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Common Framework products

*Conceptual
Background*

*Guidance Note on
Operationalization*

*Synthesis
Document*

*These documents are also available in French and Spanish
on the Common Framework pages of TAPipedia.
https://www.tapipedia.org/content/tap-framework*

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Simulation Game

Tool factsheet

IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON FRAMEWORK ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (CD) FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS (AIS)

This factsheet is part of a series outlining tools and approaches to promote capacity development projects for agricultural innovation systems (AIS). The tools described in these pages are designed with a view to the practical implementation of the principles of the Common Framework of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), a G20 initiative. They have been applied in the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project, funded by the EU and jointly implemented by Agrinatura and FAO in collaboration with national partners in Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Laos and Rwanda.

When assessing the capacities needed for an AIS to innovate and to perform effectively, the participants must be well aware of the realities, complexities and challenges and the capacities needed to address them.

In this context, the simulation game (or role play) instrument was proposed - in the context of the CDAIS project – to be used during the assessment of innovation capacities.

The simulation/role-playing tool is particularly helpful when used in combination with the Scoring Tool Methodology, or when used ahead of a problem-tree exercise as part of a facilitated assessment of innovation capacities.

The simulation game leads to an intuitive understanding of innovation capacities and of the importance of the enabling environment, helping participants to learn about the significance of these capacities.

The simulation game described here is a simplified version of the more complex games used in participatory exercises, particularly those referring to land-use and natural resource management developed by GREEN research unit of CIRAD called Companion Modelling (ComMod)[1].

The simulation game is very useful when a difficult local situation is hindering the scope for collective action. Likewise, it a useful way of setting rules, especially with respect to land-use management. With this tool, local community members are able to flag up constraints whose removal is of priority importance, and may then develop their own strategies for giving practical effect to the resolutions they have made (Perspective, CIRAD 2015).

[1] d'Aquino, P. 2015. Lasting effects from the local to the national level. Perspective, No. 33 http://www.cirad.fr/en/content/download/10033/117182/version/8/file/Perspective33_dAquino_ENG.pdf

Purpose of the tool

The tool:

- Expands the participants' understanding of the situation and of the underlying issues;
- Enables participants to become cognisant of the functional capacities discovered through the capacity scoring questionnaire, and test the limits of these capacities through simulations or role-playing (e.g. problem-solving, collaboration, information sharing, and engagement);
- Enables participants to come up with their own ways of resolving the complex challenge of augmenting functional capacities and adapting them to the local context;
- Complements scoring data with observations of the role-playing behaviour of the participants.

The tool has two features that render it unique:

- It offers maximum flexibility. The participants called upon to take part can express themselves without the need for formal discussions, written documents, or even fixed rules when acting out their parts;
- It follows a principle of socio-institutional empowerment, developed with the help of stakeholders.
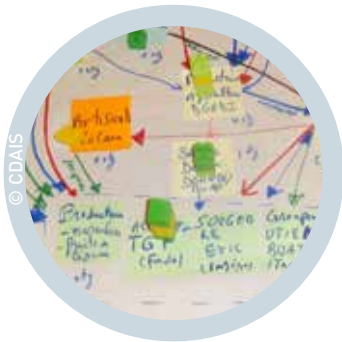
How to use the tool

Participants are presented with an outline of the current situation from a particular perspective. Each ˝player˝ is assigned an objective, but not told how to achieve it, and is therefore free to follow his or her own instincts. The objective might conflict with the objectives of other players. The essential purpose of the game is to see how each player handles the situation. During the game, the players have to react in real time and in accordance with the role or perspective assigned to them. The experience simulates and prepares them for real-life encounters.

Afterwards, the participants are asked to reflect upon their experience and to say which solutions led to the best individual and collective outcomes.

When applied to innovation partnerships, simulation games can foster learning in several ways:

• they raise the level of understanding of a given case or situation;
• they help participants gain greater awareness of their own communication strategies and capabilities;
• they foster skills in areas such as conflict management and negotiation;
• they acquaint the participants with the principles of group dynamics, and show how these dynamics can be shaped;
• they offer insight into the perspective of other stakeholders, which builds empathy and mutual understanding.

Observation and feedback

Appoint one or two participants as observers to give feedback after the role-playing game is over. The observers should have a clear idea of what is expected of them. The feedback should be as objective and non-judgemental as possible. It should also be meaningful and specific, so that the role-player can act upon it.

It is important to give the players time to reflect on their own experiences before the observer offers any feedback so that no-one is unduly influenced by the observer's views.