



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING

A HANDBOOK FOR
PRACTITIONERS IN SUDAN



ProAct
network



CONTEXT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Handbook provides an overview of tools and approaches that could be used by individuals, groups or organisations to plan, carry out and evaluate environmental management activities on a participatory and sustained basis, either on their own initiative or with outside facilitation and assistance.

It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying “**CEAP Planning Toolkit**”, and the “**CEAP Facilitator’s Guide**”, also developed by ProAct Network.

All three documents are intentionally considered as works in progress and it is intended to further populate them in due course as further experiences are learned.

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ACRONYMS

CEAP COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN

NGO NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

PLA PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION

PRA PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL

REA RAPID ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

RRA RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What this handbook describes?

This Handbook describes an approach to participatory action for sustainable environmental management and the formulation and management of Community Environmental Action Plans (CEAPs). The term “CEAP” refers to a capacity-building process through which individuals, communities and organisations analyse their situation, evaluate options for change and then plan, implement and evaluate activities on a participatory and sustained basis, either on their own initiative or stimulated and supported by others.

The purpose of this Handbook is to support facilitators as well as programme staff and decision-makers to understand the scope and potential of a CEAP and to actively support the formulation and eventual implementation of the resulting community-based action plans.

An accompanying CEAP Toolkit describes some practical and relevant tools, while useful tips for facilitation of a CEAP process are given in the Facilitator’s Guide.

1.2 Who is this handbook for?

This Handbook is intended to help people to work together to address environmental issues for more sustainable livelihoods. The Handbook is equally applicable whether these issues relate to degradation of the natural resource base, how one might begin to restore it or how to sustainably use and manage it. It can also assist those wishing to support communities to assess the local environmental situation: to plan, act, monitor, evaluate, reflect or scale-up activities.

The Handbook targets a wide range of readers, but primarily:

- community leaders, community volunteers and members of local organisations who may find

it helpful as a starting point for discussing issues that relate to the use and management of natural resources, as well as livelihood security;

- field extension staff of government ministries and non-governmental and civil society organisations who might use it to support and guide their work as facilitators; and
- programme staff of governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as decision makers, who should find it useful to better understand the scope and potential of a CEAP, even if they are not directly engaged in field work.

Tools will be most helpful for people working directly with communities affected by environmental issues in fragile states. However, any organisation broadly working on environmental issues should find the resources useful.

1.3 How to use the handbook

The Handbook is composed of three sections, each of which gives insight to the CEAP approach and practicalities at different levels of depths and understanding.

Following this short Introduction, Section 2 introduces what Community Environmental Action Planning is, in general, and focuses on some of the main skills required to successfully mobilise communities. Readers new to community mobilisation or needing to refresh their memories should read this first. This section also provides some background on participatory approaches, the philosophy behind empowering people to take charge of their community's development and the different spheres of influence in which people can act.

Section 3 then outlines successive stages of the CEAP process, providing much deeper insight to the CEAP process, describing why some steps are recommended to be done in a certain way. Reading this section is important to plan in a way that best suits the local context and, at a later stage, to choose the tools that may best work in that situation.

Users of this resource pack are reminded that additional, specific guidance is available in the **CEAP Toolkit and Facilitator's Guide**, in particular. This **Handbook** concludes with some selected References and Additional Reading.



If you are using this Handbook as a guide to lead you through a CEAP process from start to finish, we encourage you to work through the suggested stages one at a time.



If you are already carrying out a CEAP process, you can go directly to the stage where you think you have reached.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING



One of the many key actions in developing a CEAP is helping people to mobilise, get engaged in the process and begin to take on more responsibility for planning how natural resources might be better used over time and in a more sustainable way. (Photo: ProAct)

2.1 What is community environmental action planning?

Community Environmental Action Planning is a participatory, capacity building process through which individuals, groups of people or organisations plan, implement and monitor specific activities

they have identified, together, with a view to improving the way in which natural resources are managed, to more sustainable livelihoods.

In a CEAP, communities engage in a thorough and participatory analysis of their environment, looking at assets, patterns and dynamics of natural resource use and the way these are linked to their livelihoods. Through this consultation and assessment process, people learn from each other and have a chance to discuss and negotiate controversial matters.

After the assessment and analysis stage, strategies are then explored which might improve the environmental situation. Such a strategy will normally elaborate a variety of different activities.

What is a community?

A community is a group of people who feel that they have something in common. For example, a community might be people who live in the same village, people who work together or a group of people who share interests or concerns. This means that formal and informal organisations may feel that they too are part of a community – rather than separate from it – if they share the same interests and circumstances.

New communities form when people find themselves in new circumstances. For example, displaced people living in the same camp might begin to see themselves as a community, as they identify shared problems, needs and challenges. Understanding communities involves understanding how people identify themselves rather than relying on the views or definitions of others.

At this point in time, it is important to then prioritise which environmental issues will receive initial focus, realising that others can be added in due course. Once priorities are agreed, a detailed community action plan assigns tasks, responsibilities and a time frame for implementation and management.

Community ownership, management and follow-up of CEAP activities is central to the whole process.

2.2 Participatory approaches in CEAP

Participatory approaches are a way to help people engage in dialogue and joint learning and to then act on that learning. In CEAP, participatory approaches are used to create community engagement and help ensure that all community groups and stakeholders are included in the dialogue and learning process.

These approaches are based on the understanding that people affected by environmental and other issues should not just participate actively, but also influentially. This means that the views and opinions of people affected by the respective issues are not just listened to, but are also heard and acted upon. Peoples' voices should have the power to shape and control local actions.

There are different types of participation, and the levels of influence and sustainability differ. Not all types of participation allow people to actively and influentially shape decisions which affect their lives (see Figure 1), though all may be appropriate at different stages of a CEAP. Experience has shown that the higher the level of influential participation and involvement in decision making, the

higher the likelihood that an activity will be kept going by the community after external support has been withdrawn.

Figure 1. Types of community participation

Level of community control	Type of community participation	Type of community mobilisation	Level of sustainability
High	Self-mobilisation: affected communities achieve an activity without help from an external agency	Collective action: communities lead the process of mobilisation and only request external agency support if required	High
	Joint decision-making: affected communities and an outside agency make decisions together on an equal basis	Co-learning: communities and an external agency share skills, knowledge and resources during the mobilisation process	
	Functional participation: affected communities are invited to participate at a particular stage of action to fulfil a particular purpose	Collaborating: communities are working with an external agency but are not necessarily building their own capacity in the process	
	Participation for material incentives: affected communities participate in an activity only because they need the material benefit of doing so, e.g. money	Consulted: affected communities are asked about the process but their views may or may not have any influence over it	
	Consultation: affected communities are asked about an activity by an external agency but their views may or may not have any influence over it	Co-operating: communities are mobilising but with little idea why	
	Information giving: people are simply informed that an activity is taking place and have no say on activity design or management	Co-opted: communities are forced to mobilise	
Low			Low

Over the past 30 years a growing family of participatory tools, attitudes and behaviours have been developed and applied to enable and empower people to present, share, analyse and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate, reflect and scale-up community action. Depending on the objective of the process, participatory approaches have been used for Rapid Rural Assessments (RRA), Participatory Rural Assessments (PRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). While RRA and PRA have often been used to better understand the situation in a community for programming and planning, PLA has a stronger emphasis on the community becoming an actor and taking charge themselves.

Projects adopting participatory approaches are based on the presumption that all people have a right to play an active and influential part in shaping decisions which affect their lives and that people affected by environmental issues should participate together at every stage of local action on environmental issues.

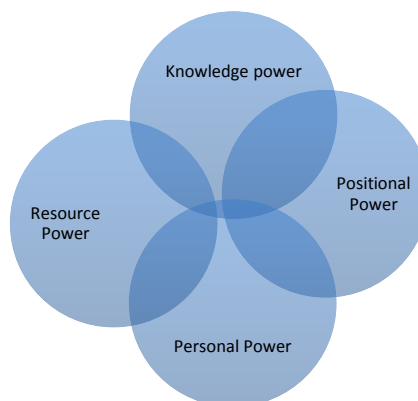
A commitment to empowerment

Empowerment can be described as the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups of people to make choices and to then transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Everyone has some power. CEAP approaches aim to make full use of the power found in communities and to strengthen it further in order to address environmental issues together.

In order to feel empowered to address environmental issues, individuals, communities and organisations need to strengthen four types of power:

- resource power – access to, and influence over, natural resources and services to ensure environmental sustainability and sustainable livelihoods;
- knowledge power – an understanding of how to ensure environmental sustainability;
- positional power – the ability to negotiate rights and entitlements, and fulfil responsibilities and obligations to ensure environmental sustainability; and
- personal power – a sense of self-esteem and self-worth, a personal realisation and motivation to claim resource, knowledge and positional power.





Capturing the views, needs and opinions of mobile communities such as pastoralists is particularly important in some societies as it is important to understand what their coping strategies have been in the past – in terms of drought, for example – and how they too can become an integral part of the CEAP management process. (Photo: UNEP)

2.3 Why and when are participatory approaches used in CEAP?

Every stage of the CEAP process is guided by participatory principles, starting from the analysis of the community's situation and environmental issues, all the way to implementation of activities and management and evaluation. Approaches and tools that are recommended in this Handbook have been successfully used around the world, in rural and urban settings, rich and poor areas and with settled, mobile and displaced populations.

Participatory approaches in a CEAP help to:

- **increase ownership and control**, which is an important component of sustainability;
- **identify the most viable local interventions** for environmental change and improvement;
- **increase the effectiveness of activities** because they can be tailored by a specific community or group to their own specific needs;

- **increase the efficiency of activities** because more minds and resources are brought to bear on an issue;
- **increase sustainability** because people learn new knowledge and skills during a CEAP which allows them to carry on assessing, planning and acting to address environmental concerns;
- **build trust** between different people and structures in a community;
- **negotiate and mediate** in case of conflicting interests (see UNEP, 2013 for practical examples of how this relates to natural resource use in Sudan);
- empower people to become “makers and shapers” of their own lives, communities and services by increasing people’s power (see above);
- **increase accountability between stakeholders** through people being more aware of each other’s roles and responsibilities; and
- **enable people to claim their human rights** – participation is not just a good thing to do, it is a fundamental human right. A CEAP can also help people claim their right to a say and development.

2.4 CEAP as a process

A CEAP process has certain characteristics which makes it different from conventional environmental assessment or planning approaches:

- **Communities lead the response** – The CEAP process encourages people to play an active and influential role in ensuring future sustainable use of natural resources. Community members thus take responsibility for addressing environmental sustainability, with the support of others as necessary. Although CEAP may involve external support or resources at some point, this is not always necessary. Communities make decisions together and take responsibility for the outcomes of their actions together.
- **A process leading to action** – Ultimately the CEAP process aims to lead to tangible and sustainable improvements in the environment, with communities taking effective action in ways that they had not managed before.
- **A flexible approach rather than a rigid model** – Communities have different characteristics and needs, and the way they mobilise has to suit these. That is why there is no single model for how to do a CEAP. Rather, there is a set of tools and principles that can be adapted to suit the particular community.
- **An organisational process that builds on existing strategies** – Communities affected by environmental degradation may already be trying to address this, particularly if it is having a negative impact on their livelihoods. Their response, however, may not always be carried out in a co-ordinated and effective manner. A CEAP tries to help communities achieve this.
- **A capacity-building process rather than a single event** – CEAP is not a single event or project. It is not a campaign, or a series of campaigns. It is a continual process that can – in the hands of a community – be continued over years and even decades.
- **A communication and education process** – For communities to pursue environmentally sustainable livelihoods they need to have frequent exchanges of ideas and issues, both with each other and sometimes external actors, some of who may be able to offer new knowledge and skills related to sustainable environmental management. A good CEAP processes will try to ensure regular communication and education opportunities within and amongst communities about environmental and livelihood-related issues.
- **An empowering process** – Rather than leaving communities to feel powerless in the face of declining natural resources and environmental degradation, CEAP seeks to provide them with the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and capability to address environmental issues effectively.

2.5 Stages of a CEAP process

The way in which a CEAP process starts and evolves depends on a number of factors, for example the size of the community, the number and complexity of environmental issues identified, the availability of the community to become engaged in the process, the interests of those stakeholders and so forth. Accordingly, a CEAP process needs to be managed in a flexible way, responding to the situation and needs encountered.

Experience has shown that the following components are essential to consider for any CEAP, though the degree to which each is used is likely to vary.

- **Stage 1:** Starting together – getting organised, rapidly assessing the environmental situation and identifying and involving different stakeholders.
- **Stage 2:** Assessing together – learning more about the specific environmental situation and the issues different people face, and identifying possible solutions.
- **Stage 3:** Planning together – prioritising issues and deciding how to solve them.
- **Stage 4:** Acting together – taking action and implementing activities to address the situation.
- **Stage 5:** Monitoring and evaluating together – considering the results and impact of activities, and using monitoring information to adjust plans.
- Although each stage is dealt with separately in this Handbook, in practice they often overlap.

2.6 Some CEAP principles

Global experience in participatory projects is leading to an increased understanding of some key principles that can be used to support the process. When facilitating communities to develop and implement CEAP:

- **Aim to achieve the dual outcomes of CEAP:** CEAP should be seen as both a means to achieving environmental outcomes and as a valuable end in itself.
- **View community mobilisation as a capacity-building process that empowers communities** with the skills to organise, assess, plan, act, monitor and evaluate together. This will make sure that communities not only achieve the immediate goals of a CEAP process (such as reducing environmental degradation), but also have the capacity to mobilise to face new environmental challenges, and sustain and scale-up existing activities.
- **Encourage meaningful community participation** by enabling that people affected by environmental issues have an active and influential say in the decisions that impact on their lives. It is especially important that those most vulnerable to environmental issues, or marginalised (e.g. young people, women, the poorest of the poor) participate meaningfully. Evidence suggests that the more meaningful the participation, the greater the mobilisation and sustainability (see Figure 1).
- **Work together to encourage all community members affected, or potentially affected,** by an environmental issue to work together to solve it, or find sustainable ways to cope with it. This means starting, assessing, planning, acting, monitoring, evaluating and scaling up together. If you are from an external agency or NGO, you should try to form an equal partnership with community members, sharing roles and responsibilities fairly and devolving responsibility to the lowest appropriate level.
- **Take a Community Perspective:** Whose reality counts? Leading thinking on participation suggests that organisations should ask this question when working with local people: “Whose reality or experience of a situation counts”? Is it local people’s reality as we – as external facilitators and actors – think it is? Or should it be local people’s reality as they freely express it? Most participatory approaches are based on the understanding that instead of

searching only for a technical description of issues in a community, a subjective view from the perspective of local people is more helpful to identify locally viable solutions to existing problems.

- **Value local knowledge and experience.** People living in a particular community often have expert knowledge of how the environment affects, and is affected by, their community and way of life. As their livelihoods often depend on the state of the environment they will also have the most motivation to sustain it. It is this motivation combined with their local expert knowledge which organisations should use as the starting point for promoting environmental actions.
- **Build trust and social capital** which means spending a lot of time on building mutual trust, respect and understanding both within communities and between communities – especially host and displaced communities – and any other organisations taking part in the process. Everyone participating needs to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. This will encourage sharing of skills and knowledge within and between communities and organisations.
- **Build community ownership of the process.** In the longer term, community action is sustained by community ownership, not by external inputs. Ownership can be built through ensuring legal responsibility and by responding to the communities' priorities □ rather than your own – and giving communities the primary responsibility for the CEAP process.
- **A relaxed process which allows a community to mobilise at its own pace.** Don't try to rush. CEAP is a process not an event. It requires significant amounts of time to build up communities' capacity to mobilise sustainably. But the investment is well worth it. A community that can mobilise for environmental issues can apply much the same knowledge, skills, resources and organisational ability to mobilise for other development issues or – if a displaced community – for addressing environmental and other issues when they return home.
- **Maximise the use of resources** by making sure that everyone in the community affected by an environmental issue is contributing whatever they can, and create links to outside services and resources where necessary.
- **Use tools and techniques which maximise participation.** This handbook uses Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools. PLA tools and exercises, together with a full description of how to use them, and train others to use them, is provided in CEAP Toolkit. Use the tools suggested at each stage to explore issues and accomplish the CEAP process. Other techniques that have proved successful are found in the Additional Reading section at the end of this Handbook.
- **Manage expectations** to make sure that the short-term expectations of community members about the CEAP process are realistic. CEAP takes time: it is a steady process but a sure one!
- **Use your best judgment:** there are no hard and fast rules to CEAP. Instead see this Handbook as a guidelines: what may work in one situation may not work in another. So if something is not working out as intended, adapt the process accordingly using your own best judgment about what is most likely to be more appropriate.
- **Start where the community is at.** It is not always essential to go through each stage of the CEAP. Communities may already have mobilised successfully without following these stages in a planned way. For example, they may have organised useful and important activities before any participatory assessment is carried out. The CEAP process is often planned in a more formal way when external people or organisations are involved. It is important for external organisations supporting CEAP processes to recognise past and current community action when they arrive in a community. This is so they can build on a community's strengths and achievements rather than undermine them.

- **Work at the pace of the community.** There is a tendency for international relief and development organisations to work and expect results at a pace they are used to seeing in northern contexts, which may not suit the local context. Often there is also time pressure built up by donor funding conditions which is unrealistic to sustainable environmental action. Relief settings are especially prone to short-term interventions, even though most relief operations end up turning into long-term operations. In this context CEAP may at first be perceived as unsuited to the need, but experience has shown that as the CEAP process progresses, the community's capacity will be built to organise activities faster and more efficiently and, ultimately, the outcomes are more sustainable.
- **Do each of the stages together with the community.** This means all those affected by environmental issues in a community working together, using resources they can mobilise together. It means including the most vulnerable, marginalised and discriminated against. It also means taking collective responsibility for addressing environmental issues effectively and learning how to cope with them together.

2.7 What is a CEAP plan?

A Community Environmental Action Plan can have different formats and elements. It can, for example, include problem and vision statements that reflect where the community sees itself at the time of planning, and where it wants to be in the future, and it should contain concrete goals/objectives and implementation plans for each action area. Displaying a copy of the plan in an accessible place, for example in the community centre, encourages ownership and transparency.

The time span the action plan covers can vary, according to the scale and nature of the chosen actions. After each agreed period, achievements can be checked against the original plan, and a new/revised plan formulated. Although the commitments made and documented in the action plan should be kept and followed through, the plan can be subject to amendments and additions as considered necessary by the community.

What is a community environmental plan?

- a CEAP is a tool through which a community or communities have agreed to:
- a shared vision of what it is they aim to achieve;
- a common strategy on how they plan to realise this vision;
- activities the community want to prioritise, and those which might be set aside for later action;
- responsibilities: who will take action, who will co-ordinate and organise?
- contributions from the community: how much time and materials can come from the community?
- external support and inputs: will there be external support, e.g. training or material inputs?
- timeline for implementation: what will be done when?
- maintenance: who will look after and maintain the results achieved?
- a budget: what is the anticipated cost of the activities and where can funds be obtained?



Identifying problems and threats and finding solutions to these, together, is an essential ingredient of a CEAP. In this case, wadi erosion might be being caused by man-made or natural actions but a common and acceptable solution needs to be found to address this issue. (Photo: UNEP)

2.8 Why use CEAP as a participatory approach for environmental management?

Environmental improvements and sustainability can be promoted on different levels: environmental laws and regulations are relevant at national and institutional levels as long as they are enforced or effectively promoted by incentives. However, law enforcement and incentives are often difficult to realise on decentralised levels, in areas with weak administrative structures or in cases where people's habits, convictions and interests hamper positive environmental change. CEAP – as a participatory, awareness-raising and empowering process – is a means to achieve environmental goals as it:

- increases a communities' understanding and awareness of environmental issues and needs and increases demand for environmentally sustainable activities;
- addresses the underlying causes of environmental issues, such as conflict or gender disparity, which require a deep understanding of a community's characteristics – something government services or outside agencies may not possess;
- supports outreach and coverage of environmental activities – communities' participation in service delivery can help expand services, e.g. through volunteer workers;
- reaches the most vulnerable and marginalised people who are often directly affected by environmental degradation or depend heavily on certain natural resources;
- improves effectiveness and efficiency of environmental services and activities because communities have been involved in their design so they are more closely matched to their

specific needs;

- improves community access to environmental services;
- mobilises additional resources for addressing environmental issues; and
- creates a greater sense that communities have a responsibility to keep actions going in the long-term, with minimal external support.

2.9 CEAP activities – mobilising for sustainable natural resource use

Examples of community-based environmental management activities include:

- **Rangeland management:** balancing use with natural regeneration, actively supporting regeneration with native rangeland species and managing grazing at a level that allows sustainable regeneration of grazed areas. This may include destocking, the installation of fodder banks, promotion of cut-and-carry systems, alternative saving schemes and other measures.
- **Soil protection and regeneration:** stopping water and wind erosion, restoring soil fertility and improving infiltration capacities in cultivated areas.
- **Water management:** safe waste water and sanitation, the management and regulation of drinking water and adaptation to seasonal shortages.
- **Forest management:** agreement on sustainable use intensity, the regulation and monitoring of extracted quantities of wood and reforestation and the maintenance of reforested areas through appropriate thinning, fire protection or protection from grazing.
- **Waste management:** waste prevention, recycling, collection and proper disposal.

While the above are generally long-term undertakings, many CEAPs also have an inbuilt “quick impact” element in which a simple solution is identified and acted upon for a given problem. Examples of community-based quick impact activities might include:

- support to fodder production;
- rehabilitation of water structures;
- rehabilitation of other community structures;
- provision of tree seedlings;
- provision of agricultural seeds and initial training; and
- provision of fuel-efficient stoves.



Good environmental practices are often location-specific and may differ, not only between Darfur and other states in Sudan, but also between communities within Darfur.

3. STAGES IN COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING

3.1 Introduction

The CEAP process is flexible, responding to different circumstances and needs of a community. There is no fixed model for community mobilisation and the timescale will vary from one community to another and according to the issues, scale and situation.

A CEAP may have its origins in several places, for example, it might be initiated following contact by a community with an external NGO or government agency or it may happen that an organisation already working with a community sees an opportunity to undertake a CEAP process to address issues of concern or conflict.

Following initial preparations, in which communities are identified, support secured from key government bodies, basic logistics arranged and initial training undertaken for some facilitation, five stages are generally followed, as outlined below and in this section.

- **Stage 1:** Starting together – introducing, balancing expectations, getting organised, identifying and involving different stakeholders and rapidly assessing the environmental situation.
- **Stage 2:** Assessing together – learning more about the specific environmental situation and the issues from different people's perspective, exploring and creating understanding of linkages between environmental issues, livelihoods and community well-being and identifying possible solutions.
- **Stage 3:** Planning together – prioritising issues and agreeing how to solve them by combining most feasible solutions and strategies.
- **Stage 4:** Acting together – taking action and implementing activities to address the situation.
- **Stage 5:** Monitoring and evaluating together – and using monitoring information to adjust plans, evaluating the results and impact of the activities and changes/improvements in the environmental situation from a community and technical perspective. Learn from experience and include it in next plan.



Ensuring that community meetings are held at a time and place that is convenient and safe to all is an important part of the CEAP process. (Photo: ProAct)

Although each stage is dealt with separately in this handbook, in practice they often overlap. The stages may also flow into another, for example there is seldom a clear cut step from Stage 1 (which already includes some aspects of assessing) to Stage 2. It may also be possible that there is a need to return to a previous step and repeat certain exercises to make sure that an issue has been thoroughly addressed to peoples' satisfaction.

3.2 Where, when and with whom do we start the CEAP?

In order to conduct a CEAP successfully, we need to carefully consider where, when and with whom we work. Our own priorities about which communities to work with will influence our decision about how to mobilise. Governments and donors may also influence our decision. But the community is key in deciding when, where and with whom to start. There are a number of practical issues to consider.

- **What information already exists?** Start by gathering as much information as possible about relevant geographic areas and the environment, using sources such as research reports, government departments and people with knowledge of the area. Such information is likely to be incomplete at this stage so we need to use our judgment about data gaps and people's opinions. Exploratory visits to the site(s) and a rapid environmental assessment (see below) may be helpful.
- **What activities are already taking place?** We need to consider ongoing or planned environmental activities by other communities and organisations in the same area. The CEAP

process might be able to complement or scale-up existing initiatives. However, we also want to minimise overlap and duplication of effort. Two similar environmental processes in the same community can lead to confusion and even conflict.

You can use mapping to help you map out existing activities in the area. See, for example, the Community Resource Mapping and Mobility Mapping tools for assistance.

Consider the logistics of mobilising. Are there particular concerns such as security? If so, how will this affect the CEAP process? Are we able to access an area and easily co-ordinate activities? Community mobilisers should ideally be from, or as close as possible, to the communities you intend to work with as this helps them develop a deeper understanding of life in the community and demonstrates their commitment to the community. It also makes it easier for mobilisers to be available at times and places convenient to the community, and reduces logistical and transport difficulties.

Where is the greatest need? We need to work with communities in greatest need. Key questions that will help identify which communities have the greatest need are:

- who is most affected by which environmental issues?
- who is less well served by existing environmental services and activities?
- which community members are the most marginalised or discriminated against?

Answering these questions is not always straightforward (see Well-being Mapping for help). Talking to different people will provide more information, but you will need to distinguish between rumour, opinion and fact. The best way to do this is to go to the community in question and see for yourself (see, for example, Transect Walk).

Some communities can be hard to reach. They may be invisible to outsiders and their existence not generally acknowledged. For example, in some places the existence of internally displaced people is not recognised by local authorities.

But these hard-to-reach communities are often the most in need. Starting together, involving many stakeholders and using participatory tools (see Mapping and Stakeholder Participation Matrix) will help us learn more about the existence and identities of different communities and stakeholders.

Motivation of the community. Where possible, we start CEAP when a community has also expressed interest in the process and in improving the current environmental situation. Feasibility Matrix, can help you assess the community's level of motivation. Exploring the following issues with the community (e.g. in a community meeting) can help them to agree that action is required:

- critical incidents, e.g. conflict over use of a natural resource;
- common problems, e.g. a lack of fuel for cooking;
- expressed needs, e.g. sanitation;
- traditional community events;
- general development activities; and
- emergencies, e.g. drought.

Are people able to participate freely? Where barriers to participation are high (e.g. when community members cannot meet freely) we may need to establish relationships with “gatekeepers” or other stakeholders (see Stakeholder Participation Matrix) before we can decide when to mobilise. People whose basic needs are not met, e.g. for food and shelter, are likely to find meaningful participation in CEAP activities difficult and their time may need to be compensated for.

People involved in illegal activities such as illegal firewood collection or migrant workers without a permit may feel unwilling to participate in meetings or discussions for fear of harassment or arrest.

Gatekeepers and Stakeholders

Gatekeepers are people who control access to certain individuals, groups of people, places or information. For example, schoolteachers and parents are gatekeepers to children, while traditional leaders serve the same role for community members.

Stakeholders are people who have an interest – or stake – in the outcome of CEAP. A primary stakeholder is a person or organisation whose aim is to benefit from this process, e.g. a farmer. A secondary stakeholder is someone who may not benefit directly but who will be affected or involved in some way, e.g. a farmer's collective.

It is, however, important to create safe spaces for people like these to participate freely and openly in discussions. Communities with the greatest needs are often among the hardest to reach, and it is important not to dismiss the possibility of mobilising successfully because there are many obvious difficulties.

Be aware that in some situations there may be significant risks to community members who start to mobilise. It is therefore important to carry out a Do No Harm Analysis at the beginning of the CEAP.

3.3 Stage 1 – starting together

3.3.1 What do we mean by starting together?

Starting together means deciding – with the community – where and with whom to start the CEAP process, as well as when is the best time to do so. It introduces the supporting organisation and the community to each other, if this has not already taken place.

Starting together involves getting commitment from the community to the CEAP process and ensuring that all those who wish to participate are able to do so. It allows for a first picture of the environmental situation to be realised and starts the consultation process on how the community is currently responding to environmental issues.

The overall aim of starting together is to build trust with the community and agree on roles and responsibilities. It is perhaps the most critical stage of the CEAP process, as how we start often sets the tone for how we will continue.

3.3.2 Why start together?

Starting together helps to:

- **engage community members** in explaining and understanding environmental issues from the start;
- **agree on the broad objectives** of the CEAP process, i.e. that the focus is on environmental issues;
- **balance expectations**: clarify what people might, and might not, expect from a CEAP process;
- introduce people to the **practicalities of CEAP work**: how long it may take, what the process involves, how much participation is expected;

- build trust between the community and the supporting organisation;
- develop a way to ensure meaningful participation throughout the process;
- get an overview of the community, including stakeholders, interest groups and social groups;
- agree on mechanisms for co-ordination and practicalities of working;
- know previous actors and projects in the community to avoid repetition and overlaps with existing activities and services;
- avoid conflict; for example, due to people feeling left out of the process; and
- encourage community ownership of future initiatives right from the start.

3.3.3 How do we start together?

Different activities or steps could be included under this stage. Depending on how well the supporting organisation and the community already know each other, these can be done quickly or may require more detail. Apart from the initial preparations and introducing ourselves to the community there is no particular chronological order that needs to be kept.

In order to conduct a CEAP successfully, we first need to consider carefully where, when and with whom we work. Our own priorities about which communities to work with will influence our decision about how to mobilise. Governments and donors may also influence our decisions. But the community is key in deciding when, where and with whom to start the CEAP. There are a number of practical issues to consider.

Check our capacity to start

Before we mobilise, we need to assess our capacity. Do we have the skills and resources necessary to mobilise effectively? Do we need to address any weaknesses before we start? How can we do this?

Community mobilisation should only start when we are confident that we have the commitment and resources to work with the community for long enough to achieve sustainable results. Tools to consider using for this stage include Feasibility Matrix, Impact Matrix, Sustainability Matrix, Low Hanging Fruit and SWOC Analysis.

Introduce ourselves

As we start working with a community, we need to introduce ourselves to the local leaders, community members and authorities. It is important to let people know who we are and what we want to do. This is in order to:

- get permission to work in the community, or area, from the relevant authorities;
- respect local leadership and customs;
- begin to develop relationships;
- begin to ensure realistic expectations of what your organisation may be able to contribute; and
- begin to establish honest communication and avoid causing suspicion and mistrust.

Be open with the community. It is important to be prepared to listen and learn about the concerns and experiences of people and organisations who may be working with the community. People are likely to have questions and expectations about what the supporting organisation is going to do. These should be discussed as openly and honestly as possible.

You should be prepared to talk about:

- who you are, what you do and where you come from;
- the skills, interests and capacity of your organisation;
- the general reasons why you have come to the community or area;
- the CEAP process;
- how and when different stakeholders will participate;
- what resources are available; and
- what the next steps are likely to be.

After meetings with key stakeholders, it may be useful to arrange a larger meeting to explain these issues to the wider community and answer any questions.

Learn about the community

After introducing ourselves to the community, it is now time for the community to introduce itself to us. A useful way to do this is to involve the community in introductory activities such as mapping (see Mapping). This involves using participatory tools to map and explore key characteristics of the community. This helps define the different groups within the community or area. It can also guide decisions about which people and organisations to work with during the participatory assessment (see Stage 2).

Involving different stakeholders in mapping the community helps to begin to build relationships. Where possible, it is useful to involve people from the community as facilitators in the process. It also helps to enable the meaningful involvement of these groups in the next steps.

Figure 2. Issues to explore in mapping the community together

Issues to explore in mapping the community together	Possible tools
Community boundaries and landmarks Important places in the community Views on the boundaries of the community Different groups in the community	Mapping: Community Resource Mapping and Mobility Mapping Household Mapping Transect Walks Seasonal Calendar
Services and resources Services, organisations, service providers, NGOs, CBOs, religious groups and so forth in the community. Important gaps in services in the community.	Mapping: Community Resource Mapping and Mobility Mapping Household Mapping Transect Walks Problem Tree or Cause and Effect Diagram Division of Labour Chart Matrix Scoring
Relationships between service providers.	Stakeholder participation matrix
Natural resource context Key concerns, and levels of concern, about the environment in the community.	Problem Tree or Cause and Effect Diagram Matrix Scoring
Past and present action on environmental issues in the community.	Seasonal Calendar
Areas of action on environmental issues to which the NGO or CBO might contribute.	Assessment Summary Matrix Feasibility Matrix Impact Matrix Sustainability Matrix

Discuss and clarify expectations

Community members and other stakeholders are likely to have many expectations of an organisation. These can be based on previous experience and/or on what people know or believe about the specific group that is starting work in the community.

It is important that stakeholders have realistic expectations of your organisation from the start. Unrealistic expectations will lead to disappointment and might cause the community to lose interest

in the CEAP process.

Where there is a history of organisations working in a certain way, it may take time to overcome expectations. After emergency relief, for example, during which aid was provided fast and for free, communities may find it difficult to get back to a development modus which builds on their own assets, requires their own initiative and in which results may take longer to achieve.

Be clear and honest with the community about the resources and working modalities of your organisation from the start, particularly if you will not bring “incentives” for community participation, such as payment or food for work.

Explain how the CEAP progress might work

To balance expectation and avoid possible disappointment it is important to be transparent with the community from the beginning and to clarify in general terms:

- what is the aim of CEAP?
- a rough timeline for the CEAP – when might each stage of the CEAP process take place and how long might it take?
- who will the CEAP target/work with?
- what involvement will be expected from the community and at which stage?
- what resources will be required at each stage?

At this stage a basic overview of the CEAP process should be sufficient. But the primary focus on the environment and the need for community inputs in terms of time and assets should be clear.

Confirm the motivation of the community

Where possible, we start CEAP when a community has also expressed interest in the process and in improving the current management of natural resources. Exploring the following issues with the community (e.g. in a community meeting) can help determine if this is the case:

- have there been environment-related emergencies, e.g. flooding or drought?
- has there been conflict over use of a natural resource?
- do people mention common problems, e.g. a lack of fuel for cooking?



Working with small groups of people is often important to ensure that individuals feel they can express their views without fear of criticism or ridicule. Capturing this information is critical to help shape a CEAP. (Photo: ProAct)

What if motivation and interest are low?

Even if the selection of the community was done carefully, and the community displayed initial interest, it can be possible that during the starting phase this interest fades and commitment and participation drops. If this happens, allow the process to slow down or take a break and check the underlying reasons:

- do the practicalities (meeting times and venues) allow people to participate?
- are there other (not environmental) more pressing problems that demand people's attention?
- is there a lack of understanding of the objectives and benefits of CEAP?
- are other work commitments coinciding, e.g., land preparation or harvest time?
- are there internal conflicts or power issues that make it risky for people to engage?
- is the community expecting more incentives – monetary or in-kind – in order to participate?

Some issues, such as coinciding work commitments may be relatively easy to address, for example by changing the time during the day when CEAP meetings are held. Others, such as underlying conflicts can be more difficult to deal with and may even require external support.

If the community strongly thinks during or after the starting phase that CEAP is not the right approach for them at the time it can be the right choice to decide not to go ahead with the process.

In this case the community should clearly decide if they want to stop the CEAP process and the reasons be explained to all stakeholders so far involved, including technical partners and donors.

As facilitators, we should respect the community's choice. It is also our task to keep integrity and not try to "sell" the CEAP idea forcefully or with promises of benefits to communities who have made it clear that they are interested in something other than CEAP.

Identify stakeholders and who should participate

Knowing the stakeholders and different groups in a community is very important in a CEAP process. Only when we understand well, who is part of the community, what different social groups exist, can we give everybody the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way.

Are people able to participate freely?

In situations when community members cannot meet freely, we may need to find out the underlying reason. It is important to know if there are gatekeepers or other stakeholders who influence participation and with whom we need to establish relationships before the CEAP can go ahead.

Other situations in which people are likely to find meaningful participation difficult are if their basic needs are not met (e.g. for food and shelter), or if they have other pressing problems.

Identify all stakeholders

It is vital that everyone who is affected by, or has an interest in, the environmental issues is able to participate meaningfully in the CEAP process. A **Stakeholder Analysis** helps to identify who has interests in which issue.

In a second step, a **Stakeholders Participation Matrix** could be used to discuss and decide who needs to be involved in which step of the process. If we leave key stakeholders out, or if they feel that they have been ignored, full community mobilisation will not have occurred and we risk failing to meet our objectives.

Communities with the greatest needs are often among the hardest to reach, and it is important not to dismiss the possibility of mobilising successfully because there are many obvious difficulties. Be aware that in some situations there may be significant risks to community members who start to mobilise.



Spending time on stakeholder analysis to make sure that everyone who should take part is taking part – and is able to participate as much as they wish to – is important and, therefore, time well spent.

At this point, it is also helpful to discuss the role of existing environmental committees and networks. This can help to avoid bypassing existing mechanisms that are working well, or revive those that are inactive.

Tensions and conflict

Discussions with different stakeholders may begin to reveal tensions and conflict as well as power relationships and interdependency. An organisation should be careful not to take sides in a conflict, especially if it only has a limited understanding of the situation. Be clear with stakeholders about the role and limitations of the organisation from the beginning. This will help to avoid raising expectations that you cannot meet.

Identify good meeting spaces and agree on convenient timing

Before moving on to assessing together, we need to ensure that there are safe spaces for community groups to meet. CEAP activities should take place at locations that are convenient and comfortable for community members where community members can build trusting relationships and participate freely in discussions (**Mapping**). It may be necessary to negotiate with gatekeepers and other stakeholders to find a place where people can meet together without fear of harassment.

When planning, also consider the time people have available. Seasonal work or holidays may mean that some people are busy, or away, at certain times of the year. The rainy season often disrupts transport and travel, which may be an issue if the community is scattered in different areas. Consultations with community members will help identify the days and times most convenient for meetings and other joint activities.

Establish communication and co-operation focal points

The role of community focal persons in CEAP processes can differ a lot, depending on the size of the community, the setting, possible internal conflicts, and the experience and skills of community members in leading community-managed processes.

In a situation where some community members have sufficient leadership capacity, it is ideal if some such people can lead the process and facilitate participatory working sessions. **Such Community Facilitators** will, however, likely need a sound training in CEAP principles and PLA methods, as well as regular backstopping and support by an experienced NGO or government facilitators. Facilitation by community members is very helpful in large communities where there is need for a lot of consultation and assessment in smaller groups.

In a situation where these attributes are missing, or where possible leaders and facilitators have a conflict of interest, external facilitation will be a better option. In this case, there will still be a need for **Community Mobilisers** who assist in calling and mobilising participants for CEAP meetings, and who can give feedback from meetings and up-to-date information to people.



Facilitators need to be unbiased, which means they should not have any personal, economic, financial, material, or power interest in the environmental issues being discussed, or in the CEAP process.

Both, Community Mobilisers and Facilitators should be selected during the starting phase after the **Stakeholder Assessment** and receive some training before entering the assessing and analysing stage of the CEAP process.

Do a Rapid Environmental Assessment as a Baseline

A rapid environmental assessment (REA) is a structured approach to survey the environmental conditions of a particular area during a specified period of time. It involves the collection of secondary and field-level environmental data to get an overview of the current state of the environment and serve as a baseline, providing a basic understanding of major issues.

REAs are different from participatory environmental assessments in that they do not aim to empower communities to conduct their own assessment of the environmental situation. Rather, it is led by outside organisations. The process of rapid assessment will not in itself encourage communities to mobilise.

A REA should, however, never be seen as a replacement or shortcut to a participatory environmental assessment. The latter, as it is done in CEAP during the Assessing Together stage is important in order to explore some issues in depth, obtain the community's perspectives and give people a forum to discuss, negotiate, learn and agree.

	Rapid Environmental Assessment	Participatory Environmental Assessment
Objective	To get preliminary data on the environmental situation	To have a detailed understanding of the dynamics of natural resource use
Who does it?	Assessment team	Community members
How is it done?	Survey questionnaire, focus group discussions, mapping and visiting the site(s)	Assessing together with PLA tools
Source of information?	Small groups of key informants who are knowledgeable in environmental issues Reports, maps and other documents Direct observation Expert technical opinion of the assessment team	Information comes from a larger representative group of the community The technical accuracy of this information may be less than that of a REA, but subjective perceptions and values of community members are an important reality that counts in the process
Who learns?	Assessment team	Community members and facilitators both learn
How long does it take?	2-4 days	6-10 community sessions
Expected Outcome	Baseline data to monitor change Prioritised issues of common concern Roles and responsibilities started to be determined Next steps identified	Better understanding of all those who are involved (community members, leaders, facilitators) about: • environmental facts and dynamics; • increased awareness; • increased motivation for action; • a viable strategies and activities; and • consensus

Checklist: starting together

Planning for starting together	✓
Are we clear why we start together?	
Have we considered the logistics of working in those communities?	
Does our organisation have the capacity to undertake a CEAP?	
Have we introduced ourselves to the community?	
Does the community understand the CEAP process?	
Does the community have realistic expectations about it?	
Have we analysed who are the community social groups, stakeholders and gatekeepers, together with their interests and influencing power?	
Have we identified who will participate, when and how?	
Have we identified the most vulnerable members of the community?	
Is the community motivated to take part?	
Have we carried out a rapid assessment of the environmental situation in the community?	
Have we identified the baseline status of the main environmental issues?	
Have we identified safe spaces and agreed on feasible meeting times?	
Have we agreed the focus of the CEAP with the community?	

3.4 Stage 2 – assessing together

3.4.1 What do we mean by assessing together?

Assessing together is a means to analyse environmental assets and environmental issues in a participatory way. It entails:

- providing the necessary training and support to enable Community Mobilisers to carry out a

participatory assessment;

- finding out what are the specific environmental issues within the community in order to plan better responses; and
- beginning to mobilise the community for environmental action.

3.4.2 Why do we assess together?

Assessing together helps to:

- build general community awareness, knowledge and understanding of environment-related issues and possible solutions to address some of these;
- provide detailed information about environmental issues in the community for planning together (see Stage 3);
- enable specific community groups to share knowledge and ideas which helps develop appropriate and effective interventions;
- build relationships with and between stakeholders;
- build an understanding of the perspectives of different community members and committees, as relevant;
- build community ownership of the process, which increases the effectiveness and sustainability of the CEAP process;
- strengthen skills and the capacity of community members in the assessment team;
- build self-esteem and confidence among community members;
- contribute to the impetus for community action; and
- build trust between stakeholders.

3.4.3 How do we assess together?

In order to allow people to analyse and fully learn about their situation, step by step participatory environmental assessments will use several participatory tools at the same time. When one or several tools are used together in a sequence, in one sitting, this constitutes a “CEAP session”.

Involving different stakeholders in mapping the community helps to begin to build relationships. Where possible, it is useful to involve members of the local population as some of the facilitators in the process. It also helps to enable the meaningful involvement of these groups in the next steps.

CEAP sessions should be carefully planned so that participants get the most out of them. In order to do this, it helps if the CEAP team considers the following, in advance:

- what are the objectives of the assessment and the session?
- what issues need to be explored in more detail?
- what main leading questions do we have?
- what PLA tools might we use?
- who needs to be included in the participatory assessment session? Where to do the assessment? Do we need to get around in the community, or can we meet in one place?
- when to do the assessment? Is this a good season to assess and discuss this issue? If not, do we need to do a deeper analysis in a different season?
- what materials and resources will be required?

Communities assessing together

Each community is different in their environmental assets, environmental problems and in its awareness and understanding of environmental management.

For this reason the way the participatory environmental assessment (Assessing Together) stage is carried out can be different in each community. However, there are four main elements that are helpful to include in each CEAP participatory assessment process:

- I. Analyse and discuss what is there: take stock of what exists in the community in terms of natural resources, environmental and livelihoods assets, as well as issues;
- II. Build a positive vision of how the community wants their environment to be in the future, meaning what they want to get through community action;
- III. Analyse issues in depth to build a good understanding of environmental dynamics, and to understand how things are interconnected and what are the root causes of some of the environmental issues might be.
- IV. Explore a range of options to improve environmental management and restoration of environmental resources in the community.

3.4.4 Some tools used in assessing together

A summary of some of the most commonly used CEAP assessment tools is provided below. The decision which tools a facilitator ends up using at which point in time should, however, be handled freely and always according to needs.

Tools

- PLA tools are intended to be used for a specific purpose, not just for the sake of using them.
- A facilitator should be able to identify which questions need to be discussed at what part of the process, based on which s/he can select the tool(s) likely to best serve that purpose.
- At the same time, facilitators also need to be ready for surprises as a PLA session can easily develop its own dynamics! A discussion that may have started on one issue may turn to a completely different subject or direction. If this happens, it can be good to allow it to develop but observe attentively. It shows what people feel is important to discuss. If there is a need to explore the initial subject in more depth, it is still possible to lead the discussion back to it at a later stage, or in a follow-up session.

Stakeholder analysis

A **Stakeholder Analysis** is most important in the starting phase of a CEAP process in order to get an overview of the stakeholders in the community. More detailed analysis can be conducted on individual environmental issues during the assessing phase, particularly if there are conflicting interests between groups. A Stakeholder Analysis can be started in the form of a **Venn Diagram**, collecting and reflecting all stakeholders and discussing their interests and influence.

Lead questions to explore in involving community stakeholders	Possible tools
Who are all the primary community stakeholders?	Secondary sources of information, such as newspapers, maps and government or NGO reports Well-being Mapping
Who are all the secondary stakeholders?	Problem Tree or Cause and Effect Diagram Card Sorting Stakeholder Participation Matrix Snowballing
When to involve different stakeholders, e.g. in assessing, planning and/or implementing. What level of decision-making each stakeholder will have and who they need to communicate with.	Stakeholder participation matrix
Lead questions to explore in deciding who to work with and on what	Possible tools
Collecting together all the rapid assessment information.	Card Sorting Assessment Summary Matrix
Identifying desired changes	Solution Tree SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints) analysis Vision Diagram
Timing activities appropriately.	Seasonal Calendar Division of Labour Chart Stakeholder Participation Matrix
Making a basic activity plan.	Action Planning

Mapping

Community maps are an excellent way to assess and discuss a large range of issues. Mapping is also a good entry tool to learn about the basic characteristics of a community. A community mapping session involves asking the community to create a map of their village and surrounding landscapes. Using materials which can be moved around has, compared with drawing a map on paper, the advantage that the community can discuss the location, number and size of elements and change them as often as necessary until people agree.

Mapping often starts with asking the community to describe their boundaries, the main physical features and where people live. A great diversity of issues can then be explored, discussed and mapped on this basis – natural resource use dynamics, resource user groups, conflicts and links between these. If maps are done in parallel by different sub-groups, e.g. by gender or age, the result can be particularly educating, when presented and discussed with the other group.

Mapping can be used repeatedly in a CEAP process. Different maps can look at different details – focusing on particular issues, marking changes, discussing details or developing a vision for the future. The map itself does not need to be beautiful and representative. The most important result is the discussions that take place during the use of the tool.

Lead questions for mapping	Possible tools
Community boundaries and landmarks Important places in the community. Views on the boundaries of the community. Different groups in the community.	Mapping: Community Resource Mapping and Mobility Mapping, Household Mapping, Transect Walks, Seasonal Calendar
Services and resources Services, organisations, service-providers, non-governmental and community-based organisations, religious groups, and so forth in the community. Important gaps in services in the community.	Mapping: Community Resource Mapping and Mobility Mapping, Household Mapping, Transect Walks, Problem Tree or Cause and Effect Diagram, Division of Labour Chart, Matrix Scoring
Natural resources context Key concerns, and levels of concern, about the environment in the community.	Problem Tree or Cause and Effect Diagram, Matrix Scoring
Past and present action on environmental issues in the community.	Seasonal Calendar
Areas of action on environmental issues to which the non- governmental or community-based organisation might contribute	Assessment Summary Matrix, Feasibility Matrix, Impact Matrix, Sustainability Matrix

Resource use dynamics

Analysing resource use dynamics is not a tool, but rather a process. Dynamics in resource use are explored not only through one tool, but through a combination of maps, Venn Diagrams, Seasonal Calendars and others. Understanding resource use patterns can take several PLA sessions.

It is important to involve community members who actively use or rely on natural resources, so that they can each explore strategies of use and conservation. Often, different groups use resources in different ways. In this case, it can be useful to work in smaller groups and have them present their analysis to each other for discussion.

Lead questions to explore in relation to natural resources	Possible tools
Ethnic and socio-economic groups in the community. Size of populations.	Secondary sources of information, such as reports, maps, newspapers and so forth.
Livelihood patterns	Seasonal Calendar
Living and working patterns of populations.	Mobility Mapping and Community Resource Mapping Household Mapping Division of Labour Chart
The relationships between populations and other communities (e.g. mobile populations such as pastoralists).	Mobility Mapping and Community Resource Mapping Measuring Empowerment
Key services and gaps in services. Key gatekeepers. Current or planned environmental activities taking place in the community or area.	Matrix Scoring
Who are the most vulnerable?	Well-being Mapping Measuring Empowerment
Numbers of households/people affected by the environmental issue/s	Secondary sources of information, such as reports, maps, newspapers and so forth. Well-being Mapping
Networks and support groups for people	Mobility Mapping and Community Resource Mapping Measuring Empowerment
Key gatekeepers, Key services and gaps in services. Current or planned environmental activities taking place in the community or area.	Matrix Scoring

Venn diagrams

Similar to maps, **Venn Diagrams** can be used to explore and discuss a range of issues. They can also take many different forms and shapes to describe relationships, conflicts, power, economic connections and the importance of different elements. Venn Diagrams are also particularly useful when they show dynamics, such as the flow of resources, the flow of information and decision making interactions.

It is always important to do a Venn Diagram with movable cards, so that the diagram can be changed, as desired, according to discussions of the relationships between its elements.

Time line

Time lines are a flexible and diverse tool that can be used to discuss issues such as one's personal life, a career or the development of an organisation or a project. Time lines can vary quite considerably in format, from a simple line to an illustrated picture or to a diagram that shows the ups and lows of different aspects.

Time lines can be used in most stages of a CEAP, whenever you want to better understand and know people's perceptions about how or why something happened and developed in the past.

Transect walks

Transect walks are an excellent way to triangulate and get a visual impression of issues that matter to the community. A transect walk is often done by a group of people walking in a straight, randomly chosen, line from one end of the community to the other. Those doing the walk should be prepared to stop, talk and ask questions of people they might meet. It can confirm things that were previously discussed and it can also raise new questions and stimulate new discussions.

What is triangulation?

Triangulation means to look at an issue from different perspectives. Practically it means to cross-check findings of assessments by looking at the same questions with the help of different tools.

For example, the use of firewood in a community can be assessed through a discussion with stakeholders, but then it can also be visualised as part of a mapping exercise and looked at in reality during a transect walk. In addition, secondary information such as statistics from the forestry department can also be checked.

Seasonal calendar

A seasonal calendar is usually used to assess seasonal work at the household level and provide insights into livelihoods. Facilitators may also use this tool to explore seasonal issues related to the environment: In which season are particular resources used or grown? What coping strategies do people practice in the lean season? When is labour available to engage in community activities?

Separate calendars might also be elaborated to differentiate the seasonal workload of women and men, or of different stakeholder groups.

Root causes and problem trees

Problem trees are a powerful tool to explore the root causes of existing problems. By identifying

root causes, we can think of activities that might improve the situation by asking: “What causes this? Why are you facing this problem? What else may be contributing to this? Is this connected to any other dynamic?” The facilitator should encourage the community to discuss interrelations between different features of natural resource use and smaller causes and practices that eventually result in larger problems. An important result of a root cause analysis is that it breaks big problems down into a number of smaller issues, which are easier to tackle.

Solution trees

Turning the smaller root causes of a problem tree into “root solutions” helps identify a large variety of actions that can be taken to contribute to resolve a problem effectively. Most problems in natural resource management are difficult to approach with one solution only and need to be approached with a combination of measures. Combining different activities leads to a strategy to restore or manage a natural resource in a sustainable way. These strategies are an important element in a CEAP as they help the community keep their vision on the bigger picture and consider environmental interrelations and side effects.



When conducting a CEAP it is important to sometimes, initially at least, deal separately with men and women, or with refugees and the host population. Gradually, however, the objective should be to bring such groups together to present findings and recommendations from different working groups and to shape a future vision for that community. (Photo: UNEP)

Visioning

Visioning is a very powerful tool to consider opportunities and build a positive vision for the future. It may be applied earlier or later in the process and facilitators can use it to “brighten up” the process, if stuck repetitively on the same problems. Visioning by sub-groups can provide exciting insights into the preferences and needs of different community groups, e.g. women, men, youth or different livelihood groups.

Feasibility

A feasibility assessment is an important step, between Assessing and Planning in CEAP. A simple way to discuss indicative feasibility is by visualising activities as High or Low Hanging Fruit. A more thorough way is by using a matrix with different criteria of feasibility – cost, technical expertise or materials available, for example.

Prioritisation

Prioritisation also falls between assessing and planning. It may need to be repeated at different stages, e.g. prioritising between strategies (most important environmental issue to address) and prioritising between different activities within a strategy. There are different options for prioritisation, the most thorough being matrix ranking with agreed criteria.

3.4.5 Recording the results

The participatory assessment phase is likely to have identified many environmental issues. It is useful for the assessment and community mobilisation teams to collect all this information together and sort it into more manageable amounts. A good way to do this is to separate the information by assessment objectives and context. For example, sort the environmental preservation information together, then separate this into information on the household, community, natural resources, services and supplies and laws and policy contexts.

It is important to have an accurate record of the different participatory sessions conducted in order to use the findings for planning together. Original maps and diagrams drawn by the community should remain with them or be held in care by the assessment team if the former request it. Since it was the community who carried out the assessment, the findings belong to them. This will encourage ownership of the assessment findings by the community. Taking digital photographs is a quick and easy way to capture outputs of community discussions made with local materials, and is also useful for documentation backup. Some flipcharts may need to be typed for reporting purposes, but could also be inserted as pictures, for simplicity and to save time.

The CEAP team will also need to keep its own records of the assessment – both information about environmental issues as well as lessons learned about how the methods were used and with what effect. Annex VII of the CEAP Facilitator's Guide provides a sample of a note-taking form that can be used to help organise information for this purpose.

Having a folder for each CEAP process is a good idea to keep notes and pictures accessible at any time. Each session may be recorded in such a folder, with the preparation sheet, the documentation sheet, a copy of notes and main photographs of the session.

Verifying the findings

When the PLA sessions have been done, it is important to make sure that the information accurately reflects the views of the different groups within the community. A good way to do this is to present preliminary findings to the community who can then decide and say whether the assessment reflects their issues and the environmental situation accurately or not. Where it does not, this needs to be re-analysed and amended. This is called verification.

Feedback sessions can be facilitated in many different ways, for example community members or mobilisers who participated in the participatory assessment sessions can present the findings, perhaps using some of the original flip charts or pictures. Findings can best be summarised in simple graphics or pictures.

Checklist: assessing together

Remember in assessing together:	✓
Have we formed a team of facilitators that includes community members?	
Have we provided training for facilitators to help develop appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes and values for the assessment?	
Are all facilitators confident about their role in the assessment?	
Have we identified the objectives of each PLA session?	
Have we matched issues to explore with tools to explore them?	
Have we made a plan for your PLA sessions: Who? When? Where? How?	
Does the community have records of the PLA sessions?	
Do we have our own records?	
Have we given feedback and verified the findings with the community?	

3.5 Stage 3 – planning together

3.5.1 What do we mean by planning together?

Planning together means deciding how we and the community will respond together to address the different problems and issues identified during the participatory assessment. Following this review of the current situation, the most urgent problems and needs are then prioritised. Strategies are later elaborated to address these issues depending on their feasibility, impact and sustainability.

Planning together also involves deciding how these strategies will be put into action. The community then needs to agree the practical details of who will do what, how and when.

An important point of planning is the need and provision of resources: What assets and resources exist in the community? What external resources might be needed? We also need to decide how we will monitor in the future.

Planning together helps the community to answer the following key questions:

- What shall we do about the environmental situation?
- How shall we do it – what strategies will help address environmental issues in our community?
- Who will do it?
- When will we do it?
- How will we measure our progress towards achieving our objectives?

3.5.2 Why do we plan together?

Planning together helps to:

- develop a shared vision and sense of purpose in the community of how they can deal with environmental issues by giving all stakeholders a chance to influence how things will be done;
- use people's experience and knowledge to select the most appropriate strategies to respond to problems raised during the assessment;
- inform and interest community members and stakeholders in the intervention;
- co-ordinate the involvement of all stakeholders;
- make sure that planned activities are appropriate for the community and the groups within it;
- build community ownership and control of the plan;
- clarify and help balance expectations within the community regarding the plan; and
- assist with the effective and efficient use of assets and resources.

3.5.3 How do we plan together?

Identify priorities for change

Due to available capacity, it may not be possible to tackle all of the root causes at once. So it is helpful at this stage to decide with the community which root problems are most important for them to focus on. Questions to help prioritise problems include:

- **How serious is the problem?** For example, does the problem impact many people in the community? Does it have a severe impact on affected people?
- **The potential seriousness of a problem** may be important to consider, i.e. whether the problem is likely to grow if it is not addressed.
- **How worried is the community?** If the community is particularly worried about a problem they are more likely to take action to address it. If the community is not so worried, a problem may be a low priority, or it may only affect a small proportion of the population who should nonetheless, be consulted for their opinions.
- **Are there gaps in current actions to address the problem?** Are other organisations already addressing the problem? Are their activities effective or not?

Setting Objectives

Before looking at what will be done, it is important to first agree where the community wants to go and what environmental improvements and impacts people want to achieve. These are the **objectives**.

Objectives are important because they provide a framework for planning, acting and monitoring together. Deciding on objectives together provides an opportunity for stakeholders to develop a sense of shared purpose.

A relatively easy and energising tool that helps to discuss and agree on objectives is **Visioning**. A vision diagram can help elaborate an overall aim – for example, obtaining high cereal yields in areas that are now infertile – which summarises the broad change that the community wants to make and see in the longer term.

Another way of defining objectives can be by returning to the **Solution Tree**. In this, the objectives are a realistic summary of what the community wants to achieve by addressing their priorities.

SMART objectives

- Clear and precise objectives are often described as “SMART” objectives. These are:
- **Specific** – an objective that describes exactly what will be achieved;
- **Measurable** – is it possible to measure whether the objective has been reached or not?
- **Achievable** – an objective should be realistic and do-able;
- **Relevant** – it should contribute to achieving the overall aim; and
- **Time bound** – an objective should have a clear indication by when it should be reached.
- Answering the following questions as precisely as possible helps to develop SMART objectives:
 - What will change as a result?
 - Who are the target groups?
 - How much will change?
 - Where will the change take place?
 - When will the activity be completed/the objective be achieved?

Identifying Strategies

Once the objectives are set, the community can then decide what **strategies** will be used to reach them.

A CEAP strategy is in very general terms the way by which a community can achieve a desired change or objective. A strategy usually combines different activities and management options. Often there are different strategies available to reach an objective, and the community can choose which is the most suitable, or whether a combined strategy may work best. A strategy to reduce deforestation, for example, may include a combination of using fuel-efficient stoves, planting woodlots and constructing with stabilised soil blocks that do not require firing.

Strategies can be identified by looking at each of the root solutions that were identified through the **Problem Tree/Solution Tree** exercise and discussing how effective, sustainable and feasible it will be to realise each solution.

If different strategies are identified, the community needs to select the most suitable that will achieve their objectives. Important questions to consider when selecting strategies include:

- **How feasible is the strategy?** For example, does the organisation and the community have the capacity and experience to implement the strategy? Are the necessary resources available or likely to become available? How acceptable is the strategy to different stakeholders, including community members, gatekeepers and other stakeholders? Can community members actively participate in the strategy?
- **What impact is the strategy likely to have?** How many people will the strategy reach? How intensively will the strategy work with people? How well does the strategy target resources to the people most affected by a problem?
- **How sustainable is the strategy likely to be?** For example, will the community be able and willing to take responsibility for the strategy in the future? Will the impact of the strategy continue after activities have finished?

3.5.4 The CEAP Plan

The details documented in the CEAP plan will depend a lot on what and how much will be done. The more difficult and complex the CEAP objectives and activities are, the more detail should be defined. Many activities – if we think them through thoroughly – turn out to be composed of different steps. In order not to forget anything important, it is good to write down the steps clearly in the plan and record responsibilities, timing and assets and inputs for every step.

It is very important to not only consider steps that are needed to do an activity for the first time, but also to discuss and record the follow-up, maintenance and management of the activity.

A possible format of a CEAP plan is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Example of Initial Contents to Start the CEAP Process

Objective: 40 hectares of rangeland and woodland rehabilitated through training, capacity building and improved governance					
Strategy: Community representatives will be trained in participatory approaches to encourage and enable land-owners, pastoralists and other key resource users to practise more sustainable approaches to natural resource use and management					
What will we do?	When will it be done?	Who will be responsible?	Who will be involved in the practical work?	What assets and resources will we use?	Has it been done?
STEP 1: COMMUNITY SELECTION AND MOBILISATION					
Team preparation: meeting to define intent and sketch out next steps	April-May	NGO representatives contacted by community leaders;	NGO; facilitator	Meeting spaces; PLA Toolkit; and Handbook	✓
Consultation: government and village leaders/ elders	June	NGO; community leaders;	NGO; facilitator	Transport logistics	✓
Community meeting	July	NGO; community leaders; facilitator	Elders; NGO; facilitator	Village maps; awareness posters (translated)	✓
Selection of community mobilisers	July-August	NGO; community leaders; facilitator	NGO; facilitator		Ongoing
...					
STEP 2: TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING					

Identify potential trainers	July-August	NGO; facilitator	NGO; facilitator	PLA Toolkit	✓
Prepare training materials	July-August	Facilitator; NGO	NGO; facilitator	PLA Handbook and Toolkit; Facilitator's Guide	Ongoing
Organise training events	July-August	NGO; facilitator			
...					
STEP 3: COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS AND DRAFT PLAN					
Community focus group discussions	September-October	NGO; facilitator			
Community mapping	October				
...					

Consideration may also be given to the following:

What additional support do we need?

When we discuss the assets and resources that will be needed, some are unlikely to be available within the community itself. This could relate to knowledge, skills, materials or special equipment. To get these additional inputs is often at some cost, but also involves work, for example to organise training and support, to buy and bring inputs, to make contracts for special services and for equipment that needs to be hired. These additional needs should be reflected as steps in the plan under the respective activity.

Costs of activities

Discussing the cost of activities with a community can be difficult. Costs for inputs which are not locally available are often not known and the accumulated costs can sometimes look daunting. However, CEAP facilitators and committee members should have an idea of the costs that are involved. This can be seen as background work that needs to be done by the supporting organisation. Facilitators from the supporting organisation can, for this purpose, work with a copy of the CEAP plan and add a separate column for costs.

Mobilising funding and brokering support

Securing additional external funds and technical support is a very important task for CEAP facilitators and the supporting organisation(s). Where funding for implementation is scarce, it is important to evaluate different options and look for external support: Are there government programmes that support this kind of activity? Are there non-governmental actors that work in this area? Are there different service providers that offer support at different prices? Can small community loans or grants be accessed? Are there environmental funding mechanisms that can be tapped for these activities?



This element of work by CEAP facilitators is very important and can take a considerable amount of time and effort that should not be underestimated. It also requires a sound technical understanding of the matter by the facilitators, so that they can validate different options for their cost-effectiveness, quality, feasibility and sustainability.

3.5.5 Activities

To define what activities and steps are needed to achieve an objective requires the community to be clear on how they want to do things, which is the essence of the strategy. Depending on the size and complexity of the objectives, activities can then be discussed and planned in as much detail as the community feels necessary.

Lead questions for deciding what to do	Possible tools
What information do we have/ how much do we know about the issue?	Card Sorting, Assessment Summary Matrix
What are the underlying causes/root causes of the problem we want to address?	Root Cause Analysis (Problem Tree)
What options do we have to change something for the better?	Solution Tree
Which of these options will be most effective to have the desired positive change?	Impact Matrix, Sustainability Matrix
Which activities can we realistically realise and where should we start?	Feasibility Matrix, High and Low Hanging Fruit
What are our larger aims / objectives?	Writing Aims and Objectives, Solution/ Objective Tree, Vision Diagram
How can we maintain our achievements? What management do we need?	Make management and maintenance an integral part of the CEAP plan

When will we do it?

We now need to prioritise and order each of the planned activities. When deciding when to do our activities we need to consider the following:

- which tasks are the most important?
- which tasks are the most urgent?
- what is the most logical sequence of activities?
- what resources – physical and financial – do we have available?
- when are people available?

Prioritising helps to get activities into a broad order, within a larger timeframe: less important activities can be considered to be addressed in year two or three, for example, or might be postponed. Placing the planned activities on a timeline can help reveal if plans are realistic or if we are trying to do too much. It can also help us identify if additional resources will be required.

For those activities that have been prioritised a more detailed time plan needs to be made, covering a period that is easy for the community to work with – maybe a year or six months. For this, seasonal considerations are very important, considering people’s workloads, access and so forth.

Lead questions for timing	Possible Tools
Which tasks are the most important? Which tasks are the most urgent?	Matrix Scoring, Timeline
What is the most logical sequence of activities?	Card Sorting
When will each activity take place? How realistic are our plans? When are people available? What additional resources are required?	Seasonal Calendar Action Planning

Who will do it?

Once it is agreed what, and how, it should be done, the community now needs to consider who will implement the activities.

It is helpful to list all activities related to each strategy, i.e. the planning, implementing, managing and evaluating components. Someone also needs to take overall responsibility for the strategy. Some activities will likely be the responsibility of more than one individual or group. Remember, if a stakeholder is not present when their roles and responsibilities are being discussed, they must be fully consulted before plans are finalised.

It may be helpful to combine this process with a review of participation in the community mobilisation process, ensuring that all stakeholders have an appropriate opportunity to be involved. Reviewing or creating a Stakeholder Participation Matrix may help with this task. It is also possible that the timing of CEAP activities limits the participation of some stakeholders. If this is the case, it can help to discuss the timing once more to try and accommodate the schedules of important stakeholders.

Lead questions on who will do things	Possible tools
Which activities need to be done for the chosen strategy? Who will do each activity?	Stakeholder Participation Matrix, Action Planning

What assets and inputs will be used needed?

This is a good moment to come back to the community asset map(s) and develop it/them further. Often communities only map visible physical and natural assets and ignore – or choose not to include – others such as:

- **human capacities and assets:** Is there some prior knowledge about the planned activities within the community? Who from the community could serve as resource persons? Can some people offer their time for labour?
- **social assets:** Are there already associations or committees or youth and other groups in the community who can help mobilise people? Is there a tradition to do communal work and, if so, how does this operate? Has there been previous experience in community mobilisation for joint work? Was the experience positive and are people confident that the a sufficient work-force will participate on a voluntary basis?
- **financial assets:** Do some committees have savings or revolving funds that could support certain activities? Do committees have access to loans? Do committees have financial management skills and a bank account?
- **technical assets:** Are some of the materials and tools needed available in the community? Does the community know where to borrow or hire other necessary equipment?
- **natural assets:** What natural assets exist that can help improve/rehabilitate the environment? This could be rangeland or forests where seeds for pasture recovery can be found, or natural resources that can be used for livelihoods support and income generation in a durable way?

Even if community assets seem limited, it is good to build on them in the CEAP, looking at how these can then be strengthened, e.g. through focused training.

Lead questions for assets and additional support	Possible Tools
What can we build on? Who has good knowledge of this matter in the community? Who has successfully done this before?	Community Mapping, Transect Walks, Stakeholder Analysis, Focus Group Discussions
Where can we find additional support, if needed? Do we know government projects or NGOs who support this? Can we get access to funding for this?	Discussions and assigning tasks and responsibilities to mobilise support in the action plan

How will everybody know what we have planned?

When the CEAP plan has been drawn up, those who took part in the exercise know it. But what about the wider community? This is when the CEAP Committee and CEAP mobilisers have another essential role to play as the plan needs to be presented and made accessible to all members of a community to allow them the opportunity of asking questions and proposing changes.

Make the CEAP Plan known and seen!



If there is a suitable and prominent space, the CEAP plan – or a copy of it – should be openly displayed within the community. Like this, it can also serve for monitoring and to celebrate achievements!

Consider whether some traditional ways of advertising might be viable, for example wall paintings, or songs through which the community vision can be promoted?

How will we measure our progress?

When it is agreed who will do what, when and with what resources, it is useful to look at how the community will measure that we are doing what was planned, i.e. that things are happening on time and we are progressing towards our objectives.

By regularly asking these questions we can adjust our plans and activities according to how work is progressing. This is called monitoring.

Monitoring in CEAP is often quite straight forward and can be done by the community and committee members. Planning monitoring activities together enables communities to take shared responsibility. It increases their willingness to use monitoring information, e.g. to improve activities, while also increasing stakeholders' accountability to each other.

In order to monitor CEAP activities we need to identify signs – indicators – that things are happening as planned (see Stage 5 for further details).

Lead questions for monitoring and follow-up	Possible Tools
Who will check if this was done?	Regular Community Meetings
Where will we note it and let everybody see our progress?	Community notice board
Where can we find additional support, if needed?	Discussions and assigning tasks and responsibilities to mobilise support in the action plan
Do we know government projects or NGOs who support this?	
Can we get access to funding for this?	

Checklist: planning together

Remember in planning together	✓
Have we collected and sorted all of the assessment information?	
Have we identified root causes to at least the main problems?	
Have we identified priorities for change?	
Have we agreed aims and objectives for mobilisation?	
Are the CEAP objectives SMART?	
Have we selected strategies that are feasible, sustainable and are going to have a positive impact on the environment?	
Have we identified people who will participate in each task or activity?	
Have we identified who will take responsibility for the completion of each task/ activity?	
Have we identified when each activity will take place?	
Have we written an action plan encompassing the activities?	
Have we identified indicators for each activity?	
Have we included regular monitoring review meetings in the action plan?	

3.6 Stage 4 – acting together

3.6.1 What do we mean by acting together?

Acting together means to implement what the community has now planned and to co-ordinate CEAP activities with other stakeholders and projects, as relevant. It also means to try and address any difficulties which may arise during implementation. Doing this together helps to stay motivated and manage expectations.

While good planning is important in CEAP, the plan is never an end by itself. Putting plans into action and achieving tangible environmental improvements is the main objective of every CEAP process.

Acting together helps to:

- build the skills and capacity of community members to address environmental issues so that they can later address them by themselves;
- develop community ownership of CEAP achievements – things that took effort to achieve are often better maintained;
- build relationships between different stakeholders and co-ordinate the efforts of different stakeholders;

- use learning to improve the quality and effectiveness of CEAP strategies and activities, and
- solve day-to-day problems.

3.6.2 Doing what was planned

The activity plan is the guiding framework for the CEAP process. It helps people remain focused on the purpose of each activity. Carefully made plans will describe who will do what, and where and when they will do it.

Thorough preparation

Each activity needs to be carefully prepared and should be done with meaningful community participation. Preparation means getting ready to do an activity and then making sure that the resources and people are in place to carry it out. For example, some plans may involve providing basic training which will require identifying trainers and participants, preparing training content, inviting participants, planning a budget, arranging logistics and hosting the event(s).

Meaningful community participation

Those most affected by environmental issues should continue to play a leading role in the implementation of activities. If the most affected members of a community are not yet able to lead, they should at least participate meaningfully. It is only through their active and influential participation that the community as a whole will be able to develop its capacity to sustain positive changes.

Follow-up

Build on the results of each activity. For example, follow-up on training is likely to include providing ongoing support to newly trained community members and possibly additional training in the future. It is unusual for a once-off activity such as a single training event to be very effective.

3.6.3 Analysing Problems Together

Challenges and problems

Plans are only a guiding framework and may need to be adapted as work is carried out. Acting together will bring challenges and problems that need to be solved together. Some activities may be harder to carry out than expected. There may be obstacles that were not foreseen during planning. Conditions may change or an activity may not produce the results that were expected. Identifying and responding to problems quickly will help find solutions and prevent small problems growing into bigger ones.

Sharing experiences can often help solve problems. Community members and other stakeholders carrying out activities are likely to benefit from regular opportunities to discuss issues with people who face similar challenges. Using participatory tools (such as a Vision Diagram) with peer groups can help find solutions to day-to-day challenges.

Some problems may be harder to understand or it may be difficult to see why an activity is not producing the expected results. For example, the activity may not be appropriate for its purpose, or there may be unforeseen barriers to carrying it out. It is important to take time to identify the root causes of the problem so that the community and the CEAP team can find effective solutions.

Possible tools for meeting challenges and problem solving can include **Measuring Empowerment, Stakeholder Participation Matrix, Problem Tree** or **Cause and Effect Diagram, Solution Tree** or **SWOC analysis**.

Problem stakeholders

Participatory work often involves shifts in the balances of power between stakeholders. This can be unpopular with some stakeholders as they may feel they are losing authority or status. Measuring what empowers and disempowers people can help avoid this. Others may feel that they have been unfairly excluded from the benefits of the activities. They may even try to sabotage the CEAP process.

The involvement of all stakeholders from the outset may help reduce sabotage by providing constructive channels for people to participate. Similarly, a participatory approach will promote transparency, which will help avoid misunderstandings about potential benefits of the activities.

3.6.4 Co-ordinating Activities with Other Stakeholders

Co-ordination

Building a response to environmental issues brings together many stakeholders. Good co-ordination by the community mobilisation team improves the effectiveness of activities and helps use resources efficiently. Co-ordination between stakeholders also encourages networking, collaboration and the sharing of skills and experiences. This can be encouraged by:

- **establishing good communication channels** between stakeholders, e.g. regular meetings, one-to-one communication, posters and written reports;
- **planning activities together and combining resources** to implement these, where appropriate;
- **discussing progress, challenges and achievements** in order to learn from our experiences and adapt plans as necessary; and
- **establishing effective co-ordination mechanisms.** These often involve committees formed by representatives of different stakeholder groups. It is preferable to work with existing committees wherever possible rather than setting up parallel groups. If a committee has been inactive, efforts to revive it should address the reasons why it has not functioned well in the past. Committees are most effective if their role is clearly understood and it is important to make sure that committee members communicate well with the people they represent. Existing committees may not represent all sectors of the community and it may be necessary to negotiate the inclusion of some new stakeholders.

3.6.5 Staying Motivated and Managing Expectations

After assessing and planning together, communities are likely to make an enthusiastic start and have high expectations. It may, however, take some time before results become visible.

Genuine ownership of the CEAP process is essential for motivation. As community action starts to show results, this will help motivate people to continue their efforts. However, it can be hard to maintain enthusiasm in the early days when people's efforts are not rewarded quickly. The support of small **quick impact projects**, such as repairing a hand pump, is useful in this respect.

Regular opportunities to discuss any frustrations or problems will help maintain interest in activities and address any unrealistic expectations. They also provide an opportunity to adjust plans, if necessary. Regular communication and co-ordination between different stakeholders also enables people to talk about their activities and receive recognition for their efforts.

To keep the momentum going, it is helpful to publicly recognise the community's achievements, for example, through a small celebration. Opportunities to learn new skills and increase the

effectiveness of activities may also help motivate sustained action. Building links with organisations outside of the community – such as regional and national networks – provides a wider opportunity to share experiences, receive recognition for community-led actions and participate in larger scale change.

Encouraging good community leadership

Acting effectively together can be greatly helped by good leadership. There are many different types of leadership, but experience has shown that communities most able to mobilise have leaders with some of the characteristics shown below.



A CEAP process will invariably identify a number of common tasks which need to be undertaken by groups of people, for example establish and maintaining a nursery (which might be the responsibility of some members of a community) followed later by transplanting and seedling aftercare – tasks which might be assigned to others in that community. (Photo: UNEP)

Leadership for CEAP

Communities most able to mobilise effectively have leadership characterised by the ability to:

- include both formal and informal leaders;
- provide direction and structure for participants;
- encourage participation from a diverse network of community participants;
- implement procedures for ensuring active participation during group meetings and events;
- facilitate the sharing of information and resources by participants and organisations;
- shape and cultivate the development of new leaders;
- cultivate a responsive and accessible style;
- focus on both task and process details;
- be receptive to innovation and risk-taking; and
- be connected to other leaders.

Source: Adapted from Goodman et al (1998)

Where such skills do not exist, CEAP can include a leadership programme as an activity to build this capacity in new or existing leaders. At the same time, if existing leaders feel their power is threatened by participatory approaches the CEAP process can be used to clarify and address such concerns. This will help leaders realise that they do not have to give up their leadership role. Rather, they may benefit from adapting a new leadership style.

CEAP committees

Supporting CEAP implementation and leadership can happen through committees. A CEAP Committee is a group of people comprising representatives from community members and other stakeholders who will guide the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action plan. Sub-committees might also be established to manage specific components of a CEAP, for example water or forest resources.

CEAP Committees should represent different social groups from within the community, so that every interest is represented. General roles associated with such committees might be to:

- co-ordinate the efforts of different stakeholders to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the CEAP;
- solve day-to-day problems;
- provide leadership for the CEAP;
- monitor progress at the activity and management levels;
- keep the community informed of progress; and
- evaluate the results and impacts, together with the broader community.

Checklist: acting together

Remember – Acting together	✓
Are we adequately prepared to carry out each activity and task?	
Are the most affected community members participating meaningfully in the process?	
Have we planned follow-up and support for community members to mobilise?	
Have we planned opportunities for community members to share experiences and address common problems?	
Have we addressed issues regarding any changes in the balance of power in the community?	
Have we developed effective mechanisms for community communication and co-ordination?	
Are we holding regular review meetings to monitor progress?	
Have we planned activities to keep up community motivation and momentum?	
Are we building the capacity of community leadership?	

3.7 Stage 5 – monitoring and evaluating together

3.7.1 What do we mean by Monitoring and Evaluating together?

Monitoring and evaluating together helps us to assess the progress we are making towards our vision and objectives. Monitoring and evaluating often overlap: they answer some similar questions (albeit on a different timescale) and some of the same tools can be used for each.

Monitoring is a regular check to see if the activities and projects managed by the community are on track, or if corrections are needed. Monitoring should be a routine process.

Evaluation is where the community – or perhaps some external expertise – looks at the achievements to date and verifies whether they are technically sound and effective and fulfil the expectations of those people intended to benefit from them. Evaluation also helps see if bigger changes are needed, or whether we need to scale-up. It is important for the community to identify additional activities that may be needed and to learn from past experiences.

Monitoring and evaluating in a participatory manner, with direct involvement of the community, helps to assess the progress we are making towards our aims and objectives. It enables us to:

- answer important questions, such as:
- how well are we doing?
- how far are we from meeting the aims and objectives we have set?
- are we doing the right things?

- what difference are we making?
- what do we need to change about what we are doing or how we are doing it?
- prove whether or not we have achieved the community's aims and objectives;
- improve our effectiveness by helping to identify strengths and weaknesses in our activities;
- revise and adjust strategies to make them more effective;
- improve our understanding of how to do CEAPs by identifying what works and what does not and why;
- keep people informed about our activities;
- motivate community facilitators and other stakeholders to continue their efforts;
- ensure accountability to different stakeholders; and
- attract more resources by showing that our activities are effective.

Encouraging participatory monitoring and evaluation

Community members are usually busy. Gathering information for monitoring and evaluation may not seem like a priority compared with doing the planned activities. The following ideas can help motivate community members to monitor and evaluate.

- Enable people to identify the benefits of monitoring and evaluation.
- Enable people to identify their own indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Find out what indicates success to them – what matters to them.
- Make sure that stakeholders are fully involved in all aspects of monitoring and evaluation, not just in collecting information.
- Keep monitoring and evaluation simple and easy.
- Use all the information that is collected.
- Do not collect information that will not be used.
- Share the results of monitoring and evaluation regularly and often so people can see the progress they are making.

3.7.2 How do we monitor and evaluate together?

Monitoring activities is quite straight forward. If well planned, it is simple to follow if activities are on track and if the community and partners take action as agreed. CEAP committees or technical sub-committees can usually monitor the process.

Monitoring is not only a way of management – it can also serve as motivation, if progress is communicated or made visible to the community. If delays occur, it can also be important that the reasons for them are explained to the wider community.

Some of the main steps to consider are outlined below.

Set clear objectives

The basis for good monitoring and evaluation starts at a very early stage of the CEAP process, when communities agree on the objective they want to achieve. If we are not clear about what we want to achieve we cannot measure our achievements.

Know the baseline

To measure change, we need to compare two different situations: that in the beginning when we started and the situation once CEAP activities started or have been completed. The starting situation is called the “baseline”. Getting good baseline data, against which we can later measure change, can be a challenge but it is nonetheless essential to try and do this. Typical baseline data might include information on the state of certain natural resources in the community (e.g. forest cover, rate of deforestation or soil erosion) or the state of people’s livelihoods as this relates to natural resource use.

A useful way to obtain initial baseline data is through a Rapid Environmental Assessment (see Section 3.3.3). Before we start with the implementation of each CEAP activity, we should check if baseline data have been recorded for the respective issue.



Celebrating successful completion of certain activities within a CEAP!

(Photo: UNEP)

Activity and Change Indicators

Some indicators tell us about our activities. Some tell us about change.

Activity Indicators: We can choose activity indicators by asking: What will tell us if we are doing what we planned? How will we know that:

- the activity or task been completed?
- it has been done well?
- it happened on time?
- it happened within budget?
- everyone who wanted to participate has been able to?

For example, if our activities include providing training on the rights of people, we can use “number of people trained” as an indicator of what we have done. This indicator tells us if we have trained more or less people than we planned. It does not tell us if the trainings were useful to the participants or helped increase respect for the rights. For this, we need a change indicator.

Change Indicators: We can choose change indicators by asking: What will tell us if we are making progress towards our objectives?

- has the environmental situation changed for the better?
- has community capacity been strengthened to address environmental issues?

For example, if we want to know whether training was useful, we might use an indicator such as “number of people who reported training was useful”. If we wanted to know whether training helped increase respect for the rights of people, we might use the indicator “number of human rights abuses against people reported”.

Identify indicators to measure changes

To check if CEAP activities are on track we need to identify signs, called **indicators**, that things are happening as planned. Indicators can measure activities – if we are doing what we planned – and resulting change – if we are making progress towards our objectives. They can be included as a column in the community planning matrix.

Deciding what information to collect usually involves choosing indicators. It is helpful to consider the following questions when deciding what indicators to collect information about:

- How easy is it to collect information about the indicator? It is important to choose indicators that are not too difficult to measure and to only select the most useful indicators. Collecting information takes time. If we select too many indicators we will spend too much time collecting information.
- Will this indicator tell us something useful? Does it tell us something new? Is it relevant to the objectives of the process?
- Is the indicator clear to everyone? For example, if one of the indicators is number of people with access to safe drinking water, should we collect information about the number of people served or the number of households served?

Collecting information about our activities

Monitoring and evaluation relies on collecting useful information. Decisions about what

information to collect, and how to collect it, are critical to the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation.

Once it has been decided what information to collect, we need to agree who will collect it, and when and how they will do so. Information for monitoring is usually collected on a regular and routine basis. Since in CEAP all actors, including facilitators work very closely together, gathering information – for example, by observation, by talking to people, from service records and by using participatory tools – usually requires little extra work. Preference should be given to methods that do not take too much time if they are going to be repeated often. Particular attention needs to be given to the matter of confidentiality when collecting certain types of information.

For the purpose of data recording it is important to agree a simple and clear and routine way of doing so. People doing community visits, for example, may use symbols on a wall chart to record how many visits they make.

Evaluation involves many stakeholders and involves a more in-depth look at what progress we have made. Information collected during routine monitoring is often used to evaluate, supplementing this with more specific enquiries, as needed. Setting objectives for each evaluation will help identify what additional information we need.

Analysing the information

As well as monitoring what we do, we need to analyse how much progress we are making towards our objectives. It is helpful to do this at regular planned intervals, for example, every 12 months and at the end of the CEAP process. Each evaluation requires clear objectives. This helps different stakeholders agree on the purpose of the evaluation and guides us in deciding what issues and information to focus on.

We analyse progress by comparing change in each indicator since activities started or since the last evaluation. We can use information from different sources to do this, including data from day-to-day monitoring as well as findings from exercises with tools. It is often helpful to repeat a tool we have used before in order to see what change there is. If CEAP activities have not resulted in the desired change we need to go deeper in the analysis: What was missing? Why did things go different or not happen in the desired way?

A CEAP plan is never really finished or cast in stone. Every monitoring and evaluation cycle can point to a need to change the course of some activities or to add additional activities. When this is the case, it should be done with the CEAP Committee and other important stakeholders but, again, needs to be communicated to the larger community.

Lead questions for monitoring and follow up	Possible Tools
Whether we have done what we planned, and if not, why. Whether we have done things we did not plan, and why.	Review tools used to plan, such as: Action Planning, Stakeholder Participation Matrix, Vision Diagram, Writing Aims and Objectives
What people think about what we have done. What we should do differently.	SWOC Analysis
What else we should explore	Vision Diagram
What lessons have we learned about how to do CEAP? What works? What doesn't? Why?	SWOC Analysis

The community's perception of change

As well as comparing change in the indicators, it is important to explore what changes the most affected people think are important and why they believe this. Also, there may be important changes in the community that we did not expect. We need to ask open-ended questions about change so that we find out what is important to people. Remember, different people will have different views about what has changed, what is significant and which changes are positive and negative. All are valid.

We also need to identify the reasons why something has changed. There may be a number of different reasons, some of which are possibly unrelated to our activities. Identifying these and including those that we did not influence can help us develop more effective strategies and single out opportunities for collaboration. If an evaluation shows that there has been little change, we need to identify the reasons for this. There may be barriers and problems that we did not expect or our strategy may not be effective. An evaluation that shows little progress towards objectives can be demotivating for people who have been working hard to bring about change. Encourage people to view the evaluation as a positive opportunity for learning and take enough time to reflect on the reasons for lack of progress.

Lead questions in relation to change	Possible Tools
What changes can we see in each indicator? What are reasons for those changes?	Focus group discussions - repeat tools used in participatory assessments and compare the information for assessing change.
What further action needed?	Solution Tree
What are the most significant changes in the situation that have taken place: why those changes are important? who has been most affected by those changes? reasons for the changes? further actions needed?	Measuring Empowerment, Action Planning, Well-being Mapping, Solution Tree

Assessing a community's capacity to mobilise

You may wish to evaluate whether or not a community's capacity to mobilise has been increased by your actions. Community mobilisation is, after all, a capacity-building process. You may have as one of your objectives "Increase the community's capacity to mobilise". Questions to help form these change indicators are suggested below.

Does the community have:

- increased access to resources?
- increased collective bargaining power?
- improved status, self-esteem and cultural identity?
- increased ability to reflect critically and solve problems?
- increased ability to make choices?
- recognition and response of people's demands by officials?
- self-discipline and the ability to work with others?

Alternatively, others might be:

degree of participatory leadership;

new leaders established;

ability of community to start, assess, plan, act, monitor and evaluate together;

ability to attract new resources;

increased trust and communication within the community;

increased trust and communication between the community and outsiders;

higher level of concern for community issues around environmental issues; and

a greater sense of community.

Sources: Adapted from Goodman et al. (1998) and Kindervatter (1979).

Sharing evaluations with different stakeholders

Participatory monitoring and evaluation offers an important opportunity to review what we are doing with the various stakeholders. Sharing the evaluation with all stakeholders helps to:

- check that the evaluation is correct;
- motivate community members and other stakeholders by demonstrating the progress we are making and how individuals contribute to this;
- encourage continued support from donors by letting them see what difference their resources are making;
- develop active support for community mobilisation and other strategies used among key stakeholders by demonstrating their effectiveness;
- encourage stakeholders to help address problems and concerns identified by monitoring and evaluation; and
- enable accountability to different stakeholders.

Monitoring information should be shared on an ongoing basis. For example, pictures and charts on walls can help community members see what progress they are making.

Evaluations should also be shared. It is useful to plan a community meeting – or series of meetings – for the end of an evaluation to feed back and verify the results of the evaluation. Written reports and updates from monitoring activities and evaluations can be shared with partner organisations, government, donors and other stakeholders.

Checklist: monitoring and evaluating together

Remember – Monitoring and evaluating together	✓
Have we explained to the community why their participation in monitoring and evaluation is useful?	
Have we chosen activity indicators for monitoring your activities?	
Has the community identified change indicators for monitoring and evaluation?	
Are all the indicators easy to collect and useful?	
Does the community regularly collect information to monitor and evaluate progress?	
Do we hold regular review meetings with stakeholders to monitor activities and change?	
Have we conducted a final evaluation of the impact of the CEAP process?	
Have we identified the reasons for change?	
Have we shared the evaluation with the community and got their feedback?	
Have we identified and shared lessons learned: what does and does not work and why?	
Have we checked out the toolkits about monitoring and evaluation at the back of this handbook?	

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