Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems

Toolkit for Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) at innovation niche partnership level

Key tools for use in CNA at niche level

▸ Timeline

▸ Problem tree/solution tree

▸ NetMap mapping

▸ Capacity assessment questionnaire

▸ Action Planning

Timeline

▸ **Definition:** A timeline (or trend line) is a graphic method used to show perceived changes or events taking place over time

▸ **What is it used for**?

❑ Establishing and representing sequences of major events or changes that have occurred in or affected a community over an extended period of time

❑ Learning about community perceptions of change in specific areas or sectors (such as natural resources, climate and weather events, political events, and conflict or cultural changes).

❑ Understanding and analysing a current problem by looking for its causes in the past, and predicting future events or changes on the basis of past experience.

❑ A basis for creating a 'vision for the future', exploring how people envisage things will be or should be in the future

Timeline - rationale

▸ As the first interactive exercise with stakeholders on CNA Visit 1, it encourages dialogue and participation

▸ Promotes stakeholder reflection on the niche

▸ Develops a common understanding of niche history

▸ Initiates thinking about the issues/events that can help or hinder the functioning of the niche

Timeline

▸ **Suggested steps**:

❑ Explain the timeline exercise to participants

❑ Agree with participants the period which the timeline will consider

❑ Ask individually (ensuring that particular individuals do not dominate the activity to the exclusion of others) participants to think/reflect and write down on cards/post-it all the important events or changes that have occurred relating to the niche

❑ Ask one participant to draw a long line on flip chart paper, then, as a group, to arrange all the cards in chronological order (when the niche developed and extending to today) along the line.

❑ Above the line put the cards highlighting the events/issues that helped the niche developed

❑ Below the line put the cards highlighting the events/issues that hindered or constrained the niche

❑ Discuss and analyse the timeline

❑ Ask participants to reflect on lessons from using the timeline as well as the skills required

Questions/Answers

Problem Tree/Solution Tree

▸ **Definition:** A problem tree provides an overview of all the known causes and effect to an identified problem

▸ **What is it used for**?

❑ Conducting a problem tree/solution tree analysis provides a means to review the existing understanding of the causes to a specific problem and how it can be overcome.

❑ Establishing and representing sequences of major events or changes that have occurred in or affected a community over an extended period of time

❑ Provides a guide as to the complexity of a problem by identifying the multiple causes

❑ Identifies particular lines of intervention and other factors that may need to be tackled with complementary projects

❑ Provides an outline of the project plan, including the activities that need to be undertaken, the goal and the outcomes of the project

Problem tree/solution tree - rationale

▸ Achieves a common understanding of the main problems (focused on capacity)

▸ Stimulates thinking on multiple causes and effects

▸ Starts the process of capacity needs assessment and planning the capacity development interventions to address the causes of the problems

Problem tree/solution tree

▸ **Suggested steps**:

❑ Explain the problem tree exercise to participants

❑ Identify the key problem(s) in the innovation partnership/niche as the trunk of the tree (It may be worth debating what the core problem is with niche partners)

❑ Ask a participant to write the core problem identified and agreed as the trunk of the tree

❑ Ask participants to write down on cards/post it the major (immediate) causes of the problem, and ask a participant to write them as the roots of the tree

❑ Ask participants to write down on cards/post it the major (immediate) effects (consequences) of the problem, and ask a participant to write them as the branches of the tree

❑ For the solution tree, replace the causes with positive objectives and develop appropriate interventions

❑ Ask participants to reflect on lessons from using the problem tree as well as the skills required

Questions/Answers

Netmap/systems mapping summary

▶ Innovation partnership/niche actors are identified on cards

▶ Arrange cards on flipchart paper with linkage lines of different colours for types of linkage e.g. knowledge/info, money, input supply etc

▶ Assign an 'influence' level to each stakeholder

▶ Present and discuss

Netmap mapping rationale

▸ Common understanding of:

- The range of stakeholders

- How they work together

- Their influence in the network

- The issues/challenges (feeds into Problem Tree)

▸ Monitor change (by carrying out the exercise again after CD interventions)

Capacity assessment questionnaire - summary

▸ NIFs facilitate the completion of a capacity questionnaire by stakeholders

▸ Responses are recorded on a data template

▸ Current capacities and capacity gaps are assessed from the data

CDAIS

Capacity assessment questionnaire - rationale

▸ Functional and technical capacity gaps are identified

▸ Types of capacity gaps are revealed (5 functional capacities + technical)

▸ Change can be measured by repeating the exercise and comparing with baseline

Action planning - summary

▸ Desired outcomes are agreed

  ▸ include discussions on what works well and what does not

  ▸ Is possible, give feedback on the results of the questionnaires i.e. visualise strengths and weaknesses.

▸ Actions to address capacity gaps are discussed and identified

▸ Responsibilities and partners for action are agreed

▸ Deadlines for action are set

▸ Resources (money/people/equipment) required for actions can also be worked out

Action planning - rationale

▸ Focusses actors' vision of desired outcomes

▸ A clear plan is agreed with responsibilities, necessary collaborations, timing and costs