested
- Your ideas are at a primary stage



2.10

Differences between a concept note and a full proposal	
Concept note	Full proposal
3–7 pages long	10 pages minimum, average 20 pages
Summarized in bullets (title, budget, etc.)	Begins with a summary section
Background section one page or less	Background section about 10% of total
Activities summarized, in time line	Activities are written up in detail
Beneficiaries, impact summarized	End users and impact described in detail
Summary budget is adequate	Budget details required including budget notes
Annexes minimized	Annexes often required

2.11

Moving from a concept note to a proposal

- You will need to add or expand several sections
- You will need to reassemble your project design team and partners to think through the additional details required to write a full proposal
- You now have a chance to make changes to the project that you described in your concept note
- So long as the basic concept of the project remains the same, you should feel free to make these changes in the light of evolving internal and external realities

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2.12

Thank You!

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Session 2: Notes for trainers: What sort of projects do donors like? When and when not to write a full proposal

2.1 Introduction—What sort of projects do donors like?

Most of the international funding for NARES researchers and extension workers come from development donors, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank (multilateral funders) and DfID, USAID, CIDA, SIDA and NORAD (bilateral donors). There are a few donor agencies specifically interested in research. One such is the Canada-based IDRC—the International Development Research Centre. But for the most part, development donors are only interested in research results that can contribute to their development goals and objectives.

Development funding partners want to give their support to the following:

- Projects that can make a marked, measurable and rapid improvement in the living conditions of poor or marginal people. This means that to sell your project to a donor you will need to carefully trace the path between the results of your research and how those results will make a difference for the end users.
- Projects that can make a marked, measurable improvement in the environment. This may have to do with preserving biodiversity, conserving water, improving soils, preventing erosion, etc.
- Projects with low risks and high returns—i.e. are likely to achieve their objectives within the allocated time and budget and within the constraints of the location, while likely to yield impressive benefits for the end users. As you are designing your project, you need to think carefully about whether the situation in your location has elements that might render the project outputs or impacts very difficult to achieve.
- Projects that beneficiaries (end users) have themselves claimed as priorities. This means that you may need to get information about their needs and preferences from the potential end users of your research.
- Proposals that offer a team composed of strong research partners whose experience and qualifications give them a comparative advantage over others to carry out the project. Very few projects (except very small ones) are nowadays implemented by just one organization. This means that you will need to be making linkages with potential partners to complement your own in-house skills.
- Proposals whose level of detail indicates that the authors have given careful thought to the design and implementation of the project. This module will help you to include this level of detail.
- Proposals with a modest yet realistic budget that is within the means of the target donor. The topic on budgets will help you to prepare budgets that are convincing to donors.
- Projects that are novel or innovative. The first thing that a funding partner will ask when picking up a concept note or proposal is, 'What's new about this?' You need to have a good answer to this, early on in your proposal. One of the topics in this module will show you how to write a section on 'What Has Already Been Done', so that you can be sure you are not repeating work done by others.

Funders will not like all of the following:

- Over-ambitious projects that claim more than they can possibly achieve in the time specified and for the funds requested. Although donors may not know your particular field of specialization in

detail, they have lots of project experience, and will have a good sense of what can and cannot be done within a given time and budget.

- Projects that call for the purchase of vehicles and computers, unless the need for these can be very clearly identified and linked directly to the project activities. As you can probably imagine, funders often receive proposals that are little more than requests for these items, for the individual use of the proposers.
- Poorly spelled and poorly presented proposals. Nowadays, with spell-checks and computers, there is no excuse for turning in a shoddy proposal. At the same time, you should not go for something too glossy—if you can afford to produce something really fancy, the funder may feel that perhaps you don't really need the money you are asking for!

2.2 When and when not to write a full proposal

Preparing a concept note takes a fraction of the time needed to prepare a proposal. So you should only proceed to the development of a full proposal under the following conditions:

- You are responding to a competitive grants program
- You have submitted an unsolicited (unasked for) concept note to a donor who has responded by asking you to provide more information.
- A funding partner/donor has asked for more than a 3–7 page concept note, and wants you to submit a full proposal

In all other cases, you should start to write up your project ideas in the form of a concept note. Also, the best basis for a full proposal is a good concept note. For these two reasons, we strongly recommend that you learn how to write a convincing concept note.

Table 1. *Differences between a concept note and a full proposal*

Concept note	Full proposal
3–7 pages long	10 pages minimum, average 20 pages
Summarized in bullets (title, budget etc.)	Begins with a summary section
Background section one page or less	Background section about 10% of total
Activities summarized, in time line	Activities are written up in detail
Beneficiaries, impact summarized	End users and impact described in detail
Summary budget is adequate	Budget details required
Annexes minimized	Annexes often required

Thus, as you move from a concept note to a proposal you will need to add or expand several sections. You will need to reassemble your project design team and partners to think through the additional details required to write a full proposal. You now have a chance to make changes to the project that you described in your concept note—you may want to change the sites, or the activities, or include new elements in your design. So long as the basic concept of the project remains the same, you should feel free to make these changes in the light of evolving internal and external realities—i.e. things that have happened since you first thought of the project and discussed it with your peers.

Session 2: Exercise 1

Individual exercise on what sort of projects donors like

Please mark the following true or false

- a. Funding partners will look favourably on proposals that have the potential to increase the incomes of low-income smallholders or that recommends to smallholders various types of trees whose fruits can be harvested, and that can be planted on hillsides to prevent soil run-off in the rainy season. True False
- b. Donors will never fund proposals unless more than one organization is involved in the implementation of the project. True False
- c. Donors will only fund projects with low risks and high returns. True False
- d. Investors are always on the look out for interesting, unusual and innovative projects. True False
- e. You should never include a request for computers in a project, for fear of looking greedy and turning off your target donor. True False
- f. You can help give your project an edge over others if you can show that the end-users of your research are really eager to get its benefits. True False

See Annex 1 for answers.

Session 2: Exercise 2

Individual exercise on when and when not to write a full proposal

Answer the following questions. Use your pad and pencil to take notes

- a. Give two occasions when it is appropriate to write a full proposal, rather than a concept note.
- b. In a concept note, the first section consists of some bullets (giving the project title, total budget, duration, partners, location etc.). What is the equivalent in a full proposal?
- c. Name two other elements you would find in a full proposal that you would not find in a concept note.

See Annex 2 for answers.

Trainer's guide

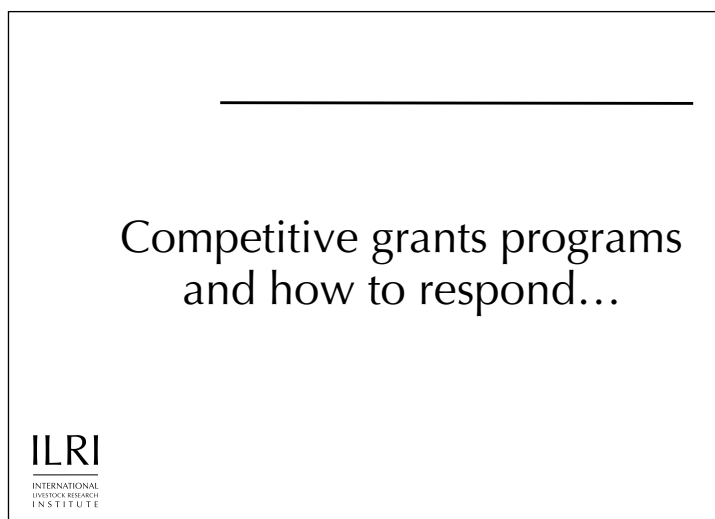
Session 3: Competitive grants program and how to respond and qualities of a convincing proposal

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the nature and content of different competitive grant programs• Be able to decide on the right time to write a full proposal• Know how to respond to calls for competitive grants• Internalize the qualities of a convincing proposal and be able to apply them in their subsequent proposal writings
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coloured cards• Flip charts• White board and assorted chisel marker pens
Time needed	2:55 hrs
Method of facilitation	

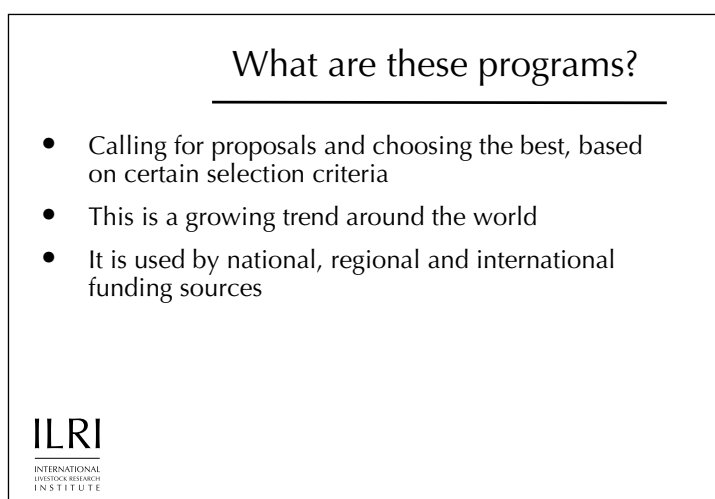
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary presentation	Ask participants for their experience in competitive grants and identify those who have won any Ask participants in groups of four to write down what they consider to be the five most desired qualities of a convincing proposal each quality on one card	30
Plenary presentation	Competitive grants programs and how to respond and qualities of a convincing proposal	1 hrs
Group exercise	Competitive grants programs and how to respond and qualities of a convincing proposal	15 minutes
Plenary presentation	Trainer leads participants in discussing answers to the exercise	30 minutes
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Competitive grants programs and how to respond and qualities of a convincing proposal Guidelines for group work exercise 2	

Session 3: Summary of presentation slides: Competitive grants programs and how to respond and qualities of a convincing proposal

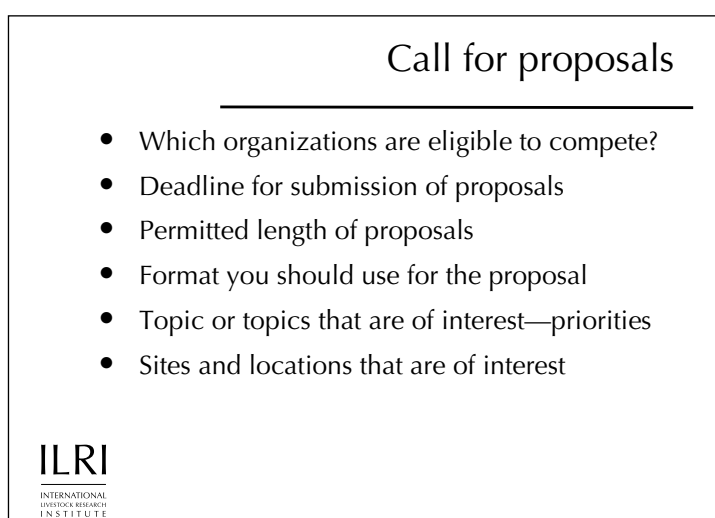
3.1



3.2



3.3



3.4

Call for proposals (cont'd...)

- Size of the grants available
- Required number and types of partners desired
- Goal(s) that the projects should address
- Desired impact
- Criteria that will be used to review the proposals and choose the winners—selection criteria

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3.5

How should you respond?

- Read and re-read the call carefully
- Understand all the key points
- Follow the instructions to the letter
- Accept that the donor agency is telling you exactly what it wants
- Do not believe that somehow you know better than the funding agency and what it really wants
- Understand that bids from ineligible groups will not be read
- If the donor requires you to partner with a private sector group to qualify for a particular grants program, do not bother to apply unless you have such a partner.

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3.6

Finding out about competitive grants programs

- Internet
- Physical visits
- Newspapers/Newsletters
- Colleagues
- Regular circulation

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3.7

Qualities of a convincing proposal

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3.8

What are the hidden messages of a good proposal.....

- Something important needs doing right away!
- Some group of people are suffering and/or the environment is under grave threat
- We have a sensible, cost-effective approach to tackling the problem
- We have thought through all the details of the project

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3.9

What are the hidden messages of a good proposal (cont'd...)

- We have collected the ideal team of people, qualified and experienced to do the work
- Our approach builds on what others have done before
- We are ready and eager to do the work
- If we do the work, our end-users will be significantly better off
- All that is needed is your support

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3.10

Trace the logic that links your research results with the solution of an important problem....

- Explaining who will be responsible for disseminating results to end-users
- Explaining the conditions under which dissemination will take place
- Explaining the strength of interest of end-users in applying/using research results

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3.11

Trace the logic that links your research results with the solution of an important problem (cont'd....)

- Explaining the difficulties that might prevent results being used – Risk factor
- Explaining at what stage (i.e. how many years after the start of the project) the application of results will start to be seen
- Explaining how and who will measure the extent to which your results were applied

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3.12

Where to place your 'silent' messages...

Section of proposal	Implicit message to reader
Background and goal and objectives	Something important needs doing right away!
Beneficiaries	These are the people who need our help
Activities	We have a good approach to do this important thing
Budget	Our approach is cost-effective
All sections	We have thought through all the details
Work plan and annexes	We have collected the ideal team to implement the project — they are highly qualified and experienced
Background	Our approach builds on the work that others have done before
Outputs and impact	If we do the work, our end-users will be significantly better off
All sections	We are ready and eager to do the work – all that is needed is your support

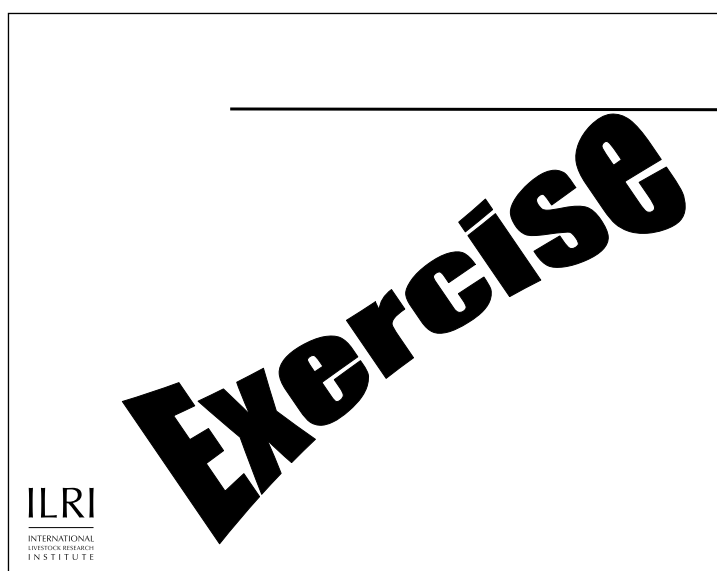
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3.13



3.14



Session 3: Notes to participants: Competitive grants programs and how to respond and qualities of a convincing proposal

3.1 Competitive grants programs and how to respond

3.1.1 What are these programs?

Competitive grants programs are a growing trend around the world. Both national and international funding sources now choose to spend at least part of their funds by requesting proposals and choosing those they like the best, based on certain selection criteria.

Donors announce their interest in receiving proposals by issuing of a 'call for proposals' or 'request for proposals' or 'request for applications'. In these calls, the funders reveal a great deal about the type of projects they want to fund. For instance, these calls will likely specify many, if not all, of the following things:

- Which organizations are eligible to compete?
- Deadline for submission of proposals
- Permitted length of proposals
- Format you should use for the proposal
- Topic or topics that are of interest
- Sites and locations that are of interest
- Size of the grants available
- Required number and types of partners desired
- Goal(s) that the projects should address
- Desired impact
- Criteria that will be used to review the proposals and choose the winners

A number of examples of call for proposals are presented in Annex 12.

3.1.2 How should you respond?

The single most important thing about responding to a call for proposals from a donor **is to read and reread the call carefully, underlining all the key points, and then to follow the instructions to the letter.** One of the great advantages of the competitive grants programs from your point of view is that the donor agency is telling you exactly what it wants. You do not need to guess. Nor should you second guess—i.e. believe that somehow you know better than the funding agency what it really wants.

Believe every word in the request for proposals. Your submission will indeed be reviewed according to the selection criteria, so you would be foolish not to follow them. Bids from ineligible groups will not be read, so do not bother applying to a program for which you (and your partners) are not properly qualified. For instance, if the donor requires you to partner with a private sector group to qualify for a particular grants program, do not bother to apply unless you have such a partner.

In some of the later topics in this training module, we will be presenting you with a 'generic' proposal format that you can use if:

- (a) you are not responding to a call for proposals
- (b) your organization does not have a preferred format, and
- (c) your target donor has not suggested you use a format applied by his or her agency.

This generic format is no better than any other. But if you write your proposal using this format, you will readily be able to adapt it to the needs of any research or development donor's needs.

However, when you are responding to a call for proposals from a competitive grants program, we recommend that you do not use this generic outline, but directly follow the instructions in the call. In other words, believe the words of the donor, rather than what you learn in this training module!

3.2 Finding out about competitive grants programs

Because more and more funding agencies are using competitive grants programs, you need to know about them. You can find out easily by carefully reading the web pages of the major donors in your country every few months. You can, and should, visit the donor agencies that have offices in your capital city, and ask them about any grant programs they have ongoing or planned for the future. Here are just a few of the donor agencies likely to be supporting competitive grants programs. You will be able to find their addresses in their web sites.

Bilateral development donors

- Australia
- Canada
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States
- China
- India
- Brazil
- Taiwan
- Japan

Multilateral development donors

- European Union
- African Development Bank
- Asian Development Bank
- Inter-American Development Bank
- International Fund for Agricultural Development

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has started a number of new initiatives recently. These are called 'Challenge Programs' and they attempt to bring together researchers of all kinds from all types of organizations to work together to address some of the world's biggest development challenges. To be sure that all interested parties are involved, each of these programs has a competitive grants element, and your organization may well be eligible to bid. You can find out more about these programs by reviewing the CGIAR website at www.cgiar.org and reading up on the Challenge Programs. At least two or three are now approved, and more are planned for the future.

3.3 Qualities of a convincing proposal

What are the hidden messages of a good proposal? A convincing proposal is one that convinces your reader to provide funding for your project. All convincing proposals, regardless of size, or even content, share the same key qualities. Although it does not say so in these words, all convincing proposals strongly convey all of the following messages:

- Something important needs doing right away!
- Some groups of people are suffering (and/or the environment is under grave threat)
- We have a sensible, cost-effective approach to tackling the problem
- We have thought through all the details of the project
- We have collected the ideal team of people, qualified and experienced to do the work
- Our approach builds on what others have done before
- We are ready and eager to do the work
- If we do the work, our end-users will be significantly better off
- All that is needed is your support!

Writing a research proposal to a development donor: These implicit messages need to be conveyed to both a development and a research project. In the proposal for a research project, you will need to trace the logic that links your research results with the solution of an important problem that is causing suffering for some group of people or has the potential to benefit some groups of people.

Tracing the logic may involve:

- explaining who will be responsible for disseminating results to end-users
- explaining the conditions under which dissemination will take place
- explaining the strength of interest of end-users in applying/using research results
- explaining the difficulties that might prevent results being used
- explaining at what stage (i.e. how many years after the start of the project) the application of results will start to be seen
- explaining how and who will measure the extent to which your results were applied

Where in the proposal do you convey the ‘hidden’ messages? Table 1 shows which sections of the proposal convey these messages.

Table 1. *Where to place your ‘silent’ messages*

Section of proposal	Implicit message to reader
Background, goal and objectives	Something important needs doing right away!
Beneficiaries	These are the people who need our help
Activities	We have a good approach to do this important thing
Budget	Our approach is cost-effective
All sections	We have thought through all the details
Work plan and annexes	We have collected the ideal team to implement the project—they are highly qualified and experienced
Background	Our approach builds on the work that others have done before
Outputs and impact	If we do the work, our end-users will be significantly better off
All sections	We are ready and eager to do the work—all that is needed is your support

Session 3: Pair exercise on qualities of a convincing proposal

Answer the following questions. Use your pad and pencil to take notes.

- a. Where in the proposal would you show your interest in ensuring that end-users are benefiting from the results of your research?
- b. Name two things that you want readers to think and feel when they read your background section.
- c. In a research proposal, is the author required to show the potential impact of his or her research results (outputs)?
- d. Where in the proposal can you show that you have tried to anticipate everything that might happen during the implementation of your project?
- e. Can a proposal have as its goal both something to do with people and something to do with the environment?
- f. Do you think you need to 'sell' the quality of the people who will implement the project in your proposal?

See Annex 3 for answers

Trainer's guide

Session 4: Proposal format and order of preparation

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a proposal following a standard format• Know which parts of the proposal are prepared first and which ones are prepared last	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flip charts• White boards• Assorted chisel marker pens	
Time needed	45 min	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary presentation	Ask participants to highlight the section of a proposal. After listening the section in their chronological order, the trainer then asks them to identify which ones are written first till the last	15 min
Plenary presentation	Proposal format and order of preparation	25 min
Summary	Trainer summarizes the session	5 min
Session 4	Switch to session four	
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Proposal format and order of preparation	

Session 4: Summary of presentation slides: Proposal format and order of preparation

4.1

Proposal format and order of presentation

4.2

Proposal format

- There are several formats of proposals
- Format is dependent on the funding agency
- Every donor/funding agency have their own preferred format or outline
- Despite the several formats, some sections are common in all proposals

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4.3

Generic proposal format

- The generic (conventional) proposal format has the following sections not necessarily the same order
1. Title
 - Title is the first and most read part of a proposal.
 - It tells the reader what the project is all about (focus of the proposal)
 2. Executive summary (sometimes abstract)
 - Summarized form of a proposal describing what the proposal is about and what will be accomplished

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4.4

Generic proposal format (cont'd...)

3. Introduction/background

Explains:

- What is the problem (problem statement)
- Why is it urgent, (justification)
- What has already been done (summary of literature review)
- Identify the gaps that your research is addressing

4. Goal and purpose/objectives

- What are you going to do in the project? and
- What do you want to achieve?

Note: Sometimes this section is included under introduction

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4.5

Generic proposal format (cont'd...)

5. Inputs

- Describes goods and services that you need to achieve your objectives (personnel, equipment, transport, chemicals etc.)

6. Activities/methods and work plan

- Describes the details of what you will do
- Explains how you will achieve your objectives
- Describes how you will schedule the implementation of what you will do

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4.6

Generic proposal format (cont'd...)

7. Expected outputs

- What will be in place at the end of the project
- It is evidence which shows that resources were properly used

8. Beneficiaries and impact

- Who will benefit from the results/outputs?
- In what way?
- How will you measure the impact, and when will it be observed?
- What would be their contribution?

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4.7

Generic proposal format (cont'd...)

9. Monitoring and evaluation
 - How can you track the project progress in terms of implementation and promised results?
 - How will the project be assessed at its end?
 - Helps to take corrective action if the expected results are not forthcoming as anticipated
10. Budget
 - Shows how much it will cost and how the cost items were estimated
11. Logframe
 - Project summary, aid to data collection for monitoring and evaluation

4.8

Other sections in a proposal

- Proposal can be biological or socioeconomic
- Be aware of the following sections:
- Environmental and ethical issues
 - Gender concerns
 - Concerns for marginalized and vulnerable people
 - Hypotheses
 - Scope of the project
 - Sometimes priorities/subject matter is determined by the funding agency
 - Annexes:
 - CVs and academic transcripts of investigators
 - Sometimes detailed budgets
 - Maps
 - Strategic plans or medium plans, etc as required

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4.9

Recommended order of preparation for a proposal

- Objectives
- Inputs
- Activities/Methods
- Outputs
- Budget
- Beneficiaries, goal and impact
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Background
- Summary
- Review, editing, cover letter

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4.10

Examples of donors' proposal formats

Maendeleo agricultural technology fund

SECTION 1

- 1.1 Title
- 1.2 Summary (1/2 pages)
- 1.3 Problem statement and project rationale (1/4 page)
- 1.4 Technology(ies) under consideration (1/4 page)

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4.11

Examples of donors' proposal formats (cont'd....)

- 1.5 Purpose and objectives (1/4 page)
- 1.6 Partnership and linkages (1/2 page)
- 1.7 Approaches and methodology (1.5 pages)
- 1.8 Social and environmental context of the project (1/4 page)
- 1.9 Potential to generate social and economic impact (1/4 page)
- 1.10 Potential for scaling up (1/2 page)
- 1.11 Potential sustainability (1/2 page)
- (financial sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability & institutional sustainability)

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4.12

-
- 1.12 Monitoring and evaluation (1/4 page)
 - 1.13 Track record and legal status of host/lead institution (1/4 page)
 - 1.14 Work plan and time frame (1 page)
 - 1.15 Logical framework (1 page)

SECTION 2

- Budget
- Use the budget guidelines

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Session 4: Notes to participants: Proposal format and order of preparation

4.1 Proposal format and order of preparation

Proposal formats: Most donors have their own preferred format or proposal outline. Ask your target donor before you start writing. If the donor does not have a preferred format, you may use that which is used by your institute. If your institute does not have a preferred format, you might think about instituting one, since it would be helpful if everyone in the institute was writing in a similar way. For example, you might consider modifying the 'generic proposal outline' shown below.

Table 1. *Generic proposal format*

Summary	(What is this proposal about?)
Background	(What is the problem, why is it urgent, what has already been done?)
Goal and objectives	(Why are you doing the project, and what do you want to achieve?)
Inputs	(What things will you need to achieve your objectives?)
Activities/methods and work plan	(What will you do? How will you achieve your objectives?)
Outputs	(What will be in place at the end of the project?)
Beneficiaries and impact	(Who will benefit from the results/outputs, in what way? How will you measure the impact, and when will it be observed?)
Monitoring and evaluation	(How can you track the project progress in terms of implementation and promised results? How will the project be assessed at its end?)
Budget	(How much will it cost?)

If you use this generic format, you should have no difficulty in repackaging the material (i.e. rearranging the sections, and perhaps changing some of the terms) to suit the template or format used by any donor. In addition to the sections shown above, you may also need some annexes to show supporting material for your project. Some of these annexes might include:

- a copy of a logframe for your project
- CVs for your implementation team
- Statements about past performance of your institute and your partners

You will also need a cover letter to submit with your proposal.

Order of preparation: Although the proposal will be submitted in the order shown in Table 3, we do not recommend that you prepare the sections in that order. We suggest that you prepare the proposal in the order of steps shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Recommended order of preparation for a proposal*

1. Objectives	6. Beneficiaries, goal and impact
2. Inputs	7. Monitoring and evaluation
3. Activities/methods	8. Background
4. Outputs	9. Summary
5. Budget	10. Review, editing, cover letter

Notice that Step 10 is as important as all the others. Having your colleagues review your proposal a little after it is finished will yield many useful suggestions for improving your proposal, and may make the difference between convincing your donor or not.

This order of preparation ensures that you first concentrate on the ‘heart’ of the project—the five key elements of the project design. Once you have those things clearly written down, you can start to write some of the ‘selling’ parts of the proposal—i.e. the Impact and Background section. The Monitoring and Evaluation section is separated from the heart of the project, because we assume that your institute has a regular program of reviewing its ongoing projects. You will mention this in your proposal, along with the specific issues about the monitoring and evaluation of this particular project. The Summary is always written last, since you need to have all other sections finished before you can summarize them.

Session 4: Individual exercise on proposal format and order of preparation

Mark the following statements true or false.

- a. You should always use the generic proposal outline when submitting a proposal to a donor. True False
- b. The Summary is always the first section in a project proposal. True False
- c. You may have annexes in a full proposal. True False
- d. The budget section of a proposal is always the last in the presentation, and so it should be worked on last. True False
- e. The outputs section is one of the places where you are 'selling' your project. True False
- f. If you are describing a research project, the methodology you are using should be described in the Activities section. True False

See Annex 4 for answers.

Trainer's guide

Session 5: Project goal(s) and the project's contribution

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand and appreciate the need of a good project goal• Be able to write a relevant project goal• Be able to establish appropriate and realistic project contribution	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assorted markers• Flip chart	
Time needed	30 min	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary presentation	A PowerPoint on project goal(s) and the project's contribution	65 min
Participants' reactions	Participants are given an opportunity to ask questions or make contributions in relation to the topic	5 min
Group work	Review examples of given project goals	15 min
Break	Health break in preparation for session 5	
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Proposal format and order of preparation	

Session 5: Summary of presentation slides: Project goal(s) and the project's contribution

5.1

Project goal(s) and the project's contribution

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5.2

Project title

- After identifying your niche area, then develop a title for the project
- Title is the first and most read part of a proposal

Importance of title

- Title gives the first impression of a proposal
- It influences vital decisions by the reader and predisposes (inclines) him/her either positively or negatively about the proposal

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5.3

Role of a title in influencing acceptance of a proposal

- Reviewers of proposals form an initial opinion about a proposal from the title
- Confusing, clumsy, vague or inappropriate title induces the reviewers to develop negative opinion about the proposal and may remain biased against its content regardless of its worth
- Confusing or inappropriate title usually makes it difficult to understand the content of the proposal

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5.4

Types of titles

- There are 3 types: Indicative, hanging and question titles

Indicative titles

- Most common type
- It states the subject of the proposal rather than expected outputs
- E.g. "Role of agricultural credit in alleviating poverty in eastern Uganda"
- Sometimes such titles become too long & clumsy

5.5

Types of titles (cont'd...)

Hanging titles

- Hanging titles have two parts. A general first part followed by a more specific second part
- It may be useful to reword long, clumsy and complicated indicative title
- E.g. "Alleviation of poverty in lowland areas of Eastern Uganda: the impact of agricultural credit"

Question titles

- Are less commonly used and are acceptable, e.g. "Does agricultural credit alleviate poverty in Eastern Uganda?"

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5.6

Guidelines for writing a good title

- The title should not be wordy – should contain less than 15 words
- Make the most important words stand out, usually by putting them first
- Be faithful to the content of the proposal
- Be accurate, concise and specific
- Contain as many of the key words as possible and be easy to understand
 - E.g. (1) "Adaptation of pedal thresher for small-holder rice farmers".
 - (2) "Recovering the degraded lands in eastern Tororo district"
 - (3) "Development of rain water harvesting options for Karamoja region"

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5.7

Guidelines for writing good title (cont'd...)

A title should not:

- Contain abbreviations or formulas
- Promise more than is in the proposal
- Be general
- Contain details that should appropriately come under another part of the proposal
- Contain unnecessary words such as "Some notes on....."; "An investigation on"



5.8

What is a goal?

- Goals are higher-order, lofty aspirations
- Goals are large statements of what you hope to accomplish
- Often difficult to measure and articulate – requires scaling down to target population
- Expressions of things that we would like to improve in our world
- They create a setting for what you are proposing
- In your proposal, you need to identify a goal to which your project will contribute, even though that contribution may be very small
- You need to choose a goal which is common to your country, your institute and your donor



5.9

Examples of a goal

- Alleviating poverty (increasing household incomes)
- Protecting or preserving the environment
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Improving infant and maternal nutrition
- Improving food security



5.10

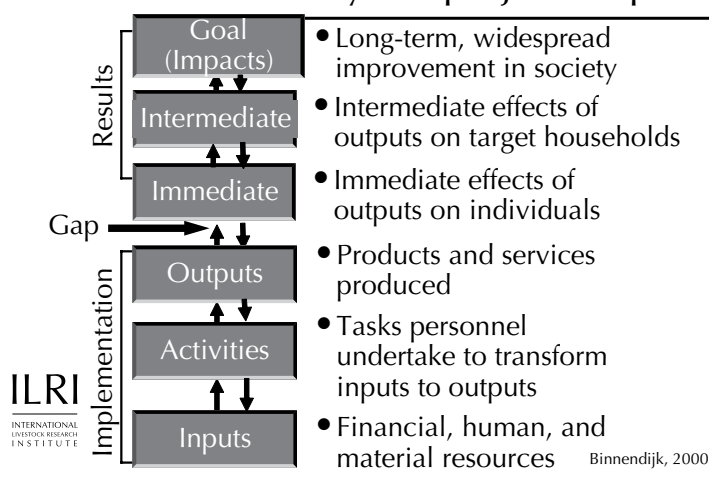
Reasons for a project goal

- First, it is the reason why you are doing the research or the project
- Second, it is the reason why the donor will fund your project
- Third, it is how your project can make a difference to one of your country's problems, aspirations of the target population

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5.11

Beyond project outputs



5.12

An example of selecting a goal

Project

- Our sample project is designed to test the nutritional and economic advantages for Malawian farm families with less than 2 ha of land with aquaculture of tilapia species over a three year period. Its author got members of his design team together to brainstorm some goals to which this project might contribute, and how

Goals

- Poverty alleviation
- Household food security
- National food security
- Improved on-farm nutrition (women and children?)
- Improved on-farm health (larger babies?)
- Increased farm incomes
- Decreased urban migration

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5.13

Goals and questions to address

They chose poverty alleviation

- How many people qualify as owning less than 2 ha of land? How large a sample would need to be tested to get meaningful results?
- What baseline data would need to be collected on the current situation of poverty in the area — income, expenditure for individual, household, whole target group, etc.? How much would it cost to do the pre-project testing? Who would carry out the survey?
- By how much could the project possibly increase household incomes under ideal circumstances? What would it take to mean that the families received no extra income at all? Could a reasonable range of possible increase be estimated?
- How soon could income improvements be seen?
- How would those improvements be measured?

5.14

Goals and questions to address – (cont'd...)

They chose household food security

- Were households insecure before? If so, how insecure? A pre-project survey would likely be needed to make any comparison
- What would happen if the fish died during the project?
- Would the head of household likely sell the fish for cash, rather than keep some or all for household consumption?
- How would household food security be measured? In number of meals eaten by the family? In calorie intake for all family members? Who would measure this?
- How much food security could the tilapia contribute under the best of circumstances?

5.15

Exercise

- Based on the thinking in our example, now take a little time to think about the possible goals you might select for a project like this one – i.e. a workshop on 'How to Write a Convincing Proposal'. First list some possible goals, and then for the one you select, list some of the questions you will need to answer in your proposal.

Session 5: Notes to participants: Project goal(s) and the project's contribution

5.1 Proposal format and order of preparation

You are doing your research for a good reason. Development donors are spending their money for a good reason. We call those good reasons 'goals'. Goals are high-order, lofty aspirations—expressions of things that we would like to improve in our world. The UN, for instance, in 2000 issued a set of 10 year Millennium Goals, the first one of which called for the world to unite to cut the rate of poverty by half by 2010.

In your proposal, you need to identify a goal to which your project will contribute, even though that contribution may be very small. And you need to choose a goal which is common to your country, your institute and your donor. Here are some of the goals which you might select:

- Alleviating poverty (increasing household incomes)
- Protecting or preserving the environment
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Improving infant and material nutrition
- Improving food security

Your project will almost certainly have an effect on more than one of those goals, but we suggest that you choose only one in your project proposal—and certainly no more than two. The reason is that you will need to present in your proposal several details about how your project relates to the selected goal. By choosing more than one, you double the work you will need to do.

Why does your project need a goal? For several reasons:

- First, it is the reason why you are doing the research or the project
- Second, it is the reason why the donor will fund your project
- Third, it is how your project can make a difference to one of your country's problems.

You may feel that as a researcher, your main duty is to achieve important research results. But nowadays that is not enough. As I have said earlier, today, and certainly if you want to attract funds from a development donor, you need to show the link between your research results (i.e. your project outputs) and the extent to which they might contribute to the goal(s) you have selected.

Let's take an example to look at how you might go about selecting a goal. The sample project is designed to test the nutritional and economic advantages for Malawian farm families with less than 2 ha of land of growing farmed tilapia in farm ponds over a three year period. Its author got members of his design team together to brainstorm some goals to which this project might contribute, and how.

In addition to poverty alleviation, the team came up with six possible goals:

- Household food security
- National food security
- Improved on-farm nutrition (women and children?)
- Improved on-farm health (larger babies?)
- Increased farm incomes
- Decreased urban migration

They picked two—poverty alleviation and household food security—to explore further, because these were of great importance in their country. Here were their thoughts as they considered the two possible goals:

For household food security

- Were households insecure before? If so, how insecure? A pre-project survey would likely be needed to make any comparison.
- What would happen if the fish died during the project?
- Would the head of household likely sell the fish for cash, rather than keep some or all for household consumption?
- How would household food security be measured? In number of meals eaten by the family? In calorie intakes for all family members? Who would do this measurement?
- How much food security could the tilapia contribute under the best of circumstances?

For poverty alleviation

- How many people qualify as owning less than 2 ha of land? How large a sample would need to be tested to get meaningful results?
- What baseline data would need to be collected on the current situation of poverty in the area: income, expenditure for individual, household, whole target group, etc.? How much would it cost to do the pre-project testing? Who would carry out the survey?
- By how much could the project possibly increase household incomes under ideal circumstances? What would it take to mean that the families received no extra income at all? Could a reasonable range of possible increase be estimated?
- How soon could income improvements be seen?
- How would those improvements be measured?

Trainer's guide


Session 6: Project objectives, anticipated outputs and beneficiaries

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write convincing project objectives• Be able to write a relevant project goal• State and describe relevant and appropriate project deliverables	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assorted markers• Flip chart	
Time needed	45 min	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary discussion	Ask participants to distinguish between project goals, objectives and outputs and show their relationship	10 min
Plenary presentation	Project objectives and anticipated outputs	30 min
Summarizing key issues	The trainer summarizes the main issues to consider when developing project objectives and expected outputs	5 min
Change of session	Transition into session 7	
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Project objectives and anticipated outputs Reading notes on project objectives and anticipated outputs	

Session 6: Summary of presentation slides: Project objectives, anticipated outputs and beneficiaries

6.1

Project objectives and anticipated outputs




6.2

Project objectives and anticipated outputs

Objective? Goal?

Try and differentiate between goals and objectives and include both

- Goals are statements of what “you” hope to achieve at the end of the project
- Can be difficult to measure and articulate
- Project purpose reflects necessary outputs but not sufficient to achieve the goal
- Goals create the setting for what you are proposing




6.3

Objectives and outputs (cont’d...)

Examples

1. To provide 500 mothers in Oromia *Woreda* with relevant information regarding child health and nutrition
2. To reduce the degree of malnutrition among young children in Oromia *Woreda*
3. To assist mothers in Oromia *Woreda* in learning how to effectively apply health and nutrition information to improve child health
4. To teach mothers in Oromia *Woreda* to evaluate changes in the health of their young children.



6.4

Objectives and outputs (cont'd...)

General objective

- This is the purpose that your project intends to achieve

Objectives

- The key element of your project's design
- They describe exactly what you intend to do
- Get their meaning and wording exactly right
- Do this with your design team of between three to five people
- Number your objectives, and use them to organize later sections of the proposal
- Collectively they should enable to achieve the project purpose

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6.5

What makes a 'good' objective?

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-bound

Compare:

1. To enhance knowledge of market opportunities for fishermen
2. To provide fishermen with twice-weekly news bulletins about fish prices in all markets within a 20 mile radius

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6.6

Good objective (cont'd...)

- | | | |
|------------|---|--|
| Specific | - | Give clear details about what you want to do |
| Measurable | - | Give some sense of the scope of what you intend to do and how it will be measured |
| Achievable | - | Make sure that your objectives are achievable within the budget you have asked for, and with the team of people you propose to implement the project |
| Realistic | - | Achievable within the context of the country – its climate and socio-political realities |
| Time-bound | - | Achievable within the time period of the project. |

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6.7

Example 1

Look at the following two examples:

1. Original: "To enhance the proposal-writing capacity of ILRI participants"
2. SMARTer: "To provide a 15-topic training program for 45 ILRI participants to improve their proposal-writing skills"



6.8

Example 2

1. Original: "To develop drought resistant fodder varieties that can be grown with saline water"
2. SMARTer: "To develop at least two new drought-resistant fodder varieties that can be grown with 3 grams of salt per litre of water."



6.9

Project anticipated outputs

- Outputs of a project are those things that will be in place at the end of the project, that would not have existed without the project
- Outputs may be tangible (like a new building or a new publication) or intangible (like a skill or a new knowledge)
- You need to specify in your proposal all the outputs you anticipate and you will 'deliver' at the end of the project



6.10

Anticipated outputs (cont'd...)

- Outputs relate directly to your objectives
- Objectives clearly state what it is you want to do in your project
- In the outputs section you state what you expect will be in place at the end of the project, as a result of your efforts to achieve the objectives
- If your project is likely to have negative outputs of any quantity, you may want to reconsider the design of your project

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6.11

Milestones – Intermediate outputs

Good monitoring helps to identify intermediate results

Milestones for the Gambia *Caliandra* Project

- Month 6: - Baseline survey of current *Caliandra* varieties and harvests in Gambia completed
- Month 12: - Six new varieties planted together in a test pattern in at least 100 home gardens.
- Baseline survey published and distributed to agricultural research establishments
- Month 18: - Number of home garden tests sites increased to at least 200
- First harvest data collected by post-docs and collated at research station

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6.12

Intermediate outputs (cont'd...)

- Month 24: - All 500 test sites now operational
- Second harvest data collected and being analyzed
- Month 30: - First draft of final report on varietal comparisons completed
- Data on quantity of *Caliandra* obtained in three harvests being analyzed
- Month 36: - Final report on varieties and harvests presented at workshop bringing together donor, extension workers, researchers and farmers

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6.13

Intermediate outputs (cont'd...)

Intermediate outputs or results will allow you, every six months, to see if your project is on track—to assess progress.

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6.14

Writing about beneficiaries/ end users

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6.15

Things that your readers want to know

- For whom is your research ultimately designed?
- Whom is your project trying to make better off?
- What sort of people are these?
- What are their circumstances now, without the project?
- How might their circumstances change, if the project is funded?

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6.16

Understand the beneficiaries

- Sit with your design team, brainstorm about the potential end-users of your project outputs.
- Carefully sample the potential beneficiaries and confirm their characteristics and their needs through participatory surveys/interviews
- Understand their culture and attitudes towards the changes expected from the proposed intervention

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6.17

Understand the beneficiaries

Will your project have a positive effect on any of the following?

- Poor urban consumers?
- Refugees from neighboring war-torn countries?
- AIDS orphans?
- Pregnant or nursing mothers?
- Unemployed youth?
- Landless laborers?
- Fishing communities? etc,etc.

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6.18

Emotive realistic description

Emotively

- Write a sentence or two about each group.
- Provide some statistics (with source, if at all possible)
- Provide details that make those people seem real to the reader.
- Describe the unemployed youth as 'desperate' and 'volatile' groups, who can cause social unrest.

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6.19

Emotive realistic description

What may be most appealing to a potential donor?

- Providing some positive benefit for this group
- Explain recent surveys suggesting half-a-million AIDS orphans in your country
- Most of these are heading families or living on their own or trying to take care of other siblings, with or without the disease.
- These children often make do with only one substandard meal per day
- As a result they are severely malnourished, and unable to continue feeding for themselves
- These few details may help the reader to identify with the plight of these poor people, and want to support your project, that may make a difference, albeit small, to their wellbeing

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6.20

Emotive realistic description

Here is a sample description of a group of target beneficiaries.

This project, which seeks to plant 5 million trees over a 3 year period, will achieve a variety of environmental benefits. It will provide urgently needed employment for an often over-looked group in province Y. The World Bank estimates that there are over 100,000 landless laborers in the rural areas of this highland province, who have lost their jobs in the South African mines, and are now urgently seeking alternative work.....

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6.21

Emotive realistic description (cont'd...)

In years of better rainfall, the larger farms might have absorbed many during harvest time, but three year's drought has put a dent in this prospect. These laborers have been used to large pay checks in the mines, sending home significant remittances to provide food and education for their families. From being people who were admired in their home towns and villages, these men cannot now provide for their families and may become a liability to their communities.

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6.22

Emotive realistic description (cont'd...)

- It is hoped that the tree project will be able to offer at least part time jobs to as many as half of these laborers in the province.
- It is important to include a discussion of all the possible beneficiaries specially disadvantaged groups, like those out-of-work migrant miners.

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6.23

Reference file

Start a file on beneficiary groups for all future project development. This file might contain useful statistics, newspaper articles, magazine clippings and other sources of news about various poor segments of your society. You will find that being able to quote from material in this file will greatly strengthen the quality of your writing about project beneficiaries and end-users.

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6.24

Exercise

Session 6: Notes to participants: Project objectives, anticipated outputs and beneficiaries

6.1 Project objectives

The objectives of your project are the key element of your project's design. They describe exactly what it is you intend to do, if you receive the financial support you seek. Because of their importance, you need to spend considerable time in getting their meaning and wording exactly right. We strongly recommend that you do this with your design team of between three to five people. Brainstorming your objectives will be much easier and more enjoyable than working out the language on your own.

Every proposal will have a separate objectives section. Many proposal readers may look at that section first. That is one of the reasons for being careful to get the wording quite right. You are encouraged to number your objectives, and use them to organize later sections of the proposal, such as the activities and outputs sections, described below.

What makes a 'good' objective? It is something that you can tell, at the end of the project, whether you have succeeded in achieving it or not. 'To enhance knowledge of market opportunities' is not a good objective, because you have not specified how much knowledge you expect to add in your project. Even one additional fact might allow you to claim that your objective had been achieved, but that would not please a potential investor. A much better objective would be something like 'To provide fishermen with twice-weekly news bulletins about the fish prices at all markets within a 20 mile radius.' This would no doubt 'enhance knowledge of market opportunities', and would also enable a reviewer to assess whether or not your project had indeed achieved its objective.

There is a neat acronym for preparing good objectives, called SMART. SMART stands for five elements of what makes a good objective. It should be:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time-bound**

By 'specific' we mean you should give some details about what it is you want to do; in our example, we specify that the end-users are fishermen, and that we will be sharing information about fish prices at nearby markets.

By 'measurable' we mean you should give some sense of the scope of what you intend to do. In our example, we have indicated our news bulletins will be twice weekly. We could have indicated the number of fishermen (e.g. fishermen living along the east coast of Sri Lanka) to make our objective even more measurable. Perhaps this would be evident from the parts of the proposal already written. But by giving more details, we make it easier again to assess the extent to which we have succeeded in meeting our objectives at project's end.

By 'achievable' we mean you should make sure that your objectives are achievable within the scope of your project (i.e. with the budget you have asked for, and with the team of people you propose to implement the project). Your donor readers, who have read many project proposals, will have a good sense of what is achievable for what sort of budget in the country in which they work. They will

know, for instance, that you will need at least two experts to do that market-information enhancement project—one an economist and the other a translator, who can put the information into terms that the fishermen will understand. If you forget to include the translator, your reader will feel that your project (as you have designed it) is not achievable. (Notice that the achievability of the project cannot be seen from the objectives alone, but takes into account what you have written in other sections of the proposal.)

By ‘realistic’ we mean that your objective must be achievable within the context of the country—its climate and socio-political realities. For instance, if our fisher people cannot read and write, then our news bulletins must come via radio. But if the families are too poor to own radios, how can the news get through? Are there communal radios? Who listens to them? You need to ensure that what you want to do in your project is do-able in the context of the reality of the people you are hoping to help.

By ‘time-bound’ we mean that your objective must be achievable within the time period of the project. We may be able to get our twice-weekly fish price information to our fishers within a two-year project, but we may not be able to get these fishers to change their behaviour as a result of having that new information in that time. Changing human behaviour always takes longer than you think!

So, when you are preparing the objectives for your proposal, remember to think SMART.

Exercise: Look at the following two examples:

- Original: ‘To enhance the proposal-writing capacity of ILRI participants’
- SMARTer: ‘To provide a 15-topic training program for 45 ILRI participants to improve their proposal-writing skills’
- Original: ‘To develop drought resistant fodder varieties that can be grown with saline water’
- SMARTer: ‘To develop at least two new drought-resistant fodder varieties that can be grown with 3 grams of salt per litre of water.’

6.2 Project anticipated outputs

The outputs of a project are those things that will be in place at the end of the project that would not have existed without the project. Outputs may be tangible (like a new building or a new publication) or intangible (like a workshop or a new knowledge). You need to specify in your proposal all the outputs you anticipate you will ‘deliver’ at the end of the project.

Here are some examples. In item (a) of the above exercise, one output of your project might be at least 100 new fish ponds on small farms in Southern Malawi. In item (b) one output might be two types of fruit tree shown to grow quickly and provide fruit for sale within two years. In item (c) an output might be one approach to chick-deaths that proved effective in keeping alive more than 85% of young chicks in the test area.

If your project is a piece of research, your outputs may be research results—either answers to a research question or the answer to a hypothesis you have posed. For instance, supposing you were testing the hypothesis that there is an inverse relation between adoption of new technologies and the level of poverty of potential adopters. The result of your research might be statistical proof that the poorer the farm family, the less likely they were to adopt a new technology. The output might be the writing up of this information in a report to your donor, or a paper given at a conference or workshop.

Every proposal will have its own separate section in which you are encouraged to list all the possible outputs of your project.

Outputs relate directly to your objectives. In your objectives you state what it is you want to do in your project (or piece of research). In the outputs section, you state what you expect will be in place at the end of the project as a result of your efforts to achieve the objectives.

Your project will likely have several outputs. Brainstorm with your design team to be sure that you are listing all the possible (positive) outputs your project might have. If your project is likely to have negative outputs of any quantity, you may want to reconsider the design of your project.

Some people, including some donors, prefer to call outputs ‘deliverables’. This is a useful term, because it helps to convey the idea that you are ‘promising’ to deliver the outputs, if the donor provides you with the money. This is the case. If your proposal is successful in attracting donor funds, it will be turned into a grant agreement (or similar document) which will specify the outputs you are expected to ‘deliver’ in return for receiving the grant. Any evaluation of your project or grant will be assessing the extent to which you did, indeed, deliver those outputs.

6.3 Milestones—Intermediate outputs

In a project of two or more years, you are likely to achieve outputs well before the end of the project. In fact, you are encouraged to identify outputs that you may achieve (deliver) regularly throughout the project. Why? To help you monitor your project.

You will want to keep a tight control on the development of your project by having a good monitoring or tracking scheme. A key tool in this project monitoring is to identify intermediate results, or outputs, at regular intervals in the project. You can then assess, as you go along, if you have achieved those results, as anticipated.

For instance, in a three-year tomato-improvement project, you may wish to specify a milestone every six months, as shown in the table.

Illustrative list of milestones for the Alemaya Lablab Fodder Project

- **Month 6:** — Base-line survey of current Lablab Fodder varieties and harvests in Alemaya completed.
- **Month 12:** — Six new varieties planted together in a test pattern in at least 100 home gardens.
— Baseline survey published and distributed to agricultural research establishments
- **Month 18:** — The number of home garden tests sites now numbers at least 200
- — First harvest data collected by post-docs and collated at research station
- **Month 24:** — All 500 test sites now operational
— Second harvest data collected and being analysed
- **Month 30:** — First draft of final report on varietal comparisons completed
— Data on quantity of Lablab Fodder obtained in three harvests being analysed
- **Month 36:** — Final report on varieties and harvests presented at workshop bringing together donor, extension workers, researchers and farmers

Notice how this list of intermediate outputs or results will allow you, every six months, to see if your project is on track. For instance, if in Month 24 you find that only 350 sites are now testing the various Lablab Fodder varieties, you will know you have a problem you need to address. You will need to

understand why your sites are far fewer than anticipated. If necessary, you may need to adjust your project design. You will need to explain this to your donor. Much better to do this at the end of Year 2, which you still have time, than at the end of the project, when you will annoy your donor by springing an unhappy surprise, that you did not deliver the outputs you promised. An annoyed donor, faced with an unexpected negative surprise, is unlikely to be thrilled about follow-on funding for your next piece of research!

Note: In writing proposals we always use terms like 'Year 1', 'Month 30', 'Week 4', etc., rather than real dates, like 2005 and February. This is because we can never know when a donor will agree to fund a project, and thus cannot be sure when a project will start. The use of Year, Month or Week, plus a number, allows you to specify the duration of certain activities, etc., without making your proposal out of date at any time.

6.4 Project beneficiaries/end users

For the moment, all that you need to know here is that in some parts of the project proposal you can 'let your hair down' and write with a bit more emotion than you usually do. One of those places is in the section where you write about the beneficiaries or end-users of your project outputs or research results.

First of all, you will have to decide who you think those end-users are. For whom is your research ultimately designed? Whom is your project trying to make better off? What sort of people are these? What are their circumstances now, without the project? How might their circumstances change, if the project is funded? These are the things that your readers want to know.

We suggest you sit with your design team and brainstorm about the potential end-users of your project outputs. Will your project have a positive effect on any of the following?

- Poor urban consumers?
- Refugees from neighbouring war-torn countries?
- AIDS orphans?
- Pregnant or nursing mothers?
- Unemployed youth?
- Landless labourers?
- Fishing communities?

Try to think beyond your 'usual' target beneficiaries—perhaps smallholder farmers, and be a little more specific.

Once you have identified all the groups that might benefit, try to write a sentence or two about each group, providing some statistics (with source, if at all possible) and some details that make those people seem real to the reader. Your object is to make your reader care about the situation of these people. For instance, you may describe the unemployed youth as 'desperate' or 'angry'. These are volatile groups who can cause social unrest. Providing some positive benefit for this group may be most appealing to a potential donor. You may explain that some suggest there may be as many as half-a-million AIDS orphans in your country, many living on their own, trying to take care of other siblings, with or without the disease. You may mention that these children often must make do with only one meal per day, often of substandard food. As a result, they are severely malnourished and unable to work for a living. These few details may help the reader to identify with the plight of these poor people, and want to support your project, that may make a difference, albeit small, to their wellbeing.

Here is a sample description of a group of target beneficiaries. 'This project, which seeks to plant literally thousands of trees over its three-year life to achieve a variety of environmental benefits, will provide urgently needed employment for an often over-looked group in Country Y. The World Bank estimates that there are over 100 thousand landless labourers in the rural areas, who have lost their jobs in the South African mines, and are now urgently seeking alternative work. In years of better rainfall, the larger farms might have absorbed many during harvest time, but this year's drought has put a dent in this prospect. These labourers have been used to large pay checks in the mines, and to sending home significant remittances to keep their families in food and education. From being people who were admired in their home towns and villages, these men are now the object of pity, and their families are dependent on the charity of others. It is hoped that the tree project will be able to offer at least part time jobs to as many as half these labourers in the three highland provinces.' Notice that even in an environmental project, with a goal of preventing soil degradation and preserving arable land, it is important to include a discussion of all the possible beneficiaries, not just the nation's farmers and food consumers, but specially disadvantaged groups, like those out-of-work migrant miners.

Your project will probably benefit various fairly privileged groups, like other research organizations, or may be politicians and civil servants, or the like. You may mention these groups as potential users of your research results or project outputs, but do not highlight these groups as your donor is not really interested in spending money to benefit these people.

We recommend that you start a file on beneficiary groups for all future project development. This file might contain useful statistics, newspaper articles, magazine clippings and other sources of news about various poor segments of your society. You will find that being able to quote from material in this file will greatly strengthen the quality of your writing about project beneficiaries and end-users.

Trainer's guide

Session 7: Inputs, activities, work plan

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish necessary and sufficient activities that can result into outputs• State and describe relevant and appropriate project deliverables• Identify necessary inputs for activity to be implemented• Develop an appropriate project plan for effective and efficient implementation and management	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coloured cards• Felt pens	
Time needed	1 hr	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary discussion	The trainer highlights the relevance of each component of the presentation. He/she makes a distinction between annual, quarterly, monthly and weekly plans and when is each appropriate	5 min
Plenary presentation	Project inputs, activities, work plan	40 min
Group exercise	Participants are organized into groups to discuss the questions and answers to the exercise on project inputs, activities, work plan.	10 min
Plenary presentation	The trainer together with the participants discuss the correct responses to the questions	5 min
Break	Health break	
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: project inputs, activities and work plan Reading notes on project inputs, activities, work plan	

Session 7: Summary of presentation slides: Project inputs, activities, work plan

7.1

Project inputs, activities and work plan

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7.2

Activities

- Describes for the reader full details of what you want to do with the inputs
- Explains how you will achieve your objectives
- Persuades your reader that you have carefully thought through exactly what you will do
- This is where methods and materials are discussed of achieving the objectives
- Activities may consist of key and sub-activities

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7.3

How to write activities

- To write activities well, your objectives should be very clear and focused (SMART)
- Activities should be well thought through for every objective
- Within each objective, the activities should be arranged in logical order with clear flow of information.
- Explain clearly how (methodology) you will address/solve each activity sometimes including key inputs like personnel, lab equipment, etc.

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7.4

How to write activities....

- Number the activities in a logical order following your objectives/outputs.
- Objective 1
 - Activity 1.1
 - Activity 1.2
 - Activity 1.3
- Objective 2
 - Activity 2.1
 - Activity 2.2
 - Etc

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7.5

Activities..

- Every sentence specifies who will do what, when, where and for how long
- Write all sentences in active voice, starting the sentence with the person(s) who will do the particular action
- Do not use “we”

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7.6

How to write activities....

- Sometimes activities are described and arranged according to project outputs.
- However project outputs are derived from the objectives.
- In some formats, the donor wants you to describe the key activities leading to achieving objectives/outputs and then put subsequent for explanation (methodology) of addressing the activities.

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7.7

Discuss activities for this objective

- To identify local market requirements, opportunities and socioeconomic constraints for improving the profitability of local rice processing industry in the mid-northern agro-ecological zone



7.8

Work plan

- It is sometimes called time line or implementation time line
- It shows the implementation time frame of the project activities presented in tabular form
- Make sure that all the activities you want to undertake is included in the work plan. This has implication on developing budgets and milestones
- Arrange the activities in a logical order as explained under activities



7.9

Example of simple work plan

Activities	Time line			
	J	F	M	A
Output 1				
Activity 1.1				
Activity 1.2				
Activity 1.3				
Output 2				
Activity 2.1				
Activity 2.2				



7.10

Example of simple work plan (cont'd...)

- The previous example is good for a multi-year but if the plan is for a single year, you need to show your plan on quarterly basis. Some activities can overlap.
- In other formats of work plan include :
 1. milestones and total annual budgets. E.g. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
 2. people/stakeholder responsible for each key activity
 3. total budget for each activity
 4. Etc.



7.11

Inputs

- Describes goods and services that you need to achieve your objectives (personnel, equipment, transport etc.)
- Once you have defined your objectives, the next job is to list all the things you will need to achieve those objectives



7.12

Critical inputs...

Most critical inputs required are:

1. Personnel
 - Time of the people who will work on the project is one of the major inputs for projects
 - It is always important to specify the area of specialisation, highest degree attained, numbers required and time to be spent by each on the project
 - This information is best presented in tabular form
 - Include partner personnel requirements



7.13

Critical inputs....

2. Travel
 - Air fares, rail fares, renting vehicles, running vehicles, taking taxis, etc
3. Per diem
 - for travel for project staff, for trainees, etc
4. Training, workshops, conferences
5. Office supplies and services
 - electricity, phones, fax, paper, etc



7.14

Critical inputs...

6. Office equipment
 - computers, printers, copiers, etc.
7. Office space
8. Equipment (farm, laboratory, etc)
 - The cost of all inputs constitutes part of the project budget.
 - Estimate the total cost of inputs including those you will not ask from the donor
 - Identification of inputs is usually done iteratively with the activities.



7.15

Thank you!

Session 7: Notes to participants: Project inputs, activities, work plan

7.1 Project inputs

Once you have defined your objectives, i.e. what you want to do, the next job is to list all the things you will need to achieve those objectives. Those are your project inputs. In research or development projects, often the most important input is the time of the people who will work on the project. In your proposal you will need to specify the amount of time you expect you will need of all the people who will work on the project.

The best way to list the personnel inputs you need will be to make a chart something like this:

Illustrative personnel requirements for project X

Position/expertise	Person month for project
Principal investigator/chief of party	Full time for 3 years
Economist	3/year for 3 years
Post doc/project assistant	9/year for 3 years
Extension agent	4 in Year 1, 6 in Year 3
Evaluation specialist	2 in Year 1, 3 in Year 3

Remember, if your project is going to be implemented with partner groups, they will also have their list of personnel requirements to add to yours. In addition to personnel, you are likely to need some combination of some or all of the following types of inputs:

- Travel (air fares, rail fares, renting vehicles, running vehicles, taking taxis etc.)
- Per diem (for travel for project staff, for trainees etc.)
- Training, workshops, conferences
- Publications
- Office supplies and services (electricity, phones, fax, paper etc.)
- Office equipment (computers, printers, copiers)
- Office space
- Farm equipment

Some of these inputs you may already have (like office space, training facilities), but will need to allocate to the project. This is also true for your in-house personnel, who will already be paid for, but whose time will have to be allocated to the project. You will need permission from management and the various people involved to ensure that this allocation is possible.

The cost of all your inputs constitutes the budget of your project and proposal. Please note that you will need to estimate the total cost of your project (i.e. the cost of all the inputs), even if you are not going to ask an external donor to fund them all. This is because management will need to know the full costs of whatever project you undertake.

When preparing your input list, be sure to be as thorough and exhaustive as possible. You do not want your project to fail because you forgot to include some key inputs. For instance, it is no use planning a wonderful training program if you do not include provision for getting the participants and trainers to the site. Or if you forget that it takes time, people, copiers and paper to prepare the training materials.

7.2 Project activities

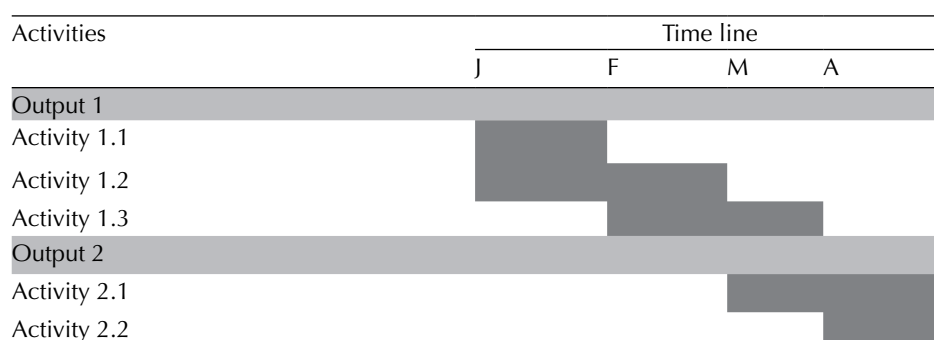
In the Activities section of the proposal you will tell the reader what you want to do with your inputs. This is a section in which the more details you put in, the more convincing you will sound. A detailed Activities section will persuade your reader that you have carefully thought through exactly what it is you will do. In a way, if your project gets funded, this section will constitute your project work plan.

The best way to write a good Activities section is to ensure that every sentence specifies who will do what, when, where and for how long. Here is a good Activities sentence. 'In Month 1, the economist will design a baseline survey of household incomes in the project site, and in Month 2, she will administer it to the target 200 families.' Try to write all sentences in the active voice, starting the sentence with the person(s) who will do the particular action. Do not use 'we' as this is too vague to be convincing. Avoid passive sentences like 'the trees will be planted along the sides of the fields'. This sentence does not tell who will do the planting. It is less convincing than 'the extension agent will provide the target farmers with free seedlings, and will reward every family that plants at least 40 trees with the equivalent of USD 10 in local currency.'

If you are describing a research project, you may wish to have a subsection, titled 'Methodology' within Activities, to describe your research methods. But remember that unless your readers are also researchers or scientists; do not make this subsection too technical. And the same tips apply—use the active voice, and explain who will be doing what in your research method.

7.3 Project work plan

In a concept note, you may summarize all the activities in a simple time line or work plan of the type below:



In the full proposal, you will need both a narrative Activities section, as described above, and a chart or time line, summarizing the key activities and people who will do them. Depending on the size, scope and complexity of the project, you may also need other charts, lists and narratives. For instance, you may need:

- A training plan (listing all the courses you expect to give)
- A workshop plan
- A reporting plan
- A publications plan
- A purchasing plan
- A distribution plan (e.g. of seedlings, seed, brochures etc.)
- A grant-making plan (if your project involves making small grants to end users).

The more details you can provide, the more convincing your proposal will be, and the more the project will come alive for your reader. Of course, you should not try to make your project more complex than need-be, and if your project is relatively simple, you may need none of these special plans.

Session 7: Exercise: Inputs, activities, work plan

Answer the following questions, Yes or No. Use your pad and pencil to take notes for questions d–f.

- a. Do all full proposals need a narrative Activities section as well as a chart or diagram showing the time line of activities? Yes No
- b. Should researchers include a section of 'research methods' in their proposals? Yes No
- c. Do you need to include in your list of inputs those things for which the donor will not pay (as perhaps the salaries of researchers at your NARS)? Yes No
- d. How can you improve this sentence from the Activities section of a proposal: 'Several varieties will be tested for their drought tolerance in the first year of the project'?
- e. What is usually the most important input to projects in agricultural research for development?
- f. When should you include a workshop plan in your proposal?

See Annex 5 for answers.

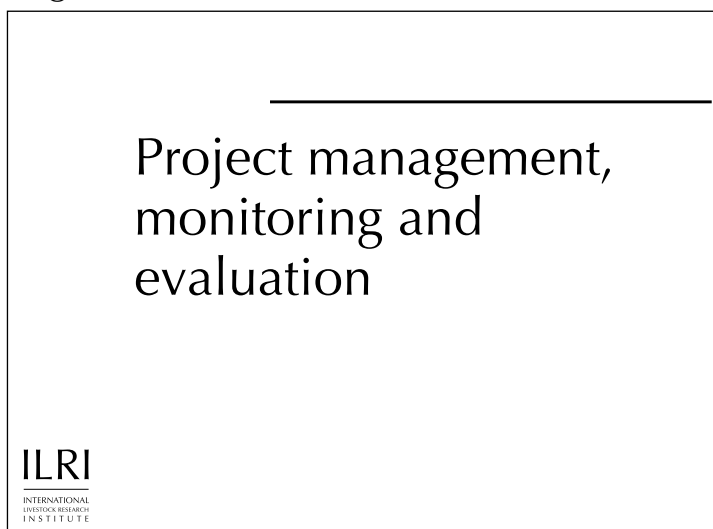
Trainer's guide

Session 8: Project management, monitoring and evaluation

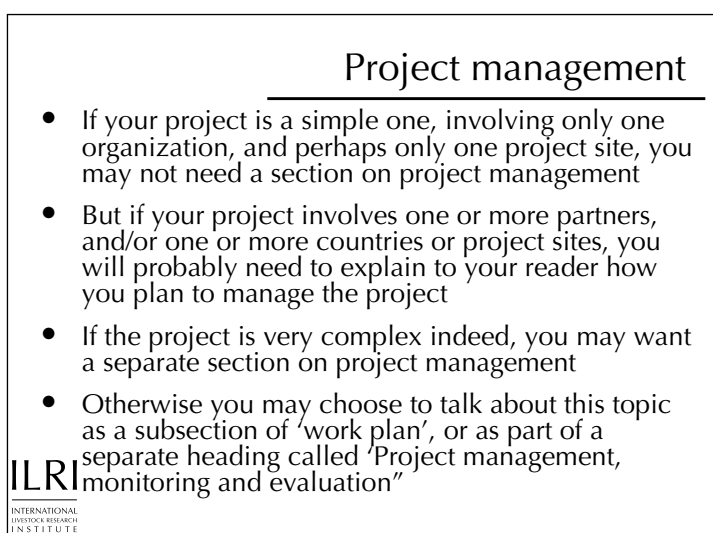
Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• • Appreciate the need for proper management of a project• • Identify what and how should be monitored• • Identify what and how should be evaluated• • Describe the M&E plan necessary for a project	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• • Assorted markers• • Felt pens• • Flip charts	
Time needed	2:15 hrs	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary discussion	The trainer leads the participants in brainstorming on the ‘buzz’ words of M&E	15 min
Plenary presentation	Project management, monitoring and evaluation	1:30 hrs
Group exercise	Participants are organized into a group to discuss the questions and answers to the exercise on project management, monitoring and evaluation	20 min
Plenary presentation	The trainer together with the participants discuss the correct responses to the questions	10 min
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Project management, monitoring and evaluation Reading notes on project management, monitoring and evaluation guidelines for group exercise	

Session 8: Summary of presentation slides: Project management, monitoring and evaluation

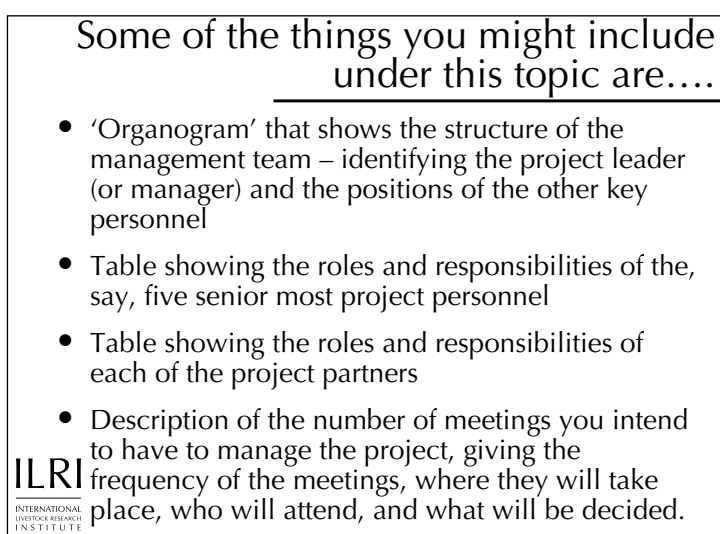
8.1



8.2



8.3



8.4


Roles and responsibilities of key personnel	
Project position	Key tasks
Project leader	Overall project management and monitoring Calls all project meetings Prepares project reports Supervises other project personnel
Economist	Designs, administers baselines survey Advises project leader on economics related issues Designs, administers end-of-project survey Analyzes survey data, prepares report on economic impact
Agronomist	Designs, implements tomato field trials Works with extension personnel to involve farmers Monitors field trials for possible annual redesign Analyzes data for each harvest, prepares annual assessments

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8.5

Buzz group discussion

- What is monitoring?
- What do we monitor?
- Why do we monitor?
- What is evaluation?
- What are the key differences between monitoring and evaluation?



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8.6

Monitoring

- Monitoring is a regular process of observation and recording of changes taking place in a project or program
 - It is a process of routinely/continuously gathering information on all aspects of the project
 - It is observation — systematic and purposeful
- It helps one to measure the performance of a project, process, or activity against expected results.

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8.7

Monitoring involves..

- Giving regular feedback about the progress of a project to the donors, implementers and beneficiaries of the project
- Reporting and feedback enables the gathered information to be used in making decisions for improving project performance
- Learning and documentation is key in the process of monitoring and evaluation

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8.8

Why monitoring?

- Monitoring is very important in project planning and implementation
 - It is like watching where you are going while riding a bicycle
 - you can adjust as you go along and ensure that you are on the right track

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8.9

Why monitoring?

- Analysing the situation in the community and its project
- Determining whether the inputs in the project are well utilized
- Identifying problems facing the community or project and finding solutions
- Ensuring all activities are carried out properly by the right people and in time
- Using lessons from one project experience on to another *and*
- Determining whether the way the project was planned is the most appropriate way of solving the problem at hand.

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8.10

Aspects that are monitored

- Budget
- Activities
- Project objectives (results, purpose, overall goals, assumptions, risks, see LF)
- Performance monitoring
- Process monitoring
- Outcome/impact monitoring

} Progress monitoring

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8.11

What is evaluation?

- Evaluation is a systematic process of judging what a project or program has achieved particularly in relation to activities planned and overall objectives.
- In addition, evaluations usually deal with strategic issues such as program/project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency (expected and unexpected), in the light of specified objectives, as well as program/project impact and sustainability.

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8.12

Evaluation ...

- ... involves comprehensive analysis of the project/program with the aim of adapting strategy and planning and influencing future policies and programs.
 - This implies that evaluation is a more complete and thorough process and a less frequent form of reflection.
 - It usually takes place at certain points in time, e.g. mid-term—final evaluation—and leads to more fundamental decisions.

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8.13

Types of evaluations

- *Ex-ante* evaluation
- Ongoing evaluation (can be mid-term)
- Terminal evaluation
- Ex-post evaluation (long after completion = Impact assessment).
- Internal evaluation
- External evaluation

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8.14

Key aspects of evaluation

- Relevance - Was/is the program or project a good idea given the situation to improve? Was the intervention logic correct? Why or why not?
- Efficiency - Have resources been used in the best possible way? Why or why not?
- Sustainability - Will there be continued positive impacts as a result of the program or project once it has finished?

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8.15

Key aspects of evaluation

- Quality- Conformity to requirements, meeting customer/client requirements
- Performance or effectiveness - Have the planned results been achieved? Why or why not?
- Impact - To what extent has the program or project contributed towards its longer term goals? Why or why not? Have there been any unanticipated positive or negative consequences of the project? Why did they arise?

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8.16

Types of impact

- Production impact
- Economic impact
- Social-cultural impact
- Environmental impact
- Spillover effect
- Intermediate impacts

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8.17

Monitoring and evaluation: Key differences

Monitoring: What are we doing?
Tracking inputs and outputs to assess whether programs are performing according to plans (e.g., people trained, condoms distributed)

Evaluation: What have we achieved?
Assessment of impact of the programme on behaviour of target group (e.g., increase in condom use for risky sex, reduced HIV prevalence)

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8.18

In summary

- Include milestones – i.e. intermediate outputs or results – in your project to help you design your monitoring plan
- The inclusion of milestones (things you expect to achieve at different points in the life of the project) allows you to check every so often to determine whether these milestones have been achieved
- In a project proposal you need to explain how you plan to monitor the project. In other words, you need to tell (like in the Activities section), who will do what, when, where and for how long

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8.19

In summary....

- Evaluation looks at the contribution of the project to the well-being of its end-users.
- Such an evaluation might ask about the value of the project to (a) its end-users and hence (b) its investors (i.e. donors)
- Note:
 - All data should be collected as part of the implementation
 - Adequate resources should be allocated
 - Lessons learned should be summarized

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8.20

Thank you!

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Session 8: Notes to participants: Project management, monitoring and evaluation

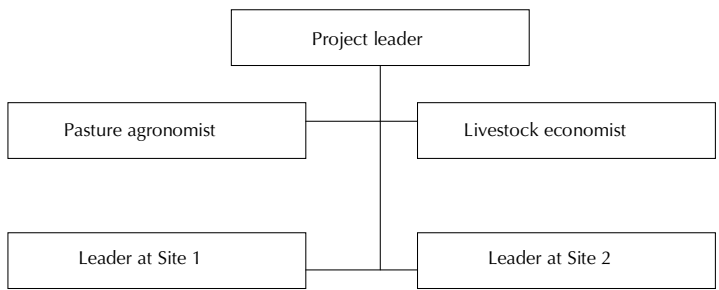
8.1 Project management

If your project is a simple one, involving only one organization, and perhaps only one project site, you may not need a section on project management. But if your project involves one or more partners, and/or one or more countries or project sites, you will probably need to explain to your reader how you plan to manage the project.

If the project is very complex indeed, you may want a separate section on project management. Otherwise you may choose to talk about this topic as a subsection of ‘work plan’, or as part of a separate heading called ‘Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation’. Some of the things you might include under this topic are:

- • ‘Organogram’ that shows the structure of the management team—identifying the project leader (or manager) and the positions of the other key personnel
- • Table showing the roles and responsibilities of the, say, five senior-most project personnel
- • Table showing the roles and responsibilities of each of the project partners
- • Description of the number of meetings you intend to have to manage the project, giving the frequency of the meetings, where they will take place, who will attend, and what will be decided. (Do consider, by the way, involving your donor in one or more of these meetings each year.) Here is an example of a project organogram.

Project management arrangements for project X



Here is an example of part of a table of roles and responsibilities of personnel:

Roles and responsibilities of key personnel

Project position	Key tasks
Project leader	Overall project management and monitoring Calls all project meetings Prepares project reports Supervises other project personnel
Livestock economist	Designs, administers baselines survey Advises project leader on economic matters Designs, administers end-of-project survey Analyses survey data, prepares report on economic impact
Pasture agronomist	Designs, implements tomato field trials Works with extension personnel to involve farmers Monitors field trials for possible annual redesign Analyses data for each harvest, prepares annual assessments

8.2 Monitoring and evaluation

8.2.1 Why M&E?

In graduate thesis proposal, there is no coverage of M&E. Many people think that M&E is external activity. The current thinking is that M&E should be integral part of project planning and implementation. However, this is a section which is poorly written. M&E requires resources but it is not always budgeted for. It should be noted that this is the section which is read devotedly by donors. It is used for output and financial accountability.

8.2.2 Monitoring

Definition: Continuous assessment of; This sometimes called conventional monitoring or progress monitoring

Activities—against work plan	} This sometimes called conventional monitoring or progress monitoring
Resources—project design	
Outputs—performance monitoring	
Outcome monitoring (Outcome = impact = people level impact, immediate outcome, intermediate outcome and ultimate outcome)—effect of the output of the ultimate beneficiaries	
Process monitoring—increasingly becoming important because of participatory approaches	

Why monitor?

Monitoring is done to identify deviations from the norm or plan and any anticipated problems to and to take corrective action. The activities of monitoring include; recording data, analysis (to generate information), reporting and data management including storage.

As we saw in Topic 6, you need to include milestones—i.e. intermediate outputs or results—in your project to help you design your monitoring plan. Monitoring is something you need to do in all projects. It means checking regularly to see that you are progressing as you had planned. The inclusion of milestones (things you expect to achieve at different points in the life of the project) allows you to check so often in order to determine whether these milestones have been achieved. If not, you have the opportunity to (a) find out what went wrong, and (b) if necessary, redesign the project. It is much

better to do small course corrections over the life of the project than to suddenly come to the end and find you have missed all your targets (i.e. outputs) by a great deal. In the latter case, you really do have a failed project, one from which you have learned no lessons, and pleased no-one—not yourself, your beneficiaries or your donor.

So regular, planned, methodical monitoring is a very important way of making yourself credible with your actual and potential funders.

In a project proposal you need to explain how you plan to monitor the project. In other words, you need to tell (like in the Activities section), who will do what, when, where and for how long. The more details, the more convincing you will be.

8.2.3 Evaluation

As we shall see in the next two topics, evaluation is a much more complex thing than monitoring. Monitoring merely concerns itself with measuring the distance between what is actually happening, as compared to what was envisaged some time previously. Evaluation looks at the contribution of the project to the well-being of its end-users. Such an evaluation might ask about the value of the project to (a) its end-users and hence (b) its investors (i.e. donors). In our most recent example, the evaluation might ask, after the project is over: Did the tomato project contribute to increasing household incomes? If so, by how much? When was the increase seen? Will it be sustained for the coming years? This sort of evaluation is often called impact assessment; we will discuss it further in Topic 10.

Some evaluations are done internally, perhaps by a special group of evaluation experts in your institute. Or they may be done by outsiders, selected because they are not involved in any way with the project, and thus have more objectivity than people in your institute may have.

You can usually include the funding for an external evaluation at the end of your project in your proposal budgets. Donors like external evaluations because they often need the results of these for their own records, to show whether or not they made a wise investment in your project. So by including the funding for this in your budget, you may be helping the donor's own efforts. You can always discuss this point with your donor during grant negotiations.

You should also value an external evaluation, since you can use the results to learn from your past projects, and if you have done a good job with your projects, have something nice to quote when writing about your past performance.

'Boilerplate' sections: The three topics—project management, monitoring and evaluation— belong together because at some institutions (hopefully including yours), these topics are a regular part of how their projects are managed. In other words, at some institutes or organizations, project management, monitoring and evaluation are regular parts of everyday life. All ongoing projects are regularly reviewed by senior management to check that (a) they are being properly managed, (b) that they are progressing as envisaged in the project proposal and work plan, and (c) that their contribution to the goals of the projects are being properly assessed. If such regular reviews are indeed part of the way in which your institute works, then by all means say so in your project proposals. You can write up your institute's approach to the three topics (or whichever is appropriate) in language that can be used in all proposals.

We use the term 'boilerplate' for any pieces of writing that can be used, without editing, for several proposals and several donors. We suggest that you review and revise any boilerplate sections you may have about once a year, to be sure they are up to date, and relevant to that you are doing.

If you have these boilerplate pieces you can either insert them into the appropriate section of the proposal, or attach them to the proposal as annexes. If you prefer to use them as annexes, be sure to refer to these annexes in the text. Thus you might say: 'Institute A has a policy of reviewing all projects once a year, to check on progress with respect to milestones, and if necessary make project changes. More on this policy and how it operates in practice is shown in Annex 3'. Or, 'Institute B has a small Impact Assessment Unit, staffed with a statistician and two social scientists. This Unit, described in Annex 2, will be responsible for the evaluation of this project.'

Session 8: Exercise: Project management, monitoring and evaluation

To show you understand the items in this topic, please mark the following statements true or false.

- a. You should include some boilerplate sections on monitoring and evaluation, even if your institute does not have a regular system for doing these things. True False
- b. An organogram shows how your project will be managed. True False
- c. For a complex project, you should include the roles and responsibilities of all the project partners. True False
- d. You can't monitor a project without milestones. True False
- e. Evaluation looks at the contribution your project has made to its goal. True False
- f. If your project is simple, you won't need to monitor it or to do an evaluation. True False

See Annex 6 for answers

Trainer's guide

Session 9: Logical framework, indicators and measuring impact

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciate the importance of a logframe in project management• Develop a logical framework of a project• Relate the logframe indicators to intended project impacts and as the basis for measuring such impacts
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Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assorted markers• Flip charts
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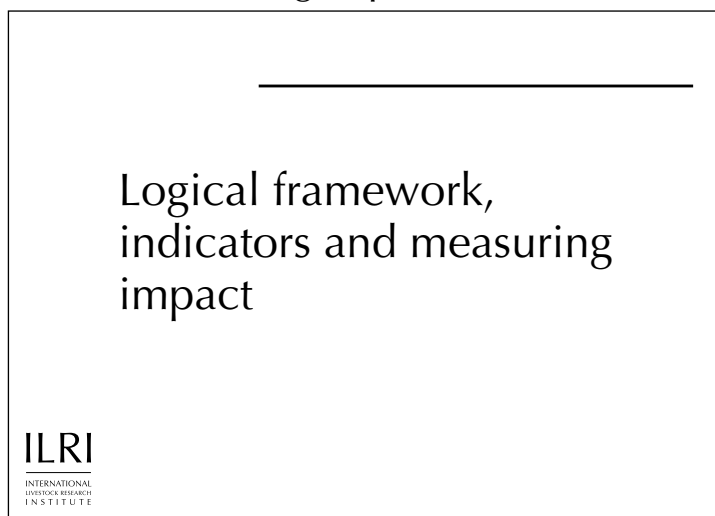
Time needed	1 hr
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Method of facilitation

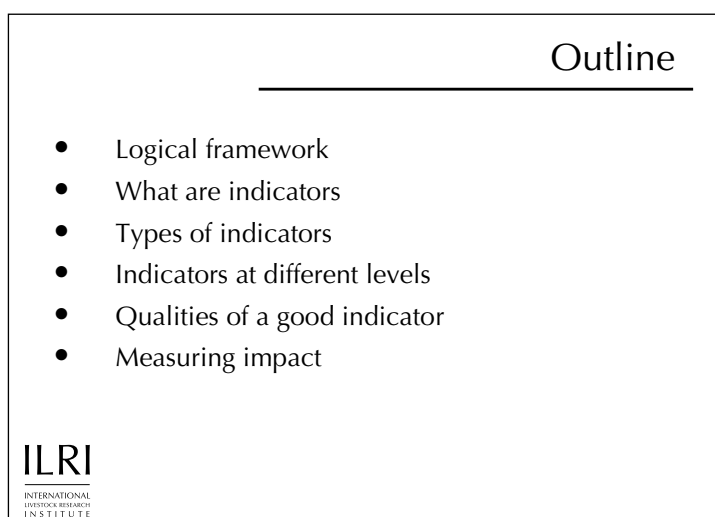
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary discussion	Ask participants for their experience in developing project log frames and relevant indicators. What challenges have they encountered in developing project log frame and how they have been able to overcome them	10 min
Plenary presentation	Logical framework, indicators and measuring impact	35 min
Group exercise	Participants are organized into a group to study an example of project logframe	5 min
Plenary presentation	Trainer asks participants to clarify and share their opinions on the logframe examples	5 min
Change of session	Session 10 starts	
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Logical framework, indicators and measuring impact Reading notes on logical framework, indicators and measuring impacts project log frame examples	

Session 9: Summary of presentation slides: Logical framework, indicators and measuring impact

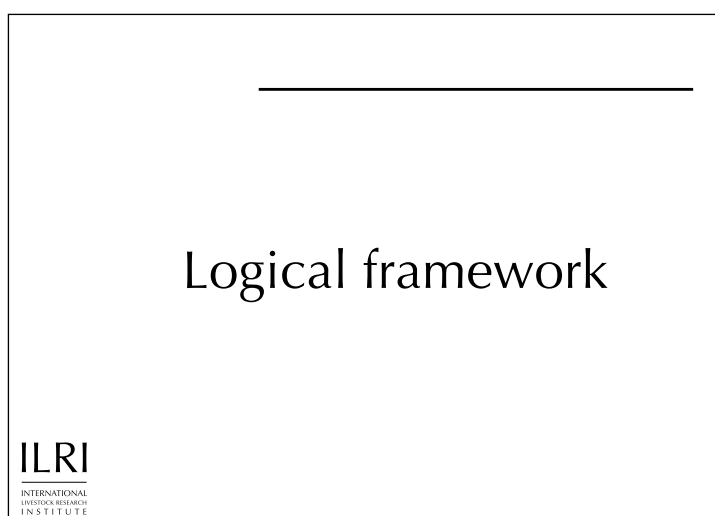
9.1



9.2



9.3



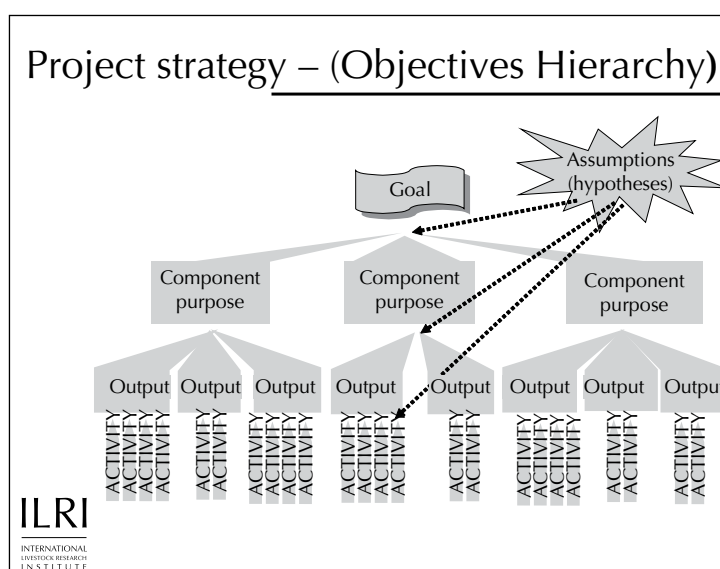
9.4

The objective hierarchy

“How lower level activities contribute to the higher level objectives and how these in turn help achieve the overall project purpose and goal” IFAD 2004

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9.5



9.6

The logframe logic

- Aids in the identification of the *expected causal links* or *program logic* in a results chain
- Results chain: inputs → activities → outputs → outcomes and → impact
- Leads to the identification of performance indicators at each stage
- Leads to identification of risks that could impede the attainment of objectives
- Collect relevant data to measure the outcome/impact

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9.7

Vertical logic

- Goal
- Purpose
- Outputs
- Activities
- Plan and budget or inputs

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9.8

Logical framework - Format

Objective hierarchy	Indicators - OVI	Means of verification	Assumptions and risks
Goal			
Purposes			
Outputs			
Activities			

Pre-conditions

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9.9


Goal

The long-term objective, change of state or improved situation that project is intended to contribute to: Regional, national or even community level desired long term objectives


- Predetermined and programs have very little control over e.g. Millennium Development Goals or poverty eradication
- Goal should agree with what beneficiaries **want (Values and aspirations)**
- Goal should be oriented to what people are **Able To Do**
- Goal should take cognizance of what people are **Allowed To Do** in the given framework conditions

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9.10

Purpose	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose is the statement of impact/Outcome the program intends to have on the beneficiaries • Observable changes in behavioural patterns • Observable changes status • Observable changes in performance
	

9.11

Outputs	
	<p>The products, services or result that projects or programs are directly responsible for and MUST be delivered for the purpose to be achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set of outputs should contribute to the purpose (Significantly) • Logical sequence - when necessary • Carefully worded to avoid sounding like activities
	

9.12

Activities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks personnel undertake to transform inputs to outputs. • These are actions taken by implementers which are required to deliver on the outputs by using inputs such as funds or technical assistance <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out diagnostic survey to assess available feeds on farm • Formulate appropriate rations • Conduct feeding trials including participatory monitoring of options <p>Output: Appropriate and cost effective dairy cattle feeds developed and validated</p>
	

9.13

Risks and assumptions

- External environment conditions upon which the attainment of project outputs and contribution to purpose depends = External indicators
- *Need to make realistic assumptions about the external environment. Avoid killer assumptions since they nullify the whole plan!*

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9.14

Definition of an indicator

- Specific information that provides evidence about the achievement of planned impacts, results and activities
- Indicators are qualitative or quantitative criteria used to check whether proposed changes have occurred
- They can be used to assess if objectives, activities or outputs have been met
- They provide a standard against which to measure or assess success or progress of a project against set standards.

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9.15

What are indicators?

- Indicators are yardsticks that can be used to demonstrate whether change has or has not taken place
- They provide meaningful and comparable information to changes
- They are measurable or tangible signs that something has been done or that something has been achieved
 - Indicators help you understand where you are
 - which way you are going and
 - how far you are from where you are going.

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9.16

Types of indicators

<p>Quantitative indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be reported in terms of a specific number (number, mean, or median) or percentage. • Assessing the significance of an outcome requires data on both number and percent. 	<p>Qualitative indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative statements • Measure perceptions • Measure attitude, behavior • Narratives
---	--

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9.17

Quantitative vs. qualitative

- Quantitative indicators are useful for summarizing large amounts of data and reaching generalizations based on statistical projections.
- Qualitative indicators can "tell the story" from the participant's viewpoint, providing the rich descriptive detail that sets quantitative results into their human context.
- One set of indicators is not better than the other; each has its own strengths and weaknesses
- It is important to combine both

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9.18

Quantitative and qualitative indicators

<p>Examples - Quantitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of • Proportion of • Percentage of • Amount of • The ratio of • Length of distance • Weight of • Size of • Areas of/spread of • Value of • etc. 	<p>Examples - Qualitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of • Presence of • Evidence of • Availability of • Quality of • Accessibility of • Existence of • Sustainability of • Improvement of • Ability to (e.g. skills) • Potential of • etc.
--	---

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9.19

Qualitative/Quantitative		
	Quantitative	Qualitative
Information	# of kms road built # households with access to clean water	Villagers perceptions about benefits/problems of the road Reasons why villagers don't use wells for drinking water
Methods	Direct observation (measuring/counting)	Discussion groups with villagers about how quality of life has changed
Analysis & reporting	10 km roads built in 1 year 50% of HH using wells for household use	50% of the villagers reported that they did not use the wells because the river was closer Stories, text, descriptions, pictures

9.20

Qualities of a good indicator

In general, indicators should:

- be verifiable (where and how to we get information about the indicator)
- measure what is important and not what is easy to measure
- measure only changes that can be linked or attributed to the project/programme (they must be specific and relevant)
- be targeted in terms of quantity, quality and timing
- measure either quantitative or qualitative change

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9.21

Qualities of a good indicator

Smart	Spiced	Cream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Attainable • Realistic • Time-bound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Participatory • Interactive • Communicable • Empowering • Disaggregated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear (precise and unambiguous) • Relevant (appropriate to the subject at hand) • Economic (available at reasonable cost) • Adequate (able to provide sufficient basis to assess performance) • Monitorable (amendable to independent validation)

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9.22

Characteristics of indicators

- Valid : proxy to assess expected impact,
“better be approximately correct than precisely wrong...Aron”
- Precise: measure, perceived & interpreted clearly
- Consistent: range of applicability across projects
- Analytically sound : changes related to project
- Policy relevant & sensitive to trends & change context
- Specific: reflect project aims
- Comparable: across time and space
- Measurable: data readily available

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9.23

Contents of an indicator

Parameter	What is measured to track progress? Verbal/visual picture of success
Indicator	What, target group, when should described parameter be observed
Rationale	Why indicator for measuring/ observing
Definitions	What do key terms/concepts mean or what is the formulae for calculation
Targeting	Basis of info for target elaboration & how
Validity/ ltd	Condition for validity & missing info
Data coll'n	What, where, how + quality + accuracy

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9.24

Developing indicators

- Develop indicators to meet your own needs
- Developing good indicators usually takes more than one attempt and requires the involvement of competent technical, substantive & policy experts participation
- Arriving at the final indicator you will use takes time
- Always pilot!

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9.25

Continued

- Using pre-designed indicators (they are indicators established independent of project context; MDGs, WB, UNDP etc.)
- Consider the importance
- Context (does it require adaptation or supplementation)
- Select more than one indicator per outcome
- Add and drop as you streamline
- Change indicators to avoid manipulation

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9.26

Developing indicators using predesigned indicators (2)

Pros	Cons
Aggregated across similar projects, programs, policies	Doesn't address individual country goals
Reduces cost of data collection	Viewed as imposed
It can be easily harmonized	No key stakeholder participation
	Leads to adoption of multiple & competing Ind.

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9.27

Proxy (indirect) indicators

- “better be approximately correct than precisely wrong”
- Proxy indicators are needed when it is difficult to measure the outcome indicator directly.
- Used when data on the direct indicator is not available
- Used when data collection is expensive.
- Used when it is not feasible to collect data at regular intervals.

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9.28

Examples of direct and indirect (proxy) indicators	
Direct indicators	Indirect (proxy indicators)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase of income at household level • # of households with greater 100\$ disposable income after all basic living costs have been met • Number of individuals who are members of community initiative groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator for improved standard of living- increased number of television aerals • # households with TV • # number of households with tine roof. • Indicator for community empowerment- increased frequency of community members speaking at community meetings

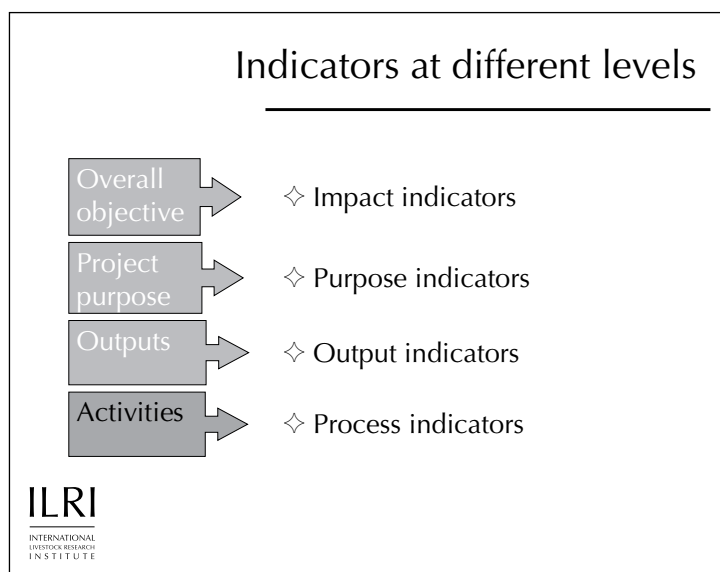
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9.29

Pre-designed indicators (-MDGs, World Bank, IMF)	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can be aggregated across similar projects and policies • Reduce costs of building multiple unique measurement systems • Make possible greater harmonization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They don't address country specific or organizational goals • They are often viewed as imposed • They don't promote key stakeholder participation • They can lead to the adoption of multiple competing indicators.

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9.30



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9.31

Indicators at different levels

- Process indicators measure the extent to which planned activities are taking place.
- Output indicators measure tangible deliverables as a result of accomplishing a set of activities
- Outcome indicators measure the extent to which program objectives are being met.
- Impact indicators measure the extent to which the overall goals of a program are achieved.
- External indicators

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9.32

Limits of control and accountability

The diagram illustrates the hierarchy of project levels and the boundaries of control and accountability. It is structured as follows:

- Ends:**
 - Beyond project control:**
 - Goal - Impact
 - Purpose
 - Key Results
 - Within project control:**
 - Sub Results (Outputs)
 - Activities
 - Tasks
- Means:**
 - ... what the project /programme is contributing towards (linked to Goal - Impact, Purpose, Key Results)
 - ... what is within the direct management control of a project/ programme (linked to Sub Results, Activities, Tasks)
 - ... what overall the project / programme can reasonably be accountable for achieving (linked to all levels)

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Adapted from Materials Developed by ITAD

9.33

Example of indicators at different levels

- **Goal**
- Improve infant health and survival
- **Impact indicators**
- (diarrhea disease incidence; infant mortality rate)
- **Objective**
- support and promote breast feeding
- **Outcome indicators**
- (% of babies breastfed within 1 hour of delivery;
- % of babies exclusively breastfed at 1 month;
- % of babies exclusively breastfed at 3 months;
- average age at introduction of complementary foods;
- % of babies breastfed at 6 months; % of babies breastfed at 12 months)

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9.34

Activities (with examples of process indicators)

- Train maternity care staff and other birth attendants
- Deploy breastfeeding counselors in health facilities and in community
- Promote formation of mother-to-mother support networks
- Provide education on breastfeeding through health facilities and in community
- % of maternity staff/ birth attendants trained
- (no. of breastfeeding counselors deployed; no. of mothers counseled)
- (no. of mothers joining mother-to-mother networks)
- (% of mothers and % of general population receiving or recalling key messages)

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9.35

Indicators & project responsibilities

				Responsible	
				Overall objective	Owners/ beneficiaries
				Project Purpose	Owners/ beneficiaries
				Outputs	Project Manager
				Activities	Project Manager
				Inputs	Project Manager

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9.36

Weaknesses in indicator design

- Indicators are usually discussed and defined late in the planning process
- Indicators are designed to meet scientific research needs and are therefore less appropriate and meaningful for the beneficiaries
- They are often not measurable in terms of cost-effectiveness
- There are usually too many indicators
- Indicators which are easy to measure are preferred
- Quantitative indicators are favoured to produce 'hard and reliable' statistics

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9.37

Weaknesses in indicator design

- They are usually not developed by stakeholders and/or beneficiaries and therefore do not represent their reality
- Indicators are donor driven since they have to legitimise the support for the respective project/programme
- Indicators are often an outcome of a desk study to prepare a proposal, satisfy funding requirements or to establish a baseline



9.38

It should be noted that....

Once critical minimum set of indicators are identified, then works out

- Baseline
- Information needed
- Data needed to generate the information
- Method of collection
- Frequency of collection
- Who collects it
- Who analyses it and report it
- Who should use the information
- Resources required
- How data will be stored and managed



9.39

Advantages and uses of logframes...

- Improving design quality - Clear purpose, outputs, performance indicators and assessment of risks
- Summarizing design of complex activities ensuring that decision makers analyze assumptions and risks
- Assisting in the preparation of detailed operational plans
- Engages stakeholders in the planning and monitoring process thereby providing an objective basis for activity review monitoring and evaluation
- *When used dynamically, an effective management tool to guide implementation, monitoring and evaluation*



9.40

Disadvantages of logframes

If managed rigidly, stifles creativity and innovation

- Needs updating during implementation
- Training and follow-up on the use of log-frames paramount

9.41

Thank you!

Session 9: Notes to participants: Logical framework, indicators and measuring impact

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is an instrument for objective-oriented planning of projects. LFA was developed during the 1960s and has been widely spread all over the world since the 1970s. Today it is used by private companies, municipalities and by almost all international development organizations, when *assessing, and making follow-ups and evaluations of projects/programs*.

The method may also be used for analysis, assessment, follow-up and evaluation of projects. What the method is used for depends on the role of its users and their needs.

It is an instrument to improve the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a development intervention. The systematic application of the method, with good judgement and sound common sense, can help to *improve the quality*, and hence *the relevance, feasibility and sustainability* of development cooperation.

An ideal situation when planning a project is when the owner of the project (the cooperation partner) and the development partners (e.g. donors and consultants) are clear about their respective roles and when *the project owner, the cooperation partner, assumes the main responsibility for the planning, implementation and follow-up of the project. Hence true local ownership should exist*. The owner of a project is always the local organization (the cooperation partner). Promoting local/recipient 'ownership' of projects and programs is recognized as a key issue in the strategy for sustainable development cooperation.

LFA is based on the idea that the *user, the project owner, assumes the main responsibility for the planning process*. However, assistance with planning *may* be needed and useful. LFA has the aim of improving the quality of project operations and can only achieve this *if* the user has a good grasp of the method and uses it throughout the entire project cycle. Therefore, it is useful to start cooperation by integrating information on LFA in the dialogue between the parties concerned. Most steps in the LFA method are often used during participatory workshops.

LFA is used to:

- 1) identify problems and needs in a certain sector of society
- 2) facilitate selecting and setting priorities between projects
- 3) plan and implement development projects effectively
- 4) follow-up and evaluate development projects.

What the method is used for depends on the role of and the needs of its users.

LFA is:

- An *instrument for logical analysis* and structured thinking in project planning
- A framework, a battery of questions which, if they are used in a uniform way, provide a structure for the dialogue between different stakeholders in a project
- A planning instrument, which encompasses the different elements in a process of change (problems, objectives, stakeholders, plan for implementation etc). The project plan may be summarized in a LFA matrix, the log frame

- An instrument to *create participation/accountability/ownership*
- *Common sense.*

Objective-oriented planning means that *the point of departure of the planning process is the problem analysis*, which leads to *the objectives* and finally makes it possible to choose the relevant *activities*. Hence, *before making a plan of activities, an analysis of the problems and objectives is necessary.*

The LFA is not a control instrument and thus does not replace different control systems such as environmental assessment studies, gender analysis or financial control systems.

The LFA method should be used *during all phases of a project cycle* (i.e. during preparation, implementation and evaluation). When the LFA analysis has been performed, the plans made with the aid of the analysis should be used and followed-up actively at each project meeting. Normally, it is necessary to make certain adjustments throughout the project implementation phase. The LFA method must be *used with flexibility* and with a great sense of feeling of what is required in each situation.

The LFA is a suitable tool to use for *capacity development*, 'the effort to facilitate for individuals, groups or organizations to better identify and deal with development challenges, by facilitating discussion among stakeholders to identify obstacles to change. During the problem analysis the needs and approaches for different forms of capacity development can be recognized and made transparent. The problem analysis shows whether professional knowledge is needed among the individuals involved, *or* whether it is necessary to use a broader approach—for example to strengthen organizations, or whether there is a need to improve institutional frameworks (legislation or policies).

We noted that many evaluations nowadays were focused on measuring the impact of projects on their selected goal. In effect, this form of evaluation is an exercise in measuring or assessing the impact of a project on its target beneficiaries.

Imagine you are proposing a project that will introduce to some poor farmers a new rice variety that has in-built vitamin A. You are not sure if this new variety will be acceptable to the farmers, or what its effect will be. You believe it may be able to improve the health of poor women and children in the families of farmers with less than two hectares of land, and you use this goal to 'sell' your project to a donor who you know is very concerned with this target group. How do you assess, in your proposal, the extent to which this new variety might have the desired impact on the health and nutrition of your target beneficiaries? How do you propose to measure that impact? What do you need to write in the project proposal?

What you need to do is explain the logic of why you think your project might have the desired effect. If the farmers adopt this rice, and if they keep a proportion for home consumption, you assume that women and children will receive about 75% more vitamin A than they do at the present time. The literature suggests that a significant increase of this kind could make an appreciable difference, within a few years, to the incidence of eye disease, anaemia and overall malnutrition. So you are going to be looking for evidence of a slowdown in these ailments. This evidence will be in the form of indicators—things to look for to show that you are having the impact you want. In this case you might select one or more the following indicators:

- Fewer visits by mothers and children to health clinics
- Higher levels of haemoglobin in blood tests

- Higher weights of children when they go to clinics and the children are healthier when attending school
- Fewer complications at childbirth

You would choose those indicators that were easy to measure, and that would give you a good picture of the difference that new rice was making.

You would, of course, have to have some before-the-project data to compare with the after-the-project assessment. And you would have to include the collection of that pre-project data as part of the proposed project, remembering that this activity would require personnel, travel, and other inputs.

You will rarely find donors unwilling to pay for pre-project baseline surveys and post-project impact assessments, so it is definitely advisable to include these in your project, if appropriate.

As with so many other sections of the proposal, we strongly suggest that you prepare the indicators and measuring impact section by working with your project team. By brainstorming with your colleagues, you can come up with a much wider range of potential indicators, and do a better job of selecting those which will make your post-project measurements as easy as possible.

Remember, that if you already have an impact assessment unit or specialist in your institute, be sure to write this up as a boilerplate piece for all your project proposals. You need not include pre- and post-project surveys in all project proposals. But you should always trace the logic of how your project might, in time, make a real contribution to your project goal. You need to do this because, for the most part, impact is what your development donor wants to buy. And the quicker and greater the impact, the more your donor will like your project idea.

We noted in Topic 5 that impact was related directly to the project goal. So depending which goal you choose for your project (and it should be a goal that is common to your institute, your country and your potential donor), the impact of your project may take many forms. We suggest that you develop an impact check list—writing down all the possible impacts of your sort of work might have on various potential target beneficiaries. Keep adding to that list, and consult it whenever you are writing project proposals.

Here is an illustrative and partial list to get you going. Will your project result in:

- More education for poor people?
- Higher family incomes?
- Better health for infants or children?
- More employment for widows or orphans?
- Enhanced community participation?
- New use for indigenous knowledge?
- More public sector accountability?
- New roles for the private sector?
- Inputs for improved decision-making?
- New food sources for urban dwellers?
- More jobs for young men and boys?
- Import substitution for poor economies?
- Improved child nutrition?

If you claim one or more of these benefits in your project, remember that the impacts you can quantify are the most impressive. Increasing household incomes by 10% in five years is more impressive than just claiming you will 'raise incomes'. So stick your neck out a little, and give an estimate of how much of a good thing your project might be able to contribute.

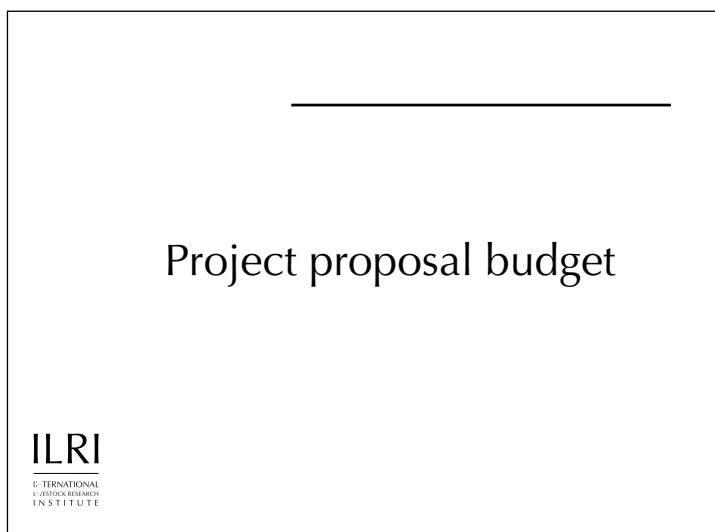
Trainer's guide

Session 10: Project proposal budgets

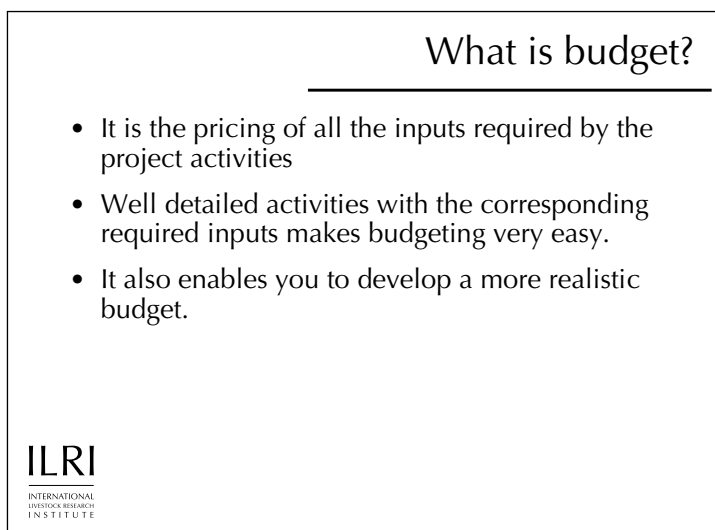
Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare a project budget	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assorted markers• Felt pens• Flip charts	
Time needed	2:15 hrs	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary discussion	Ask at least 3 volunteer participants to explain how they have been developing project budget	05 min
Plenary presentation	Project proposal budgets	35 min
Group interaction	Trainer asks participants to raise questions, contributions or critical reflection on the presentation	5 min
Break	Health break	
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Project proposal budgets Reading notes on project proposal budgets	

Session 10: Summary of presentation slides: Project proposal budgets

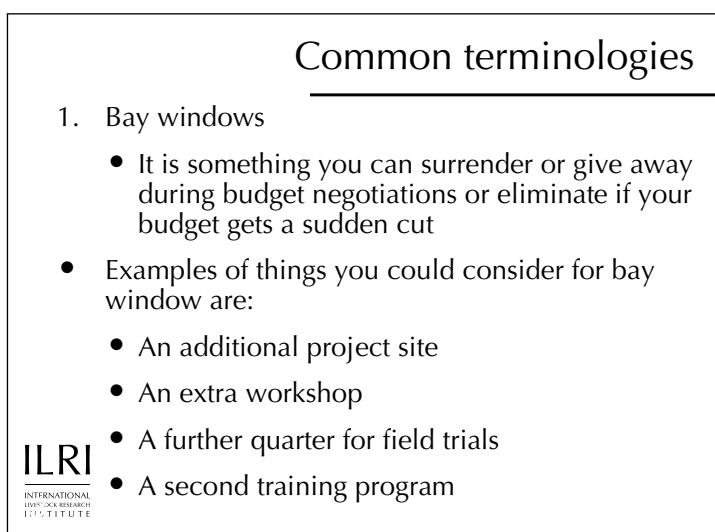
10.1




10.2



10.3



10.4



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2. Direct costs

- Are costs of project inputs
- E.g. personnel, travel, vehicles communication, etc.

3. Indirect costs

- Are costs of items that do not contribute directly to the project but they are sometimes important
- E.g. rent, library in the institute, supervision costs by the Director, etc.
- Depending on the project, all these should be budgeted and included in the main budget
- Note: Not all donors are willing to fund indirect costs

10.5




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Elements of quality budget

- Budgets should be clear, transparent and easy to understand
- Every line item should be footnoted with unit costs
- Every budget should have a heading, and should indicate in which currency it is shown
- Figures should be rounded, usually to the nearest 000s
- Budgets should be realistic, and not greedy
- Follows the formats of the funding agency or of the host institution

10.6



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Tips for developing good budget

- Develop well detailed activities
- Identify all the necessary inputs required for each detailed activity
- Not under-budgeted
- Study and understand clearly those inputs the donor can fund
- Weed out the inputs available with you or your organization, cost them and present them as your contribution.
- Study and fully comprehend the budging format of the funding agency/donor

10.7

- Go to the open market to find the current prices of various inputs
- Develop few bay windows to help you in negotiations
- Involve your accounts staff in budgeting
- Consider the inflation factor
- Develop a yearly requirement of inputs such as personnel, equipment, fertilizers, etc.



10.8

Example of scheduling inputs

Inputs	Quantities		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Personnel			
Endocrinologist (person months)	1	2	1
Economist (person months)		1	1
Equipment			
Double cabin pick-up (km)	500	1000	500
Computer		2	2



10.9

Example of scheduling inputs

- Some donors give summarized budget format. In such cases it is advisable to develop detailed budget of every activity in your organization's format and then aggregate to give into what the donor wants
- To improve effective budget management, it is always advisable to arrange your detailed budget according to your activities.



10.10

How do you generate your yearly budgets?

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10.11

Tips for generating yearly budgets

- Yearly budget is governed by:
 - Work plan
 - Personnel schedule
 - Equipment schedule, etc.
 - Sometimes donor budget limits:
- Look at your work plan to see start and end of each activity.
- Make the budget estimates for each input schedule for the activity from start to end

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10.12

Tips for generating yearly budgets....

- Some activities take more than one year to finish. In such cases estimate how much the activity will require on yearly basis while bearing in the work plan
- Add budgets of each activity to be implemented in that year until the end of the project life
- Where partners are involved clearly indicate who contributes what
- Also indicate out of the total funding what your organization will contribute

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Session 10: Notes to participants: Project proposal budgets

10.1 Project proposal budgets

A proposal budget is the pricing of all the project inputs. So, if you have done a good, thorough job of listing all the inputs, all that now needs doing is to put a price on each input. Your finance office can probably help you with this.

Here are some tips for preparing convincing budgets. Each point will be elaborated in this topic.

- Organizations should use a consistent budget format in all proposals, except for those where the donor has a preferred budget style or outline.
- Organizations should issue budget guidelines to ensure that everyone in the institute is preparing budgets under the same financial assumptions, and that the same costs are offered to all donors in all proposals.
- Budgets should be clear, transparent and easy to read. (You will not be there to explain anything!)
- Every line item should be footnoted with unit costs.
- Every budget should have a title, and should indicate in which currency it is shown.
- Figures should be rounded, usually to the nearest 000s.
- Budgets should be realistic, and not greedy.
- Under-budgeting should always be avoided.
- Bay windows (explained below) can help in grant negotiations.
- Indirect costs are legitimate costs, and should be included in all budgets.
- Every proposal, no matter how small, should have a summary budget. Large projects, or full proposals, may require additional budgets, by partner, by site or by activity.

Budget formats: Every organization has a slightly different budget format. Some donors insist you use their style, while others will accept whatever is usual for a grantee. Here is a fairly typical format.

Illustrative budget format

- Personnel
- Travel
- Supplies and services
- Vehicles, equipment, capital costs
- Evaluation
- Indirect costs
- Inflation and contingency

Grand total

Whichever style or format you use, be sure to use the same for all proposals coming from your organization, unless the donor asks you to use theirs. By having your own style, you ensure consistency in your internal financial management and allow your institute to develop a consistent budget image.

Budget guidelines: If your organization is going to have a steady stream of proposal going to different donors, you will want to ensure consistency by issuing proposal budget guidelines. These will give guidance to everyone in your institute who works on proposals on such things as the price of key inputs like personnel, equipment, supplies and services, workshops, indirect costs etc. Your finance office would be the right people to draft these guidelines for approval by your Director General and Board.

Qualities of a good budget: A good budget should be clear, transparent and easy to read. This means that anyone can pick up your budget and understand it, without you having to be there to explain your cost assumptions. The paragraphs below will provide you with tips on how to ensure your budgets are clear, transparent and easy to read.

Footnote every line item: A transparent budget shows exactly how you achieved your line item totals. You do this by footnoting each line item with the unit cost. Here is a simplified example.

Summary budget for project X in USD 000			
Line item	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personnel (1)	15	20	35
Travel (2)	5	10	15
Equipment (3)	70	10	80
Total	90	40	130

- Three person months of a senior agronomist at USD 5000/month for both years, plus one month of an economist at same cost in Year 2.
- One RT airfare and per diem from Site A to Australia @ USD 5000 in Year 1 and two in Year 2.
- In Year 1—USD 10,000 for seedlings, USD 20,000 for fertilizer and USD 30,000 for tools for farmers. In both years, USD 10,000 for renting well-drilling equipment.
- Notice how the footnotes make it quite clear how you arrived at each of the totals in the budget.

Rounding the numbers and naming the currency: We recommend rounding to make your budgets easier to read; you can see how this is so, by looking at the examples below.

Figures for two years of a project, expressed two ways

(a) In un-rounded USD	Year 1	Year 2
	42,580	42,580
	24,500	24,500
	17,000	17,550
	15,525	16,750
	2,000	2,000
(b) In rounded USD 000s	43	43
	24	24
	17	18
	16	17
	2	2

You always need to explain in your budget which currency you are using. This will depend on the circumstances and the donor. Never assume that your reader will know!

Getting your budget 'just right': You want to avoid a greedy budget and under-budgeting. Nothing is as frustrating as an under-budgeted project. If you lack the funds to do a good job, you and your partners, your donors and your beneficiaries are all going to be disappointed. So resist any temptation to promise too much for the money available. If a donor cuts your budget, you will need to cut the objectives and activities accordingly, and you need to make clear to the donor that fewer outputs will be delivered.

At the same time, a padded, greedy budget will turn off your funder completely. Do not be tempted to inflate salaries or travel costs. Some eagle-eyed finance person in the donor agency will catch all and any inflated unit prices.

In sum, offer a moderate, realistic budget within which you are convinced that you can deliver the promised outputs.

Bay windows: A bay window (one that juts out in a semi-circle) in a new house in an ‘extra’—something nice but not essential. A bay window in your project is the same thing—something that you would like to include in your project, but something that you can do without if necessary.

A bay window is therefore something you can give away during budget negotiations or eliminate if your budget gets a sudden cut. We recommend you consider including one or two bay windows in your next project designs. Here are some examples of things that would qualify:

- an additional project site
- an extra workshop
- a further year of field trials
- a second training program

Notice that these are extra project elements, not inflated prices. Their inclusion will not annoy your potential donor, and, if you are lucky, you will be able to keep all your bay windows!

Indirect costs: All projects have direct costs—these are the inputs to the project, as we have described. In addition, a project has indirect costs. These are the costs of things such as rent and lighting in your office, the library in your institute, the services of your finance office, the supervision of your DG. You need these items to implement the project, but only a little bit of each, and it is very difficult to say exactly how much of each will be needed for each project. To spare you the time and effort involved in calculating how much of these items you need for each project, the convention is to use an indirect cost recovery rate. All organizations do this, both public and private sector. Basically, the rate is obtained by dividing all the costs not directly attributable to specific projects, and dividing that by the number of activities and projects.

Indirect cost recovery rates vary greatly, depending on the type of organization. In the business of research and development projects, rates of 10–40% are common.

Not all donors are willing to pay for indirect costs. If not, you can claim this cost as part of your matching funds, and your contribution to the project. But other donors will pay, especially if you charge all donors (even if they don’t pay), and your rate is properly derived and audited. Once a donor has paid your indirect cost recovery rate on one grant, they will likely do so in all future grants, so it worth negotiating on this.

Back-up budgets: We have noted several times that all proposals, even the shortest of concept notes, when submitted to a donor, should be accompanied by a one-page project summary budget. Often this is all that you will need to at least arouse a donor’s interest in your idea. But in a large, complex project, involving one or more partners and perhaps several countries, you are likely to need back-up budgets to fully explain your project.

One thing we recommend is that you consider giving each partner (and your institute) a separate budget. If you and your partners sign off on these separate budgets before submitting the proposals to a donor, this will prevent any kind of argument about the allocation of project funds. Some donors now require these separate budgets, for the same reason—they don’t want fights about money to slow down project implementation.

You may also want to give more details about the specific costs of certain project activities, like field trials, or study tours, or training courses. Use your own judgement. The intent of these additional financial details is to give your reader confidence that you have carefully thought through all the details of your project, including what it will cost.

Often, too, the donor will have financial requirements for a full proposal, and you will learn about these in discussions or through filling in the appropriate forms.

Trainer's guide

Session 11: Project background and summary section

Session objectives	By the end of this session participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify the main issues considered in writing the background and summary sections of a project proposal	
Training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assorted markersFelt pensFlip charts	
Time needed	2:15 hrs	
Method of facilitation		
Activities	Contents	Time
Plenary discussion	Ask at least 2 participants to describe the difference between abstract, summary and background	5 min
Plenary presentation	Project background and summary section	30 min
Plenary interaction	Trainer gives an opportunity to participants to ask questions, contribute or raise their opinions. If there are any 'light bulbs', participants are encouraged to share them with others.	10 min
Summary	Trainer summarizes the salient features of the session and announces end of day	
Handouts and reference materials	PPT: Background and summary section Reading notes on project background and summary section	

Session 11: Summary of presentation slides: Project background and summary sections

11.1

Background section and summary

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11.2

Headings in the background section

- This section of the proposal, which comes early on, after the summary, can take different headings depending on the donor.
- Justification (good reason, explanation, validation, rationalization)
- Context (situation, perspective, framework, circumstance, environment)
- The problem (puzzle, question, challenge, obstacle, predicament)

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11.3

Headings – (cont'd...)

- Need for the project (can imply justification, context, problem to be solved and rationale)
- Background (setting, environment, surroundings, conditions, circumstances)
- Rationale (basis, foundation, justification, motivation, underlying principles)

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11.4

Background — Sequence of preparation

Whatever you call it

- This section guides you in your writing of the proposal. It sets the context and sometimes with reviewed literature for your proposal
- This is one of the places where you can best 'sell' your project to the donor
- Independent of when you write the background section make sure you revisit it once project proposal is complete

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11.5

Background — Style and presentation

- Be as short and sharp as possible (length depends on the type of proposal)
- Avoid telling your reader facts they already know, and those that have nothing directly to do with your project
- Resist the urge to tell your reader basic facts and figures about the country in which you plan to work, unless these figures are either new or startling, or have a direct bearing on your work

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11.6

Background — Style and presentation...

- Try to be careful in your use of language
- It is very helpful to have a friend, outside of your area of focus/expertise, read your background to make sure that the language is readable and minimizes the use of:
 - Jargon
 - trendy or "in" words
 - abbreviations
 - colloquial expressions
 - redundant phrases
 - confusing language

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11.7

Background — Style and presentation..

Position your project in relation to other efforts and show how your project:

- a. will extend the work that has been previously done,
- b. will avoid the mistakes and/or errors that have been previously made,
- c. will serve to develop stronger collaboration between existing initiatives, or
- d. is unique since it does not follow the same path as previously followed

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11.8

Background — Style and presentation...

- It is essential to include a well documented statement of the need/problem that is the basis for your project
- What are the pressing problems that you want to address?
- How do you know these problems are important?
- What other sources/programs similarly support these needs as major needs?

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11.9

Background — Style and presentation...

It can really help gain funding support for your project if:

- You have already taken some small steps to begin your project
- An excellent small step that can occur prior to requesting funding is a needs assessment that you conduct (survey, interviews, focus groups, etc.)
- If you have written up your need assessment as a short report, cite it in your background section

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11.10

Background — Style and presentation...

- A good background section is a page or less in a concept note, and at maximum three pages in a long (30–40 page) full proposal—exception may be thesis proposal
- You can make it easier to read by illustrating your text with a few well-chosen graphs, pictures and/or diagrams
- Organize the text with sub-headings
- Make the location, the beneficiaries and their problems come alive for the reader
- Ensure logical flow

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11.11

Background — Style and presentation...

Among others, always use the following two sub-headings both in the concept note and in the full proposal:

- The problem and why it is urgent
- What has already been done
- What is the knowledge gap

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11.12

Background — Style and presentation...

At the end of the sub-section “What has already been done”, your reader should have no doubt that the project you are proposing is the next logical thing that needs to be done. So the section that follows, goal and objectives, will follow seamlessly in the readers mind. If you can create this feeling in your reader’s mind, you will have succeeded in writing a good background section

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11.13

Background — Style and presentation...

- Check to see that the potential funding agency is committed to the same needs/problems that your proposal addresses
- Clearly indicate how the problems that will be addressed in your project will help the potential funding agency in fulfilling their own goals and objectives
- As you write, keep the funding agency in your mind as a "cooperating partner" committed to the same concerns that you are

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11.14

Summary

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11.15

Summary versus abstract

- Sometimes used interchangeably
- They both serve to reduce long text to essential key points
- A summary usually concentrates on the essentials of a larger thing
- Abstract is a more specialized form of summary – shorter, clearer
- Summary is a little detailed-out version of abstract

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11.16

Summary....

The summary is a very vital part of the proposal

- It comes first
- It may be the only part that some people ever read
- It summarises the whole project
- Although it comes first, it cannot be written until all the other sections of the proposal are complete

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11.17

Summary/Abstract....

- Always write this section last
- Refer to all the other sections in your summary
- Take great care with the wording
- Be as brief as you can. Two pages for a long document is acceptable—one page is even better

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11.18

Summary/Abstract....

- In a proposal to a donor, highlight any known donor interests
- Write simply and directly
- Include the specific request for funds in the first, or latest the second sentence

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11.19

Summary/Abstract....

- Be specific and concise
- Do not go into detail on aspects of your proposal that are further clarified at a later point in your proposal
- The project summary should "paint a picture" of your proposal in the mind of the reader
- It should establish the framework so that the rest of the proposal has a frame of reference

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11.20

Summary/Abstract....

- Use the project summary to begin to show your knowledge of the organization from which you are requesting funds
- Key concerns of the funding organization can be briefly identified in relation to your proposed project
- If you will be collaborating with other organizations make sure some of their interests are also highlighted in the summary. This can assist in strengthening the collaboration by recognizing them at the very beginning of your proposal

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11.21

Summary/Abstract....

- Prepare the project summary after you have completed the entire proposal (and you understand all aspects of your proposal very well)
- Insert this last piece of writing at the beginning of your proposal

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Session 11: Notes to participants: Project background and summary section

11.1 Project background

This section of the proposal, which comes early on, after the summary, may have a number of titles, including (sometimes can be used interchangeably):

- Justification (good reason, explanation, validation, rationalization)
- Context (situation, perspective, framework, circumstance, environment)
- The problem (puzzle, question, challenge, obstacle, predicament)
- Need for the project (can imply justification, context, problem to be solved and rationale)
- Background (setting, environment, surroundings, conditions, circumstances)
- Rationale (basis, foundation, justification, motivation, underlying principles)

Sequence of preparation: Whatever you call it, here are some tips on preparing this section well. Most importantly, do not write this background section first. Many novice writers think this is the place to start, but it is not. This is one of the places where you can ‘sell’ your project to the donor, and it should not be written until you have completed all the sections covering the ‘heart’ of your project design—i.e. goal, objectives, activities, outputs and budget.

Style and presentation: As you will learn from the module ‘How to write for non-technical audiences’, the background section is a place where you can use a different style of writing—it is a place where you can write with more urgency and passion than in other sections.

One of the things you should avoid is telling your reader various facts they already know, and that really have nothing directly to do with your project. Resist the urge to tell your reader various basic facts and figures about the country in which you plan to work, unless these figures are either new or startling, or have a direct bearing on your work. A donor working in Cairo once told me that she would scream if she received one more proposal telling her that ‘the Nile is the longest river in Africa’.

The key to a good background section is to be as short and sharp as possible. A good background section is a page or less in a concept note, and at maximum three pages in a long (30–40 page) full proposal.

You can make it easier to read by illustrating your text with a few well-chosen graphs, pictures and/or diagrams. You need to organize the text with subheadings. And you should refer to your sources, although without the need for footnotes, as in a journal article.

The sort of style that is highly appropriate for a background section of a proposal is that used in the science and technology section of the Economist magazine. You should try to make the location, the beneficiaries and their problems come alive for the reader by using interesting words, and arresting examples. Short sentences and words will make your piece easy to read and give your reader an idea of the urgency of the problem.

We recommend that in the next few proposals that you prepare you always use the following two subheadings:

- The problem and why it is urgent
- What has already been done

These two subheads are recommended for use in the concept note, and are equally recommended for the full proposal.

You need the heading: *'The Problem and Why It Is Urgent'* for several reasons. For one thing, if the problem isn't urgent (compared to other things) why should it be done? And if it isn't urgent (compared to other projects) why should the donor fund it? And if the beneficiaries don't want it badly, why should time and money be spent on it? By using this sub-heading you can be sure that every sentence under it will be directly relevant to 'selling' your project to the donor.

Using the subheading *'What Has Already Been Done'* is equally important, as it will remind you that all projects build on what has happened before. Your readers want to know where your project fits in the array of activities that have gone before.

By citing the work of others in your field you show you know the field and demonstrate your scientific credentials; not including this section by contrast, betrays your ignorance and will not create a good impression on your reader. Always mention any other relevant donor projects—on the same topic in other countries, or on related topics in the same country. It is your business to find out about these, by asking, by searching the web, or by whatever means.

At the end of the sub-section *'What Has Already Been Done'*, your reader should have no doubt that the project you are proposing is the next logical thing that is needed. So the section that follows, Goal and Objectives, will follow seamlessly in the readers mind. If you can create this feeling in your reader's mind, you will have succeeded in writing a good background section.

11.2 Topic 15: Project summary

The summary is a vital part of the proposal—it comes first, and it may be the only part that some people ever read. Although it comes first, it cannot be written until all the other sections of the proposal are complete. So you should write this section after you have finished all the 'heart of proposal' sections, as well as the background.

You need a summary for all proposals (or reports, or other forms of writing) longer than, say, six or seven pages. For shorter proposals, or reports, a brief introductory paragraph or set of bullets (as for example when writing a concept note) is all you will need.

Here are some tips for preparing a good summary:

- Always write this section last
- Refer to all the other sections in your summary
- Take great care with the wording
- Be as brief as you can. Two pages for a long document is acceptable—one page is even better
- In a proposal to a donor, highlight any known donor interests
- Write simply and directly
- Include the specific request for funds in the first, or latest the second sentence.

In the exercise below, you will find an outline of a summary for just about any type of proposal. If you use this outline, and fill in the blanks with details of your project, you should have prepared a simple, direct and inclusive proposal summary. Try not to leave any blanks, unless the sentence really does not fit your project.

I suggest that until you get proficient at writing summaries of our own, you continue using this outline for proposals to donors who do not have specific proposal formats of their own.

Exercise for Topic 15: Please review the concept note titled ‘Sweet smells and tangy tastes: reviving the essential oil industry in White Land’s coconut-growing areas’, at the bottom of this page. Use the material in this concept note to prepare a summary using the sample outline that follows. Use your pad and pencil to take notes and check your notes with the explanation provided.

11.3 Sample outline for a proposal summary

This proposal requests ... (name of donor) to provide USD ... for ... (name of your organization) and ... (names of partners) to (project objectives summarized) in ... (location of project). The proposed project will take ... years, and involve a team of ... (give the positions).

The need for this project is urgent. (Tell why in one or two sentences. If possible refer to related donor projects)... .. The proposing team is anxious to achieve the desired outputs and impacts as soon as possible. To do so, the team will (summarize the project activities in one or two sentences).

This project builds on previous work by (your organization, others) that has (tell what has already been done). The beneficiaries, (describe them in a phrase), are eager to participate in the project. (the names of your organization and any partners) are ideally suited to conduct the proposed project... .. (tell why in a sentence or two).

As a result of this project, (the anticipated impact) should be experienced by the end-users by (estimate a time).

11.4 Sample concept note to use for this exercise

11.4.1 White Land

Project title: Sweet smells and tangy tastes: Reviving the essential oil industry in White Land’s coconut areas.

Expected budget and duration: USD 600,000 over three years; of which approximately USD 400,000 is requested as a grant from donor x

Partners: Department of Horticulture scientists with assistance from University of White Land

Location and sites: Three White Land coconut areas

Related donor projects: (to be completed when potential donor is identified)

11.4.2 The problem and why it is urgent

About 150 years ago, White Land had a thriving and profitable essential oils sector, centred on the export of ilang-ilang oil to Europe. World War I led to the closure of most firms in the business, and subsequently production moved to French territories, leading to the death of the whole industry. However, White Landers never lost their taste for essences and oils, and today the country imports over 3500 metric tons, with a value of more than USD 25 million.

The Government of White Land's budget is stretched to the limit, so savings of this size can make a real difference, freeing up funds for high-priority investments in women's health and education. These essence crops having once grown, there is no doubt that they can once again flourish in White Land. In particular, Department of Horticulture scientists believe that the country's large coconut areas offer the ideal location, offering both shade and nitrogen nutrition for the young plants.

11.4.3 What has already been done

For the past five years, scientists from the University of White Land have been helping staff of the Department of Horticulture to identify crops that might be grown in the country to lower the nation's import bill. Last year, essential oils surfaced as one of the top six possibilities as described in a paper widely circulated to government and university personnel. The paper made exciting reading for two staff of the Plantation Crops Division, who saw the essential oils idea as a way to reignite interest in the stagnant coconut plantation sector. The two principal proponents of this project, Dr CCG and Ms RAR of the Plantation Crops Division, felt that coconut would offer the ideal environment for a pilot project to test the feasibility of bringing the essential oils industry back to life in White Land.

11.4.4 Project goal, objectives, and activities

The **goal** of the project is to create new agriculture-based industries in White Land while cutting the cost of importing agricultural products into the country.

The **general objective** of the project is to determine whether essential oils can be cost-effectively grown in White Land's coconut plantation areas.

The **specific objectives** of the project are: (1) to determine the levels of nitrogen and shade under coconut canopies that will provide optimum growth and development conditions for selected essences, and (2) to identify which of six selected essences are most suitable for cultivation under coconut.

The following **activities** will be undertaken:

- The project team (consisting of the two principal scientists and a research associate from the University) will select three coconut areas with the following features:
- Site A, with newly planted coconut, representing 0% shade
- Site B, with coconut providing 25% shade
- Site C, with coconut providing almost overlapping canopy >75% shade
- In each area, during Months 2–3 of the project, staff of the selected coconut plantations will plant six essences (sweet basil, lemon grass, citronella, vetiver, peppermint, and spearmint).
- In each area, plantation staff will apply three nitrogen fertilizer levels (0, 30, 60 g/plant).
- The principal scientists will supervise the gathering and analysis of data on key morphological and physiological features over the three years of the project, using a two-factor factorial experiment (shade x fertilizer level) format.

11.5 Inputs and project management issues

The project will require personnel expenses and maintenance and operating expenses. Staff time required will include three person-months/year by the two principal scientists and four person months/year by a university research associate. Graduate students will help with data gathering and analysis. Labourers will be hired from among the plantation staff. The project will purchase seedlings and

fertilizer and use a Department of Horticulture motorcycle as the project vehicle. The Department of Horticulture will be responsible for all aspects of the project, from grant compliance to production of reports. The University of White Land will be working under a subcontract.

11.6 Beneficiaries, outputs, and impacts

The main **output** of this project will be a report published by the principal scientists at the end of Year 3, reporting on the experiment, identifying which essences are particularly suitable for cultivation under coconut, and making recommendations on the production technology for those essences that proved most successful.

The **impact** of the project will depend on the results of the experiment. If, as expected, several of the selected essences are found to thrive under coconut, the project has the potential to revive the entire essential oils industry in White Land. In this case, the impact will be at both the micro and macro level. On the one hand, consumers in White Land will be able to purchase the essences they need on a local market at cheaper, local prices. On the other hand, the White Land economy will benefit through savings on the import bill, the creation of new jobs in the revived industry, and the expected boost to the stagnant coconut plantation sector. These impacts are likely to be felt gradually, starting approximately one year after publication of the project's final report, as commercial planting and growing of essences takes hold. The full impact of the project will likely not be felt until a decade after the project is over. If the experiment has a positive outcome, it will have many beneficiaries. These will include essential-oil consumers, those who work and invest in the coconut plantations, and ultimately all citizens of White Land, who will benefit from the improvements to the country's economy.

11.6 Budget issues

The requested funds will be used to remunerate University of White Land staff and coconut plantation labourers, and for the purchase of project inputs such as seedlings and fertilizer. The Department of Horticulture will pay for the time of the principal scientists, but will charge an administrative fee of just over USD 12,000 per year for managing the project and its grant funds.

11.7 Project cover letter

Cover letters for solicited and unsolicited proposals: In this module we have been trying to give you advice about how to write proposals to submit to international development donors. As we said at the beginning, if you are responding to a competitive grants program, the call for proposal will include instructions of how to bid, and these instructions will almost certainly give you advice about what to put in your cover letter. Usually this letter will give details of your eligibility to compete in the program.

But if you are not responding to a request for proposals, but rather writing to a donor who did not solicit (ask for) your proposal, you need to craft a rather different cover letter. You will need a letter that both serves to introduce your proposal, and also paves the way for you to find out what the donor thinks about it.

To whom should you write, and who should sign: The first thing you need to decide is to whom you are going to write. By this stage in the project development, you should already have had some correspondence with the donor, in connection with preparing your concept note. It will have been

because the donor liked your concept note that he or she asked you to prepare a full proposal. So you may want to write to the person you have been dealing with. But you may also want to write to the most senior person in the donor organization—i.e. go right to the top. You may wish to do this, because you know that that person will be making the final decision. Or you may have been told by your contact in the donor agency that that is what you should do. Note that if you do address the letter to the local or regional director of the donor agency, you should write the letter for the signature of your own senior-most person, i.e. your Director General.

In fact, that is always the rule—that the person addressed and the person who signs the letter should always be about the same level.

You, as the author of the project, may be required to draft the cover letter, but the person who signs it will probably want to edit it before she or he signs.

Tips for writing a good cover letter: As with all letters, you should write with the reader in mind. (There is much more on this topic in the sister module ‘How to write for non-technical readers’, which you may wish to consult before drafting a cover letter.) If the person signing the letter knows the person to whom you are writing, make that clear in how you write. For instance, refer to any previous interaction between the two.

By all means, refer to your donor’s interests and related projects. If possible, show how the proposed project builds on work that has been funded by the donor. Highlight the importance and urgency of the problem the project is addressing. Explain that the scientists, their partners, and the beneficiaries are almost eager to have the project start soon.

Conclude with a ‘hook’, i.e. a follow-up comment that opens the door for you to find out what the donor thinks of what you sent. For example: ‘If we have not heard from you by next month, we propose to call you by phone to get your impressions and suggestions for how the proposal could be improved.’ Of course you must not be too pushy or rude, so depending on the nationality or cultural background of the donor, you may want to be more gentle on this point. However, you do want to be able to follow-up on your submission, and not just sit there, wondering if the proposal arrived, and if anyone at all is reading it!

Here is an example of a really good cover letter. It benefits from the fact that the two people involved know each other quite well. As you read this letter, try to see why it works so well.

11.7.1 Example of a good cover letter

Dear Martin:

It was a pleasure to meet you again to my visit to the EU offices in July, and I look forward to meeting you again in Washington this October.

I am pleased to enclose a proposal modelled closely on the guidelines we received from your office. It is a three-country proposal on arresting ever-increasing and livelihood-threatening water loss and soil degradation. The project is designed to have a positive impact on the agricultural productivity of India, Myanmar and Vietnam. We estimate that this impact will be felt by up to 130 million poor farmers, nearly half of them women. In fact, the research will have direct benefits on the conservation and sound management of soil resources throughout the semi-arid areas of Asia, and builds directly

on a number of EU-supported activities involving farmer participation in watershed management now underway in India.

Attached to our proposal are letters of support from our partners, expressing their eagerness to begin work on the projects soon, as well as requests for the project that we have received from water user association leaders throughout the targeted countries, and from politicians representing those areas. In line with your funding limits, you will notice that the proposal calls for support of just under Euros 3 million over the five year life of the project.

Martin, I will look forward to hearing your reaction to our proposal when we are both in Washington next month, and in the meantime, I wish to thank you for your continued support for our institute and its important work.

With warm wishes,

Jim Johnston,
Director General
Institute for Agricultural Research

Annex 1: Answers: What sort of projects do donors like?

a. True —Funding partners will look favourably on proposals that have the potential to increase the incomes of low-income smallholders or that recommends to smallholders various types of trees whose fruits can be harvested, and that can be planted on hillsides to prevent soil run-off in the rainy season.

In general, all funding partners like to support research that can contribute to poverty reduction and/or preservation of the environment.

b. False—Donors will never fund proposals unless more than one organization is involved in the implementation of the project

If an organization has within itself all the personnel with all the skills needed to implement a project, there will be no need to partner with another group to find complementary skills. However, most agricultural research organizations are too small to include all the needed capacity to undertake all but the simplest and smallest projects. Some competitive grants programs (such as the INCO-Dev program of the European Union) require extensive partnerships—in this case at least two European partners teamed with at least three groups from developing countries.

c. False —Donors will only fund projects with low risks and high returns

Under certain circumstances, funders will be attracted to high risk, high return projects. In such cases they are willing to accept that there is a chance that the project might not succeed within time and budget, because of the very high potential of the results, if the project does succeed. One such example might be a malaria or AIDS vaccine. The chances of a single project achieving an effective vaccine for either disease are very low, but if the project were successful, the pay-off would be enormous. That's why many donors are now funding projects like that.

d. True—Investors are always on the look out for interesting, unusual and innovative projects

If you have an idea for something that has never been done before, and that might make a real difference to a major development goal, you are on to a winner. Here's a small example. A researcher in Ethiopia came up with a small 'hay box' that could be used to raise chickens from baby chicks to full-grown chickens, without electricity, which is unavailable for millions of small farmers in the country. Families who tried the hay box found that they could add to their incomes by selling fully grown chickens for a small investment. The inventor was given a prize by the Ethiopian Government! And donors will be happy to fund projects for up-scaling this work.

e. False—You should never include a request for computers in a project, for fear of looking greedy and turning off your target donor

Investors will be happy to fund computers if they are integral to the design of the project, and if they are attracted to the potential project returns. One example would be a project to increase access to self-learning modules, by setting up internet cafes in rural colleges and universities in the poorer African countries. The key is to carefully justify the need for all capital items in your list of project inputs.

f. True—You can help give your project an edge over others if you can show that the end-users of your research are really eager to get its benefits.

If you have taken the trouble to talk directly to the people you feel will be the end users of your research, you show that the results of your project will not only be of scientific interest, but will also be put to productive use. Those are just the sort of research projects development donors are looking for from scientists.

Annex 2: Answers: When and when not to write a full proposal

a. Explanation:

You should write a proposal rather than a concept note only when asked to by a potential funder. The funder will tell you if a full proposal is needed in a competitive grants program. The donor may also ask for a proposal if she or he has already seen a concept note and wants more information.

b. Explanation:

The equivalent of the bullets in a concept note is a project summary, which is the first section of a proposal, even though it is the section you should prepare last.

c. Explanation:

In a full proposal you have far more details in every section than in a concept note. Specifically, you will have back-up financial information, to make more sense of the summary project budget that you submit with a concept note. You are also likely to have annexes, containing, for instance, information on the past performance of your organization, and CVs of the key personnel who will implement the project.

Annex 3: Answers: Qualities of a convincing proposal

a. Where in the proposal would you show your interest in ensuring that end-users are benefiting from the results of your research?

Explanation:

You will describe the effect of your research outputs on the beneficiaries in the Impact section of the proposal.

b. Name two things that you want readers to think and feel when they read your background section.

Explanation:

In the background section you want to convey the message that (1) something important needs doing, and (2) it needs immediately, because it is very urgent.

c. In a research proposal, is the author required to show the potential impact of his or her research results (outputs)?

Explanation:

Yes, the author need not say that his or her project will be responsible for achieving the impact on the end-users, but the author must trace that path that will need to be followed if the research results are to turn into real benefits. The author needs to show who will disseminate the results, how they will be disseminated, why the end-users will adopt the results, and when the benefits of that adoption will become evident. Further, the author can make the proposal more convincing by saying how those benefits will be measured.

d. Where in the proposal can you show that you have tried to anticipate everything that might happen during the implementation of your project?

Explanation:

You can show that you have carefully thought through all the elements of your project throughout the proposals, i.e. in all of its sections. The more details you put in, the more convincing your proposal becomes. However, you do not want to make your proposal impossibly long. About 10–20 pages is about right for a full scale, detailed proposal for a significant project of about 3–4 years duration.

e. Can a proposal have as its goal both something to do with people and something to do with the environment?

Explanation:

Yes, you can have more than one goal for a project. In fact most projects have multiple effects—i.e. potential impact. For instance, the introduction of new fruit-bearing tree varieties can have an effect on household incomes (new products to sell), and on the environment (the trees providing wind-breaks, carbon sequestration, or perhaps planted to prevent soil erosion). However, the more goals you choose for your project, the more you will have to write when you come to the Impact section. There will be more on this later.

f. Do you think you need to 'sell' the quality of the people who will implement the project in your proposal?

Explanation:

Yes, definitely, you will want to sell the quality of the people you are proposing to implement the study or project. You are trying to convey the message that your team has a comparative advantage over any other group of people to do this work. You can do this by giving their names and attaching their CVs, and also by including in your proposal a brief description of the past successes of your institute. There will be more on this later, too.

Annex 4: Answers: Proposal format and order of preparation

- a False—You should always use the generic proposal outline when submitting a proposal to a donor.

You should always submit your proposal in your target donor's preferred outline, if there is one. If not, you should use your own institute's regular format. Only if neither donor nor your institute has a preferred format, should you use the one in this topic. However, if you like it or find it useful, you may use the generic proposal format, and then repackage it for whichever donor you are targeting first.

- b. True—The Summary is always the first section in a project proposal. javascript: “;

The Summary section is always first. It is therefore very important, and since it may be the only section that some people ever read, you will need to take care in its wording.

- c. True—You may have annexes in a full proposal.

In a concept note (that is usually seven pages or less), you would normally not include any annexes. But in a longer document, like a proposal, of ten pages or more, you may wish to include annexes. Annexes are used for material that illustrates (or gives more detail on) the main text. Typical annexes in project proposals are details about:

- The qualifications of the proposed project team
- The monitoring and evaluation practices in your institute
- The past performance of your institute and your partners'
- A logical framework matrix for your project.

- d. False—The Budget section of a proposal is always the last in the presentation, and so it should be worked on last.

Although the Budget section always comes last in terms of presentations, we do not recommend that you prepare that last. We suggest that you prepare your proposal's budget soon after listing your inputs, and more usually after specifying the project outputs. The section that should be written last, we think, is the proposal summary.

- e. False—The Outputs section is one of the places where you are 'selling' your project.

The Outputs section describes what will be in place at the end of the project. You are conveying factual information here, and should not be trying to 'sell' anything.

- f. True—If you are describing a research project, the methodology you are using should be described in the Activities section.

Your research methods are, in effect, the equivalent to the activities of a development project. If your research methodology is especially novel or important to the project, you may wish to describe it in the Activities section, under a separate sub-heading.

Annex 5: Answers: Inputs, activities, work plan

a. Yes —Do all full proposals need a narrative Activities section as well as a chart or diagram showing the time line of activities?

All full proposals need both a narrative Activities section, as well as a summary chart or time line. Note that some donors may use different terminology for these things. The European Union, for instance, may call the ‘activities’ ‘work packages’. In any case, do provide a narrative section.

b. No—Should researchers include a section of ‘research methods’ in their proposals?

If they wish. A development donor will not necessarily be interested in your research methods, but some donors, like Germany, may hire scientists to read your proposal. If in doubt, ask your target donor. If you do want to describe your research methodology, perhaps because it is special in some way, you can present this as a sub-section of the Activities section.

c. Yes —Do you need to include in your list of inputs those things for which the donor will not pay (as perhaps the salaries of researchers at your NARS)?

You need to list all the inputs your project will need, even if the donor will not pay for these. There are many reasons for this. First, your management will want to know the full, real cost of all activities in your institute. Second, you will be able to claim in-kind or other contributions for all those project inputs for which the donor does not pay. This may include the time of key people, or the use of your facilities (offices, training rooms, etc) or your vehicles and equipment.

d. How can you improve this sentence from the Activities section of a proposal: ‘Several varieties will be tested for their drought tolerance in the first year of the project.’?

This sentence is vague, because it uses the passive voice, thus omitting the person who does the work. It also uses the vague word ‘several’. This sentence would convey more information and be more convincing if it reads: ‘The agronomist will test at least five varieties for their drought tolerance in the first year of the project.’

e. What is usually the most important input to projects in agricultural research or development?

The most important input in most research and development projects is people—their experience and expertise. This is why ‘personnel’ is nearly always the first item in an inputs list. You will need to specify the person months (in some cases perhaps person days or person weeks or person years) of all the people you expect to play an important role in the project implementation.

f. When should you include a workshop plan in your proposal?

Only include a workshop plan (or any other special plan, like a training plan), if your project is sufficiently complex to warrant it. For instance, if your project calls for, say, six or more different training courses to be given over the life of the project, you may wish to show these details in the form of a small chart or table.

Annex 6: Answers: Project management, monitoring, evaluation

a. False —You should include some boilerplate sections on monitoring and evaluation, even if your institute does not have a regular system for doing these things.

You can only write a 'boilerplate' section describing how your institute does its monitoring or evaluation or both, if indeed your institute really does this regularly. If not, you will have to describe the specific monitoring and evaluation you plan for your project. Because this is project-specific, you cannot write it up as 'boilerplate'. However, you can try to influence your senior management to consider making regular project monitoring and evaluation part of your institute's regular work.

b. True—An organogram shows how your project will be managed. An organogram is a diagrammatic representation of how a project (or an organization) is managed. If you think it helpful, and you are designing a complex project, with many sites, and partners, and personnel, you can include one in your project proposal.

c. True—For a complex project, you should include the roles and responsibilities of all the project partners. It is very useful to have a full list of the roles and responsibilities of all the project partners. You will probably have this described in another way in the Activities section, but it is useful (and convincing) to show this divided by partners in Project Management section. It shows that you and your partners have carefully discussed how the project will work, and are agreed on what each party will take responsibility for.

d. False —You can't monitor a project without milestones. You could monitor a project in terms of its objectives and activities and work plan, without specific milestones. However, if your project design includes specific deliverables at key moments during the life of the project, you will make your monitoring that much easier, and can highlight problems well in time.

e. True—Evaluation looks at the contribution your project has made to its goal. At least for those evaluations that are involved in impact assessment. Some evaluations may be focused on other things, such as the how the project funds were spent, or whether or not all the project partners worked well together. However, more and more investors are now interested in finding out the extent to which the projects they funded made a real difference to the target beneficiaries. These evaluations do measure the contribution of a project to its goal.

f. False —If your project is simple, you won't need to monitor it or to do an evaluation. No matter how simple, a project will always need monitoring, to ensure that it is going to plan. And an evaluation will be useful to see if not only the objectives were met, but also that a real contribution was (or will be) made to the project goal.

Annex 7: An example of a work plan for a project: Generation of knowledge and technologies that ensure sustainable utilization of fish stocks (capture fisheries) on Lakes Kyoga, Kwanja and Bisina

Analysis of Frame survey data collected by ILM in 2002 and BMU in 2003 on Lakes Kyoga, Kwanja and Bisina and Frame survey of Lake Albert	Location/activity	2005						2006					
		J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
For Lakes Kyoga, Kwanja and Bisina,	Preparation of training and Frame survey materials												
	Training of DFOs and FOs and delivery of Frame survey materials and logistics												
	Training of enumerators												
	Implementation of Frame survey												
	Frame survey returns												
	Data analysis and reporting												
For Lake Albert	Preparation of training and Frame survey materials												
	Training of DFOs and FOs and delivery of Frame survey materials and logistics												
	Training of enumerators												
	Implementation of Frame survey												
	Frame survey returns												
	Data analysis and reporting												
Age estimation of the major commercial fish species	Lake Kyoga												
	Lake Kwanja												
	Lake Bisina												
	Reporting												

Annex 8: An example of a project logframe: Development of propagation establishment techniques and harvesting methods that ensure market quality of forest products

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<p>Goal</p> <p>To improve productivity, use and sustainability of Plantation forest resources</p>			
<p>Purpose</p> <p>To develop, validate and disseminate technologies for improved productivity, use and sustainability of Plantation forest resources</p>	<p>At least 3 technologies for improved productivity, use and sustainability of Plantation forests developed by 2005</p>	<p>Annual reports</p> <p>Number of Technologies developed</p>	<p>Technologies developed and disseminated are adopted by stakeholders</p> <p>Conducive policy environment for dissemination.</p> <p>Peace and stability guaranteed</p>
<p>Output 1</p> <p>Priority indigenous trees spp propagated and evaluated</p>	<p>Germplasm of at least 10 indigenous trees spp collection by 2005.</p> <p>Propagation techniques of 10 indigenous trees spp developed and demonstrated by 2005</p> <p>At least 10 indigenous trees spp evaluated for plantation development by 2008</p> <p>Assessment of performance of at least 10 indigenous trees carried out by 2008</p>	<p>No of indigenous species from which germplasm has been collected</p> <p>Number of propagation techniques of indigenous tree spp developed and demonstrated</p> <p>Number of indigenous tree spp evaluated for plantation development</p> <p>Number of indigenous tree spp assessed in plantation set up</p>	<p>Appropriate materials available</p> <p>Stakeholders willingness to collaborate</p>
<p>Output 2</p> <p>Improved silvicultural techniques for plantation and woodlot development generated</p>	<p>Establishment techniques for at least five indigenous trees determined by 2005</p> <p>Trials of five indigenous tree spp established in at least two agro-ecological zones by 2005</p> <p>Assessment of performance for at least five indigenous trees spp carried out by 2008</p> <p>Guidelines for appropriate establishment and growth performance of five indigenous tree spp in at least two agro-ecological prepared</p>	<p>Number of establishment techniques for indigenous tree spp determined</p> <p>Number of trials of indigenous tree spp established</p> <p>Number of indigenous tree spp assessed</p> <p>Technical reports</p>	<p>Appropriate materials available</p> <p>Stakeholders willingness to collaborate</p> <p>Conducive policy environment</p>

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<p>Output 3</p> <p>Technologies for reducing waste in harvesting, processing of wood and nonwood forest products developed and wood properties of indigenous tree spp determined</p>	<p>Methods of harvesting <i>Pinus radiata</i>, <i>Carapa grandiflora</i> and <i>Cynometra alexandrii</i> developed by 2005</p> <p>3 efficient processing techniques to improve wood recovery developed by 2005</p> <p>Methods of improved harvesting, processing and utilization (value addition) rattan and bamboo developed by 2005</p> <p>Wood properties of four indigenous species determined by 2005</p>	<p>Number of methods of harvesting <i>Pinus radiata</i>, <i>Carapa grandiflora</i> and <i>Cynometra alexandrii</i> developed</p> <p>Number of efficient processing techniques to improve wood recovery developed</p> <p>Number of methods of improved harvesting, processing and utilization (value addition) of rattan and bamboo developed</p> <p>Number off indigenous species whose properties are determined</p>	<p>Appropriate materials available</p> <p>Stakeholders willingness to collaborate</p> <p>Conducive policy environment</p>
<p>Output 4</p> <p>Improved forest management technologies disseminated</p>	<p>Five additional potential spp for plantation development promoted by 2005</p> <p>A brochure on each of the five potential spp for plantation development produced by 2005</p> <p>Demonstrations of the 10 potential spp for plantation development out in ARDCs by 2005</p>	<p>Number of additional potential spp for plantation development promoted.</p> <p>Number of Brochures produced</p> <p>Number of potential spp for plantation development demonstrated out in ARDCs</p>	<p>Appropriate materials available</p> <p>Stakeholders willingness to collaborate</p> <p>Conducive policy environment</p>

