CHANGE

DANONE ÉCOSYSTEME

CHANGE MANAGEMENT TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

> For stakeholders who work with farmers

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES:

- ✓ Accounts from the field
- ✓ To be locally adapted
- ✓ Toolbox for inspiration

EDITORIAL

WHY A GUIDEBOOK TO SUPPORT CHANGE TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE ?

The use of the word "sustainable" when describing a process is often vague if not downright incorrect. If there is at least one domain in particular where this word needs to have a clear and precise meaning, it is that of agriculture that produces from the natural cycles, healthy food for the largest number of people.

In the next thirty years, our planet's population will have grown by 2 billion individuals. Coping with the world's rapid growth in nutritional needs in the face of limited natural resources is one of the primary challenges of the 21st century. Arable lands, clean water, a stable climate and thriving biodiversity are all increasingly precious things, vital to guarantee our next generations' futures. Our goal is now to learn to produce more and better, all while having less at our disposal.

The industrial revolution of the 20th century allowed for previously unheard-of increases in agricultural productivity. We now know the limits of these new methods, their impact on the environment, the desertification of rural areas, and the disconnection between agricultural production and the consumer they incur. These methods can't be generalized to a global level; deep-seated changes are therefore necessary.

The change towards sustainable agriculture has begun: the world over, farmers with help of researchers and grassroots organizations are experimenting with new resource-efficient production methods that are able to produce high-quality agricultural products at accessible prices, all whilst guaranteeing fair living and working conditions for their producers.

Because change does not come only from scientific and technological innovation, this guide hopes to encourage the transition towards a sustainable agriculture. Change comes from within, and therefore everyone linked to the agricultural industry is concerned: farmers, agri-suppliers, food processors, consumers, policy makers and domain experts.

This guide is directed primarily towards those who are engaged in on-site projects that are working for change: team leaders, project managers, agricultural development technicians, etc. This document hopes to make available some principles and methods culled from years of experience that have proven their worth the world over in accompanying change towards new and better practices in agriculture. May all those who have helped build this guide and those who daily act to this change be thanked for their contributions.

Emmanuel Faber
Deputy General Manager of Danone

INTRODUCTION

WHY IMPLEMENT CHANGE MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE?

Accomplishing a transition towards sustainable agriculture does not solely concern the technical domain. In this instance, change means calling into question the underlying structure of the models adopted by a large part of the farming world. For successful change, it is critical to implement collective intelligence and change management processes at the service of the actors.

WHAT ARE THESE PRACTICAL GUIDELINES?

These guidelines set out a practical framework and points out a few major principles that are key to move towards a more sustainable agriculture.

A large part of this book is dedicated to experiences from the field, as well as practical pieces of advice.

It is a pragmatic learning tool that brings together universal principles and methods, but that also requires to be adapted to local contexts. This first version is not the final one. We hope that other versions, adapted to local contexts, will be published in the future.

PART I
THE COMMITTED PARTNERSHIP

PART II
THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT

PART III
THE CO-CREATION OF INITIATIVES

PART IV
THE COMMUNICATION AND THE FACILITATION

PART V
THE MONITORING AND THE IMPROVEMENT

WHO ARE THE AUTHORS?

This work is an initiative of the Danone Ecosystem Fund and has been realized with the support of the Institut de l'Elevage (The French Livestock Institute).

This book brings together contributions from agricultural development experts, Danone teams, partners of the Ecosystem Fund projects (project managers, field technicians, etc.) who kindly shared their experiences, expertise and knowledge.

WHO ARE THEY FOR?

This work is meant to be used by any entity or person (Danone subsidiaries, non-profit organizations, technical institutes, entrepreneurs, consultants, etc.) and more particularly future project managers, willing to work with and for farmers to move towards a more sustainable agriculture.

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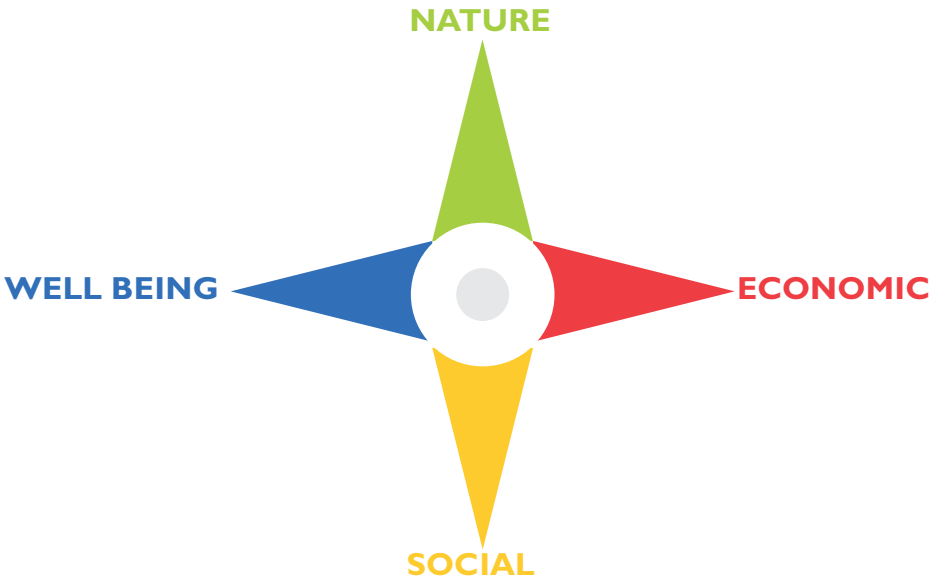
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: OUR VISION

Agricultural issues are leading Danone to promote and encourage competitive agriculture that creates economic and social value, that respects natural ecosystems, and that produces healthy food and contributes to a good nutritional balance.

The vision, developed by Danone and the stakeholders, is guided by a concern to constantly reconcile the four components of sustainable agriculture, using the Danone compass:



NATURE:
Respect natural ecosystems and fight climate change.

WELL BEING:
Ensure safe and healthy food.

SOCIAL :
Promote and support the autonomy and roles of famers within their local communities.

ECONOMIC :
Ensure economic development for all actors along the food chain.

OUR PRINCIPLES:

THINK 360°

Each issue must be approached bearing in mind all 4 dimensions of Danone compass – Economic, Nature, Social and Well-being – as well as its consequences upstream and downstream of the sector. Decisions must be guided by a holistic and global vision, from the production of the agricultural raw material to the quality of the finished product.

ADAPT TO LOCAL DIVERSITY

Although the food chain is global, it relies on local farming and food culture, which are the fruits of specific histories and territories. Danone recognises and respects this diversity of cultures and local production know-how, and recognises and respects farmers' integrity and independence. In other words, there is no one single sustainable agriculture model that should be universally imposed.

ACT PRAGMATICALLY AND IMPROVE CONSTANTLY

Reconnecting the food chain and moving towards sustainable food is a long-term path of progress, and is not frozen in time. Rather than certification, constant improvement must be the driving force behind sustainable agriculture, generating innovation and emulation. The complexity of issues must be treated using pragmatism from the ground and small-scale pilot experimentation.

WORK TOGETHER

Solutions for sustainable food will only grow out of the non-competitive cooperation of actors within the same chain: agricultural supply industries, farmers, food manufacturers, scientific experts, local communities and public authorities, etc. The most efficient ways of moving towards more sustainable food, for the benefit of all, are: comparing points of view, collaboration, partnerships and co-creation.

Change towards Sustainable Agriculture

WHAT IT IS	WHAT IT IS NOT
• A conviction • A 360° approach • An ongoing improvement initiative • A co-creation dynamic	• A certification that is frozen in time • A single model of a farming system, applicable everywhere and in all contexts

AKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to all the experts who shared their experience. Thanks to them, real-life examples could be used in the writing and illustration of this guide.

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I-
THE COMMITTED PARTNERSHIP

BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP

1 - OBJECTIVES

ADOPTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES INVOLVES NUMEROUS STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN AN INDUSTRY.

It is important to build a project around stakeholders: this includes farmers as well as industrial partners, technical institutes, consulting agencies and others. If the project is aimed at promoting a sector and what it produces, consumer groups can also be included in the process.

Stakeholders involved in the project are **partners** who:
- Sponsor the project and provide support
- Ensure initiatives can be rolled out
- Provide advice based on their areas of expertise and skills

Defining the roles and responsibilities of each participant is an essential component of project management.

The **"project sponsor"** initiates and backs the project.

"Project manager" is a different role. The project manager leads the project day-to-day. He or she is assigned to this role by the project sponsor, who can request to have someone from his/her company or an outside organisation.

2 - BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP, STEP BY STEP

ESTABLISHING A PARTNERSHIP AND PROJECT GOVERNANCE IS A THREE-STEP PROCESS.

STEP 1:
DEFINE THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE PROJECT SPONSOR

STEP 2:
DEFINE THE PARTNERSHIP

STEP 3:
ESTABLISH A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

STEP 1:

DEFINE THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE PROJECT SPONSOR

The project sponsor must be able to clarify and explain their strategic goals to the other stakeholders so that everyone knows and understands each other, to establish a trusting relationship and avoid any hidden agendas.

For example, a project sponsor may want to:
- Strengthen a local production on long term
- Answer societal expectations
- Generate value using a differentiating approach.

These goals are continually refined and are an important reference point throughout the project to encourage stakeholder support and progress.

EXAMPLE

« Acteur pour un lait durable »

Guillaume Desfourneaux worked for two years on the "Acteur pour un lait durable" project at Danone France. Below he explains the positioning of the project prior to its launch.

CONTEXT ➔ Milk industry crisis (2009)

OBJECTIVES ➔ Strengthen ties between producers and Danone France
➔ Refocus Danone communication on farmers

INTERNAL DEFINITION ➔ In the field (with farmers, Danone technicians)
➔ At Danone France headquarters (make the project a joint effort)

CO-DEFINITION ➔ Of what proposed initiatives will involve

Be convinced to convince others

A project works when it is sponsored by someone who firmly believes in it. The project sponsor must work with people he or she knows and convince them so that they in turn will spread the word in their own circles.

DOMINIQUE BARJOLLE, DIRECTOR - FiBL (SWITZERLAND)

STEP 2:

DEFINE THE PARTNERSHIP

THE PARTNERS AND PROJECT MANAGER MUST BE CHOSEN WITH CARE.

Involving partners in the project is a pre-requisite for its success. Partners provide technical skills, methods, networking opportunities, as well as credibility and resources.

To build a solid partnership, the project sponsor must:

1° - Review potential partners:

- Representatives of the farming profession: ambassadors (to others farmers)
- Public sector
- Research and technical institutes
- Universities
- NGOs, foundations
- Consulting agencies
- Local community
- Producers' associations
- Companies
- etc

TIPS AND TOOLS

How to choose: representatives of the farming profession?

Ambassadors who are receptive, representative, and pro-active

Farmers are essential partners. They are **actors for change,** via their representatives, at decision-making bodies. They ensure a co-creational, grassroots approach to initiatives, whereby needs expressed by farmers are heard and addressed.

> *We don't have results without the involvement of the producer.*
>
> **PRISCILLA LINS**
> **EDUCAMPO MANAGER - SEBRAE (BRAZIL)**

2° - Analyze strategies, skills and objectives from potential partners

Potential partners are evaluated based on several criteria:

Evaluating potential partners	Sources of information
What are their objectives and general strategy?	Expert input
Do they have the necessary (complementarity) skills to carry out the project?	Discussions with candidates
Who are the key figures in their activity?	Knowledge from existing networks
How do they envision sustainable agriculture?	Past project results
What are some potential setbacks or incentives regarding the project?	
How can they contribute to the project?	
What ties exist between the stakeholders (existing partnerships / problems)?	

3° - Choose a project manager among the potential partners

The project manager mobilizes partners, leads the project and oversees the implementation of initiatives. He or she is an actor for change and firm believer in the initiatives he/she is leading.

A legitimate project manager:

- Has a clear mandate from the project sponsor
- Supports the goals of sustainable agriculture and is well acquainted with the project
- Is known and has earned recognition from the other partners

☞ The project manager must have recognized skills in the field and hold operational authority in order to garner enthusiasm among project participants.

"Don't assign a project to someone who tells you it won't work!"

MUSTAFA ACAR,
MILK SOURCING MANAGER - DANONE (TURKEY)

Working with local experts from a country is a key.

PATRICK STRUEBI,
FOUNDER OF FAIRTRASA (LATIN AMERICA)

STEP 2:

DEFINE THE PARTNERSHIP

You have to define a common point which unites partners; it's ideological glue.

GUSZTAV NEMES, RESEARCHER, CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL STUDIES IEHAS (HUNGARY)

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP BASED ON COMMON INTERESTS.

A community of interest should be identified prior to establishing a partnership.

Aside from the strategic goals of the project sponsor, the common interests of partners must also be identified. Each partner must have a **vested interest** in the project and understand other partners' interests as well. Partners must identify with project objectives. This is called a **community of interest.** This, along with the belief that they will do better together, will drive and inspire the project partners.

Partners are then selected based on the skills needed for the project and on their ability to support the project both internally and externally.

Lastly, once partners are chosen, it is important to:

- Identify the role – technical, economic or political, for example – which can be offered to each partner
- Identify initiatives in which partners are, or could be, active

☞ The project manager is not hierarchically above the partners. He or she can draw their attention to common interests so that they invest themselves in their responsibilities and role. The partnership is driven by the community of interest.

TIPS AND TOOLS

Holding the project together

One aspect of project management is keeping partners motivated and active over the long term. The following suggestions may help:

- ➜ Consider each partner's schedule when planning and don't assign too much work
- ➜ Prevent and/or mediate conflicts
- ➜ Maintain a positive working atmosphere by organising social events on occasion
- ➜ Give credit to project accomplishments: thank people for their commitment and mention them when presenting their work, etc..
- ➜ Have different organisations work together to share experience and compare methods
- ➜ Share results throughout the entire project

From acting together to creating together

This guide is not only about defining every one's role within the frame of a project, the final aim is to co-define and design solutions together.

PATRICE LEPAGE, ENGINEERING CONSULTANT AND FOUNDER OF TERRETHIQUE (FRANCE)

STEP 3:

ESTABLISH A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

DECISIONS ARE TAKEN BY TWO GOVERNING BODIES

These two bodies are the **steering committee** and the **operational committee.**

They interact to ensure effective oversight focused on common interests.

Who oversees the project? Who makes decisions? Who implements?

	Steering committee	Operational committee
MEMBERS*	• Project sponsor (director level) • Project manager • Priority partner(s) who helped build the project • Representatives of farmers • Financier/donor	• Local project managers • Partners • Representatives of farmers
ROLE	• Defines strategic guidelines, objectives, and means of implementation • Makes budget-related decisions • Monitors results	• Makes operational choices • Conducts project day-to-day • Incorporates strategic guidelines set by steering committee
MEETS (EXAMPLE)	Twice a year	Once every two months

** Governance is flexible: the structure is defined at the outset of the project but can be adjusted at a later stage.*

Bodies that oversee project implementation and decision making function well when there is:

- A clear definition of **who is steering the project** and how decisions are taken
- A clear picture of how information is shared
- A clear understanding of each partner's responsibilities and how these are delegated.

TIPS AND TOOLS

An advisory committee may also be useful for certain projects.

ITS MEMBERS:

Experts or important stakeholders (political figures, international partners, consumer groups, etc.), general directors or presidents of partner organisations.

ITS ROLE:

An advisory one: it is a forum for the presentation of project milestones and consideration of opinions of leaders not involved in the project. This type of committee can examine political issues as well and promote the project in the wider community.

SUMMARY

Establishing a partnership and project governance involves:
➜ Determining the strategic goals of the project sponsor
➜ Identifying stakeholders, starting with farmers
➜ Finding the right project manager
➜ Mobilizing partners on the basis of a community of interest
➜ Establishing a structure for project governance with :
- a steering committee
- and operational committee

II - THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT

CONDUCTING THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT IN VIEW OF A COMMON STRATEGY

1 - OBJECTIVES

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT CONTEXT INVOLVES COLLECTING DIFFERENT DATA.

It can be technical, economic, socio-cultural, environmental and structural data on the agricultural region in order to:

- **understand areas of concern** in the region
- **analyze current farming practices** and identify areas where improvement is possible
- **select sustainability indicators to define project** objectives
- **classify farming systems** according to sustainability indicators and/or practices.

☞ The assessment is entrusted to someone with recognized qualifications in agriculture and sustainable development.

2 - HOW THE ASSESSMENT IS CONDUCTED

THE LOCAL ASSESSMENT IS OFTEN A THREE-STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1:
COLLECT EXISTING DATA AND IDENTIFY AREAS OF CONCERN

STEP 2:
CLASSIFY AND ANALYSE FARMING SYSTEMS

STEP 3:
SHARE LOCAL ASSESSMENT AND DEFINE THE STRATEGY

A global or 'holistic' approach looks at the entire farm system (composed of animals, humans, crops, food, water, etc.) and at the region, to obtain a more detailed and precise analysis of the situation. As a result, things like nutrition and education in relation to agriculture are also studied.

SAMIR SEDKY,
DIRECTOR OF THE AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM - CARE (EGYPT)

STEP 1:

COLLECT EXISTING DATA AND IDENTIFY AREAS OF CONCERN

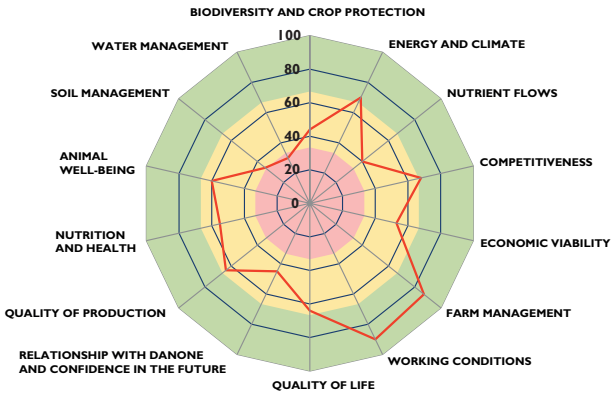
A local assessment looks at least two levels:

LEVELS	TARGETS	TOOLS
Farm: Analysis of farming practices and their effects	A reasonably-sized sample of farmers which reflects the status quo of the region	• Assessment tools (e.g. RISE, a Swiss-based system used to analyse a farm's sustainability) • Quantitative and qualitative surveys
Region / sector: Macro-analysis of strategic, socio-cultural and environmental concerns	Groups of farmers, unions and other local organizations, cooperatives, institutional bodies, etc.	• Qualitative surveys (see part IV)

Some information can be collected directly from existing publications or experts. Local and specialized media can also be very helpful in the beginning stages of the assessment. Surveys are conducted face-to-face or over the phone with different types of stakeholders (producers, development agencies, partners, etc.). Questions deal with the four dimensions of sustainable agriculture; the assessment is holistic.

☞ Collecting sociological data from farmers during the assessment phase makes it possible to offer solutions which suit their needs (see Part III)

Example of a farm diagnosis realized with the RISE tool adapted to Danone specificities



☞ Information is summarized and sent to partners to ensure that every stakeholder is familiar with the situation.

Our goal was to identify the methods and practices used by farmers and highlight specific concerns regarding specific situations:
Over the course of a month, 12 interns conducted 1,200 surveys (with 10% of all Danone Délice farmers) on the work methods and resources used by farmers in the region. A closed questionnaire addressed the following topics: herd size, farm size, access to fodder and water, irrigation. Farming systems were classified according to the feed system used, available surface area and irrigation.

SOUMAYA BEN SLIMANE,
MILK SOURCING MANAGER IN CHARGE OF THE ECOSYSTEM PROJECT
MILK WAY - DANONE DÉLICE (TUNISIA)

STEP 2:

CLASSIFY AND ANALYSE FARMING SYSTEMS

A variety of proposals will be made based on the results of the assessment and on the farmer (see Part III).

FARMS ARE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS ACCORDING TO SEVERAL KEY CRITERIA WHICH CAN BE RELATED TO:

- **systems** (size, degree of specialization, etc.)
- **farmers' practices** (feeding, management of herd health, irrigation, genetics etc.).

A cross analysis of identified concerns and different categories of farming systems reveals specific problems faced by these systems. This step increases the efficiency with which action plans can later be designed and implemented.

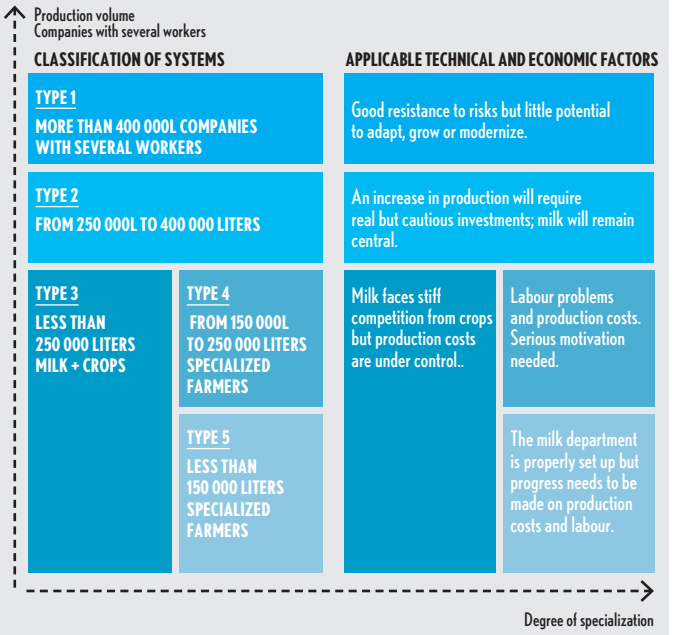
EXAMPLE

Agricultural systems classification of Horizon project:

Anne-Charlotte Dockès of the Institut de l'Elevage (France) explains the technical and economic assessment conducted in south-western France for the Horizon Project, launched by the Danone Ecosystem Fund:

➔ Dairy farmers are classified to identify primary strengths and weaknesses, and medium-term risks and opportunities (see diagram).

➔ Based on this classification, specific concerns are highlighted.



From wailing wall to water pact.

First, the community talks to us about its problems and difficulties: it's like a wailing wall. Second, we analyse the problems together and look at what solutions could be applied: this is like a tree of hope. Lastly, we look at how these solutions can be implemented and at planning and choosing partners. This is the way of the future. Results are written down and signed by the different partners and participants. This is the water pact.

JOAO PASSINI,
PROJECT MANAGER FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING DEVELOPMENT - ITAPU (BRAZIL)

STEP 3:

SHARE LOCAL ASSESSMENT AND DEFINE THE STRATEGY

THE PROJECT MUST BE SHARED TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

After sharing the results of the local assessment, stakeholders co-define:

Concerns/issues: the reasons behind the project	Why?
Objectives stakeholders wish to achieve and impacts	What?

Strategy:

Target group	For whom?
Partners	With whom?
Initiatives	How?
Timeline	When?

* *Other questions, like what should be done, by who and when, will be examined in the section on co-creating initiatives*

☞ Taking into account the opinions and expectations of each party involved in a project must quickly lead to an alignment on what can possibly change, according to the means available. We must avoid creating expectations that the partners cannot meet.

☞ Farmers (or their representatives) must be involved in the process, from the definition of objectives onward, to best meet their needs and expectations.

Objectives and strategies are approved by the strategic committee.

Establishing a strategy is essential in supporting the shift towards sustainable farming. If we don't clearly define our mission, we don't really know where we're going."

DAVID HOGG,
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER - NAANDI (INDIA)

People can only do it effectively if they think it's their idea.

GUSZTAV NEMES,
RESEARCHER, CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL STUDIES IEHAS (HUNGARY)

SUMMARY

The local assessment involves:

- ➜Identifying the concerns of farms in a given region using a systemic analysis of quantitative and qualitative survey results
- ➜Classifying farming systems to identify specific concerns
- ➜Sharing the results with stakeholders
- ➜Co-defining project challenges, objectives and targets

III-
THE CO-CREATION OF INITIATIVES

CO-CREATING INITIATIVES FOR FARMERS

1 - OBJECTIVES

CO-CREATION INVOLVES DEVELOPING INITIATIVES IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTICULARLY FARMERS, WHO ARE ACTORS FOR CHANGE.

Co-creation provides a balance between project objectives and the needs of farmers.

High-priority initiatives are therefore selected based on:

- A shared local assessment and analysis of the specific needs of farmers
- Projects goals defined by partners, who form the "community of interest"

☞ High-priority initiatives must be approved by all partners. A limited number of initiatives should be selected to avoid a backlog of work and a shortage of resources.

2 - HOW TO CO-CREATE

CO-CREATION IS A THREE-STEP PROCESS:

STEP 1:
ANALYZE THE NEEDS OF FARMERS

STEP 2:
CO-CREATE INITIATIVES

STEP 3:
PLAN AND ORGANIZE INITIATIVES

Not everyone is ready to change; the project manager must adapt to the target group. In the case of farmers who aren't ready to switch to sustainable agriculture, it's better to suggest good practices and techniques they can use to get started, without changing their whole system.

JOAO PASSINI,
PROJECT MANAGER FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING DEVELOPMENT - ITAPU (BRAZIL)

STEP 1:

ANALYZE THE NEEDS OF FARMERS

The project manager determines the needs of farmers by looking at :

- the local assessment surveys
- other specific studies carried out (participatory meetings, marketing research, etc.).

CONSIDERATION OF FARMERS' NEEDS

Any technical, economic, social or organisational concerns farmers may have, or their wish to see their work and profession given recognition, are taken into consideration when planning initiatives.

CONSIDERATION OF DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS AND POSITIONS

The different viewpoints of farmers in a given region can be studied using a sociological approach to pinpoint the drawbacks and advantages which farmers associate with the initiatives they may be offered.

3 aspects are studied:

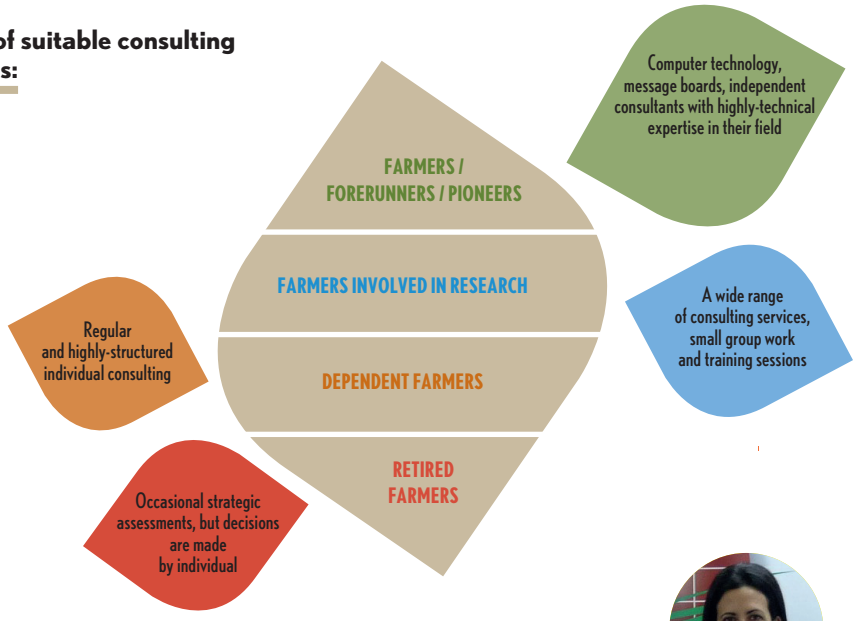
- Farmers' understanding of the subject of the project
- Attitudes (ways of thinking and conceptions about the profession)
- Behaviour (ways of doing things, habits, practices).

Analysis of these three aspects reveals different conceptions of the farming profession and how farmers view proposed changes and can be used to develop guidance that is appropriate for every profile.

"At the beginning of the meeting, ask farmers what their expectations are. From this moment on, you must adapt to what they say."

JAMES HUSBAND, FOUNDER - EVIDENCE BASED VETERINARY CONSULTANCY (UK)

Examples of suitable consulting approaches:



The local context deserves complete respect. We're dealing with people's lives, not with a business

ANA PERUGORRIA, COORDINATOR OF THE E-LEARNING PROGRAM, INSTITUTO AGROPECUARIO (URUGUAY)

STEP 2:

CO-CREATE INITIATIVES

An action plan is needed to achieve project goals and meet everyone's expectations.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Before launching a new initiative, it is important to look at **past experience and assess** any factors that could contribute to its success or failure: conflict, lack of commitment, missing deadlines, or technical problems, for example.

The operational committee can conduct a risk assessment to **define and classify risks.** Following this assessment, preventive and corrective measures can be deployed by the project manager.

TIPS AND TOOLS

"Quantifying" a risk

A risk can be "quantified" by assigning it a level of between 1 and 3:

- ➔ the likelihood it will happen (1 for improbable, 3 for very probable)
- ➔ the impact on the project if it occurs (1 for not very serious, 3 for very serious)
- ➔ ease of identification (1 for easy, 3 for difficult)

The importance of the risk is quantified by multiplying the three numbers obtained (from 1 to 27).

RISK	CAUSES	EVALUATION	PREVENTIVE MEASURES	CORRECTIVE MEASURES
Conflicts between consulting bodies	Competing and similar methods	Occurrence (1-3) x impact (1-3) x identification (1-3) 3 x 3 x 2 = 18	• Assessment of partnership • Bring potential partners together from the outset of the project (steering committee and working group)	• Sharing reponsabilities and tasks • Capitalise on competition

DESIGNING INITIATIVES COLLECTIVELY

To satisfy identified needs, initiatives must be co-created in a way that reflects **diversity in the farming profession, the expectations of farmers (step 1) and the local context (assessment).** They must be based on common objectives.

The process involves **identifying the necessary initiatives.**

A working group, led by the project manager and including partners and farmers, drafts an action plan that is approved by the steering committee.

EXAMPLE

Danone's sustainable agriculture project in Poland

Anna Rynkiewicz, discussing Danone's sustainable agriculture project in Poland, funded by the Ecosystem Fund, explains how an action plan is co-developed:

"Project initiatives were developed following a series of workshops attended by 25 producers. At the first workshop, producers discussed their needs and defined objectives. They met a second time to approve the action plan and express their satisfaction".

STEP 3:

PLAN AND ORGANIZE INITIATIVES

Prior to implementation, initiatives are scheduled and assigned to different partners: this is the **action plan.**

ESTABLISHING A SCHEDULE

Approved initiatives are scheduled according to:

- When they can best be carried out (depending on farmers' workloads, weather factors, etc.)
- The financial, material and human resources needed for the project which must be taken into account.

ASSIGNING INITIATIVES AND COORDINATING PARTNERS

The project sponsor and partners will be assigned tasks in line with their skills and knowledge.

Throughout the implementation of the action plan, the project manager coordinates work between partners. This is a key element in organising the initiatives and part of the project manager's role (see Part I).

In the case of large-scale projects that cover an entire region or involve numerous partners, a smaller-scale pilot project can also be developed (in a single area, or involving one step of the larger project).

☞ Remember to assign initiatives and other tasks according to workloads and available resources. Human resources can be identified internally or externally.

EXAMPLE

Why create a pilot project?

Fabien Choiseau, who has worked on Danone France's Horizon Ecosystem project, shares his experience.

"Establishing a pilot project in a specific area is important. By doing so, participants can make sure no one has been left out. It is a way to test communication and the partnerships that have been created. Local specificities need to be taken into account, however, and any projects that follow the pilot project should be adapted to meet local needs".

> *The biggest challenge is coordinating technicians. We work with consultants who are not our employees, so making them understand our work ethic and goals so that they in turn can promote them is a significant challenge.*
>
> **PRISCILLA LINS,**
> **EDUCAMPO MANAGER - SEBRAE (BRAZIL)**

SUMMARY

The co-creation of initiatives involves:

- ➜ Setting priorities with stakeholders based on common interests and the needs of all farmers
- ➜ Developing initiatives based on the expectations and viewpoints of farmers, who represent a diverse profession
- ➜ Planning and organizing initiatives based on a schedule and given resources

IV-
THE COMMUNICATION AND THE FACILITATION

COMMUNICATE AND FACILITATE

1 - THE OBJECTIVES

THE GOAL HERE IS TO RUN THE PROJECT AND ATTRACT THE SUPPORT OF AS MANY FARMERS AS POSSIBLE.

This requires effective communication with:

- **Farmers:**
  Communication throughout the project mobilizes the attention and interest of farmers while helping them through the transition.
- **Project stakeholders:**
  Regular communication lets partners and farmers know how the project is coming along and promote long term interest.

2 - COMMUNICATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

FARMERS ARE MOBILIZED VIA A THREE-STEP CHANGE PROCESS:

STEP 1:
ATTRACT ATTENTION BY PRESENTING THE PROJECT EFFECTIVELY

STEP 2:
GENERATE INTEREST AND MOBILIZE

STEP 3:
IMPLEMENT AND ACCOMPANY

Listening and acknowledgement are vital when launching an action plan. Farmers need to be heard and the company must be receptive to them. Acknowledgement of their efforts is important to them, particularly in difficult contexts. Symbolic recognition is also a key point; farmers really appreciate receiving a gift package from the Danone transport provider at the end of the year.

ÉRIC BIRLOUEZ,
AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER AND FREELANCE SOCIOLOGIST (FRANCE)

STEP 1:

ATTRACT ATTENTION BY PRESENTING THE PROJECT EFFECTIVELY

TO CONVINCE PEOPLE AND ENCOURAGE CHANGE, YOU MUST FIRST GET THEIR ATTENTION.

In addition to visual aids, logos and posters, which can be used to promote the project, a kick-off meeting provides an opportunity to attract the attention of potentially interested farmers. The following should be presented in **a transparent manner:**

- The context, challenges and common vision of sustainable agriculture
- Project objectives
- The community of interest formed by the stakeholders
- What the project entails

Interest and motivation can also be generated through the participation of external experts (who can speak about context and challenges), representatives of project partners, and recognised farmers in the profession, who can share personal experience or lead visits.

Conducting a kick-off meeting

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT SPONSOR AND MANAGER

Target audience contributions	• Listen • Write down questions • Manage contributions
Presentations and speeches	• Use clear visual aids • Repeat key ideas • Less than 10 min. in length • Illustrate with examples • Convince
Discussions	• Provide individual experiences • Encourage farmers to participate • Point out advantages and drawbacks of practices • Acknowledge obstacles and objections

A carefully crafted and original invitation will spark interest and lead to an increased the turn-out. The message must be short, easy to read and provide detailed information about the location, date and agenda. Turn-out will be boosted if the project manager and partners follow up with those who haven't confirmed.

TIPS AND TOOLS

Encourage participants to voice concerns and expectations

The kick-off meeting is an opportunity to openly assess farmers' concerns and expectations regarding the project and include that information in subsequent decisions.

For example, concerns that farmers express can be written down on coloured post-it notes, so that everyone, including the farmers and project manager, can visualise the context and state of mind of the participants.
The notes show farmers that their opinion is being heard.

STEP 2:

GENERATE INTEREST AND MOBILISE

When accompanying change, it is essential to consider everything that makes up an individual. People adapt because they have to, but change – which is different – occurs because we decide to, based on a firm belief that it will transform our lives."

PATRICK LEPAGE, ENGINEERING CONSULTANT AND FOUNDER OF TERRETHIQUE (FRANCE)

FARMERS MUST HAVE A PERSONAL STAKE IN THE PROCESS TO BELIEVE IN THE PROJECT AND INITIATE CHANGE.

For a farmer, change is only conceivable if it is likely to bring improvement. The process is often set in motion by a conversation with someone important (consultant, neighbour who is also a farmer, etc.).

Different farmers have different reasons for changing their practices. It is important to understand each person's motivations and adapting initiatives accordingly. Always refer to real-life examples and the work carried out by volunteers to arouse interest.

TIPS AND TOOLS

Suggestions for getting as many producers as possible to participate:

- ➜ Have farmers train fellow farmers
- ➜ Hold outreach meetings where everyone present can take part
- ➜ Give concrete examples, have producers share their own experience
- ➜ Adapt to each producer's situation
- ➜ Promote actions delivering short-term results to create a dynamic
- ➜ Do not neglect how the process will affect work methods and quality of life
- ➜ Place emphasis on an external, neutral organization which adds credibility to the enterprise
- ➜ Establish networking between consultants and producers

☞ Using group-based approaches to present particularly innovative initiatives (or ones which could be viewed as marginal) is a good way to inform a wide range of farmers.

Telling producers they have to do this and that doesn't work. Change can be encouraged by pointing to examples like the use of organic fertilizers and organic pesticides.

RAHUL KUMAR, MANAGING DIRECTOR - AMUL ANAND (INDIA)

EXAMPLE

Conducting a successful outreach meeting

At meetings with 15-20 people in attendance, each participant can speak freely and feel like they play an active role. Participants must be selected beforehand (to form homogenous or mixed groups depending on the project sponsor's needs).

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING AN OUTREACH MEETING:

- A field visit to start the discussion
- The meeting should be conducted in a specific order and on schedule
- Having several speakers will maintain attention levels
- Give participants the floor both at the beginning of the meeting as well as throughout
- Create a climate of trust in which participants feel free to express themselves
- Alternate between discussion, brief presentations and quick written surveys to encourage debate

☞ It is critical to recognize the general role women play in work and the dissemination of new knowledge and farming practices. Their involvement in the dynamics of change is a key factor of success towards more sustainable agriculture. Women are often in charge of the milking and the accounting and therefore, depending on the contexts, it is important to have them involved into projects and design specific actions to empower them.

Training initiatives and assessments of a farm's sustainability provide farmers with progress indicators. Producers need to see tangible results and future gains before making a commitment.

ANNA RYNKIEWICZ,
MILK PURCHASING DIRECTOR - DANONE (POLAND)

Farmers are less likely to respond to a concept or an idea than they are to something they can put their hands on. If they can visit another location that has implemented a practice then they can ask questions, see the value and become more comfortable with the application.

LENNY SMITH,
MILK QUALITY MANAGER - DANNON (UNITED STATES)

STEP 3:

IMPLEMENT AND ACCOMPANY

ACCOMPANYING CHANGE MEANS LOOKING AT EVERY INDIVIDUAL SITUATION.

Implementing initiatives is a challenging enterprise that comes with surprises, failures (sometimes) and doubt (always), even for those who are the most convinced. That's why providing support is vital to achieving long-term change.

Questions, doubts and concerns must be heard and addressed and individual situations must be taken into account. This can be done through individual counselling or small meetings (8-12 participants).

The person providing this support focuses on:

- Actively listening and asking specific questions to ascertain problems and the real sources of difficulties
- Suggesting solutions to those problems using concrete examples;
- Small-scale in situ testing for comparison prior to launching a more serious commitment
- Encouraging and promoting progress already achieved.

☞ The consultant must be known and respected figure in the farming community. Otherwise, for example, it is difficult for a Danone technician to conduct an economic assessment of a farm.

☞ When a farmer decides to change, he or she takes the risk of not achieving his/her goals. A consultant listens to the farmer's concerns and objectives and helps him/her make the right choices.

EXAMPLE

The concept of compelling communication

Eric Birlouez, agricultural engineer and freelance sociologist, explains this concept:

"It involves raising awareness and motivating participants, who take part, raise their hands, vote and decide on initiatives. It's a method of persuasion based on personal commitment."

"Group training should focus on concrete things and not be overly theoretical. Presentations should be based on photos and other images, PowerPoint presentations, videos and other visual aids. At the end of the session, a summary report or point-form list can be taken home for future reference."

DIRK HARTING,
INDEPENDENT DAIRY HUSBANDERY SPECIALIST- DHPROJECTS (NETHERLANDS)

3 - CHOOSING THE RIGHT INTERNAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Internal communication is essential to the project's success. It is a way to keep all partners "on the same page", to account for any difficulties which may arise, to boost motivation and to assist in decision making. Communication is also a useful way of preventing conflict and misunderstandings.

The purpose of internal communication is to:

- Inform all partners about the project's goals, content, accomplishments, of any decisions made or if the project takes a new direction
- Listen to and acknowledge opinions, suggestions and criticism
- Maintain or rekindle interest in the project.

For successful internal project communication:

- Name the project and give it an identity and visibility
- Introduce the partners
- Provide the right amount of information (not too much or too little) depending on the objectives
- Choose the right moment to communicate
- Check information from key people
- Be clear and transparent
- Communicate positively about all project partners
- Make the project human: it must be embodied in the people who make it happen.

The project manager suggests information material and schedules meetings so that the project sponsor, partners and participating farmers remain united and motivated.

Different types and means of communication can be used depending on the target audience:

- Newsletter, letter/email illustrated by testimonies (farmers...)
- Outreach meetings, project workshops
- Phone calls
- Intranet / collaborative web site
- Social networks

☞ Social events can be organised for project partners at key moments in the endeavour or when a milestone has been reached in order to energize and unite the team.

We created a restricted-access Facebook page for farmers taking part in the project and for team members. They can exchange information, photos and viewpoints. This tool is an add-on to actual meetings and boosts motivation. For it to work, though, farmers must be able to connect to the site.

DOMINIQUE BARJOLLE, DIRECTOR - FIBL (SWITZERLAND)

Online message boards are accessible around the clock and from anywhere. This makes it easier for more farmers to participate, provided they have good internet access.

ANA PERUGORRIA, COORDINATOR OF THE E-LEARNING PROGRAM, INSTITUTO AGROPECUARIO (URUGUAY)

How to generate interest and mobilize?

As the change process moves ahead, tools, methods and communication aids must be adapted to specific, individual expectations and viewpoints.

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	REACTION	COMMUNICATION AIDS
Attract attention and provide information	All potentially interested farmers	"It exists and effects me"	• Events, media, professional events, project kick-off day, etc. • Visual aids: logos, posters, videos, etc.
Generate interest and mobilise	Farmers interested in the project	"I understand and I am interested" "I want to do it"	• Specific written documents, media, explanations by experts • Outreach meetings, open houses, training sessions by fellow farmers, producers' own experiences • Web sites, social media, technical platform
Implement and accompany	Farmers who adhere to change	"I'm doing it"	• Consulting • Visits • Small group meetings • Letters of commitment

☞ Web-based tools require an internet connection and computer skills. Farmers living in isolated areas can be reached by phone or SMS to ensure a flow of communication throughout the project.

SUMMARY

Effective communication involves:

➔ Keeping up communication throughout the project between the project sponsor, project manager, partners and farmers, to keep everyone informed and motivated

➔ Basing communication on participants and adapting the materials used to accompany change:
- organising successful kick-off meetings to attract attention and inform
- using concrete examples and personal experience to generate interest and mobilize
- assisting farmers in the transition over the long term while taking into account individual farmers situation.

V-
THE MONITORING AND THE IMPROVEMENT

MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE PROJECT TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENT

1 - OBJECTIVES

PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION IS CARRIED OUT TO:

- Ensure the project runs smoothly and make sure that all means, resources, deadlines and the way the project is implemented are in keeping with project objectives
- Keep project participants abreast of progress on the project and motivated
- Improve or redefine initiatives
- Evaluate the project's sustainability.

☞ Project monitoring and evaluation must be developed at the same time as the initiatives and approved by the steering committee.

2 - CONDUCTING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARE TWO SEPARATE AND COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES.
Monitoring and evaluation tools must be prepared when the project is being designed. Generally, this is also a three-step process:

STEP 1:
DEFINE INDICATORS

STEP 2:
ENSURE REGULAR MONITORING

STEP 3:
EVALUATE MIDWAY OR AT THE END OF THE PROJECT

Measuring how lives are improved.
Our approach to things is different. Cash income to the farmer is not the only indicator, we factor other tangible indicators like education, health and well-being and most importantly the improving quality of the farm organism, particularly the soil. Measuring this amelioration in a farming community is what is essential not just the linear «cash in the pocket» indicator. Social and economic transformation is not possible unless quality of life, well-being/ecosystem are key indicators.

DAVID HOGG,
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER, NAANDI (INDIA)

STEP 1:

DEFINE INDICATORS

FOLLOW-UP INDICATORS ARE APPROVED BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE AND CHOSEN IN LINE WITH PROJECT OBJECTIVES.

Indicators must be developed, shared and recognised by everyone, particularly by farmers who are working towards change.

Progress is measured by looking at the means implemented to carry out initiatives and by assessing their impact. Two kinds of indicators are used (qualitative or quantitative):

INDICATORS	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES
Progress	Measures what has been done to achieve goals	- Number of farmers attending steering committee meetings - Frequency of internal communications (newsletters, events, videos) - Number of training sessions available to farmers - Number of farmers attending the training sessions - Budget spent in comparison with budget earmarked
Impact	Examines the impact of project initiatives in relation to objectives	- Percentage of farmers who adopt the techniques they acquire at training sessions - Soil fertility - Water quality (various indicators can be used) - Satisfaction levels among participating farmers

Indicators must be coherent and complementary. A limited number of indicators should be used, they should include an equal amount of process and impact indicators.

☞ Performance indicators for sustainable agriculture projects must cover the four Danone compass points:
- economic
- nature
- social
- well-being.

Indicators can also be based on tools used for the local assessment.

TIPS AND TOOLS

Whatever the indicator type, it must be "SMART":

- **SPECIFIC:** it must not depend on uncontrollable factors
- **MEASURABLE:** it must be possible to save it and analyze it on either a quantitative or qualitative basis
- **ACCEPTED:** it must be accepted by stakeholders
- **REALISTIC:** it does not only rely on the project sponsor or manager
- **TIMETABLED:** it is timetabled with a deadline

STEP 2:

ENSURE REGULAR MONITORING

> The dashboard doesn't explain results. It simply provides figures, facts and observations.

MONITORING VIA INDICATORS IS NECESSARY TO ENABLE COMPARING OBJECTIVES WITH ACTUAL RESULTS.

The monitoring process begins by classifying and summarizing defined indicators on a dashboard. This task falls to the project manager.

The dashboard must include the following information about every indicator:

- Its significance
- The objective (quantified if possible)
- Collection method (who, when, how?)
- Initial value
- Value at every step
- Level attained in relation to the objective

The dashboard is updated on a regular basis to ensure close monitoring. It provides a snapshot of how the project is coming along, the means implemented for it and achieved results.

Observed results are adjusted according to the context (milk prices, economic crisis, drought, etc.).

EXEMPLE

Example taken from dashboard of the Horizon project (France)

Results to date: April 15th, 2013

I. Result to date (04-15-13) in South and Center-East area

173 producers are registered in Horizon project on April 15th 2013, which means 22 % of Danone farmers in this area.

- 181 registrations for strategic coaching or cost production diagnosis.
- 7 producers asked for specific advice because they already made a cost production diagnosis in 2011.
- 15 producers asked for both diagnosis (strategic coaching and cost production assessments).
- 142 diagnosis are in progress or already done.

Department	Nb of Danone farmers 01/26/2012	Nb of diagnostics applications 03/15/13	% of farmers involved	Cost production diagnosis asked 03/15/13			Cost production diagnosis done at 03/15/13			Strategic coaching asked	Strategic coaching done
				Long collective training	Short collective training	Individual	Long collective training	Short collective training	Individual	03/15/13	03/15/13
7	202	30	15%			17			15	13	11
38	147	46	31%		38			38		8	0
39	79	23	28%	13		9	12		9	1	1
42	110	31	28%	12	4	10	12	4	5	5	3
69	150	24	16%	16		1	16		1	7	
71	116	27	22%	8		7	8		4	12	3
TOTAL	*811*	*181*	22%	*49*	*42*	*44*	*48*	*42*	*34*	*46*	*18*

"People often distort what they hear: one person is unhappy and suddenly "everybody" is. It's like the water cooler at the office. So you need to conduct monitoring in a formal manner and establish a dashboard with very specific indicators."

ÉRIC BIRLOUEZ,
AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER AND FREELANCE SOCIOLOGIST (FRANCE)

STEP 3:

EVALUATE MIDWAY OR AT THE END OF THE PROJECT

A MID-TERM AND/OR END-OF-PROJECT EVALUATION AIMS AT UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF INITIATIVES AND ADJUST THEM IF NECESSARY.

A mid-term evaluation both enriches and fine tunes the action plan. It shows what direction the project is taking and suggests ways to improve it if outcomes fall short of stated objectives. It is also an opportunity to review project objectives or selected indicators if these do not reflect what is happening in the field.

A final evaluation assesses the lasting effects of the initiatives in relation to initial objectives. It is also an opportunity to draw lessons from the project to determine how to upon it and whether or not to conduct it in other locations.

Before conducting an evaluation it is a good idea to establish an evaluation plan which clearly identifies the goals of the evaluation and what information needs to be gathered:

- This evaluation should be carried out by an **external expert** or a **project partner** who can remain objective
- It is based on **existing data** and monitoring tools (indicators); this **information is enriched** by conducting qualitative surveys on project outcomes
- The various partners, and **of course farmers**, are surveyed to obtain their viewpoints.

☞ A key factor in a project's success is the ability to adapt and improve it while it is underway.

☞ Previous pilot projects (see page 25) can be evaluated before launching a bigger project to identify any difficulties and prevent them from arising again.

Three other steps follow once the evaluation goals have been defined:

1 - Critical assessment

To review initiatives and develop hypotheses
- Integrate obtained information into the dashboard
- Assess the gap between initial objectives and accomplishments
- Formulate hypotheses to explain these gaps

Data: Existing timelines, indicators and documents (summary reports, presentations), project leader's assessments, etc.

2 - Impact study

To evaluate the impact of the initiatives and test the hypotheses
- Assess changes in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of farmers and the whole community
- Evaluate the impact of the initiatives and their sustainability

Data: Semi-structured interviews with producers and partners, etc.

3 - Conclusion

To answer questions, suggest areas for improvement
- Meet the stated goal of the evaluation
- Provide recommendations for future steps
- Set out conditions in which define how the project can be duplicated in new locations
- Clearly establish factors which contribute to failure/success and learning
- Formulate communication tools

☞ Outcomes and conclusions are shared with all stakeholders. A final meeting can be planned along the same lines as the kick-off meeting (see part IV).

Working towards sustainable agriculture is an ongoing process of improvement

Priorities and objectives were identified at the outset of the project. When it is completed, outcomes can be reviewed in order to update future projects to satisfy new priorities, or conduct the same project in another region.

	MONITORING	EVALUATION AND IMPACT STUDY
OBJECTIVE	• Monitor ongoing initiatives and implemented support on a day-to-day basis • Adapt planning and/or initiatives as observations are made	• Measure the impact of initiatives on expected outcomes • Adjust initiatives • Capitalise on feedback for new projects
TYPE OF DATA GATHERED	• Indicators • Informal exchanges • Minutes of meetings • Budget	• Indicators • Formal and representative interviews with producers and partners • Informal exchanges • Minutes of meetings • Budget
WHO?	• Project manager	• A partner who can remain objective or • An external expert not involved in the project
WHEN?	• Throughout the project	• Mid-way / At the end of the project

SUMMARY

To monitor and evaluate a project that aims to accompany the switch to sustainable agriculture, it is important to:

➔define indicators beforehand which are coherent with stated objectives

➔conduct monitoring on a regular basis to adapt the project if any discrepancies are observed

➔conduct a mid-term or end-of-project evaluation and an impact study to assess perceptions and improve processes

VI-
KEY IDEAS

KEY IDEAS FOR ACCOMPANYING CHANGE TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

BUILD THE PARTNERSHIP

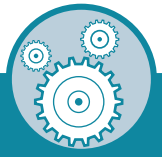
- Ascertain the strategic interests of the project sponsor.
- Include farmers when building the partnership and mobilize partners.
- Select a legitimate, recognized project manager.
- Establish project governance in the form of a steering committee and operational committee.

CONDUCT A LOCAL ASSESSMENT

- Carry out a detailed assessment of the local context using quantitative and qualitative surveys.
- Adopt a holistic approach to understanding sustainable agriculture as a process.
- Share the assessment results with partners and farmers.
- Co-define project challenges, objectives and targets.

COMMUNICATE AND FACILITATE

- Throughout the project, ensure good communication between the project sponsor, project manager, partners and farmers to keep everyone motivated.
- Talk to farmers about the benefits of the switch.



CO-CREATE INITIATIVES

- Set priorities with stakeholders based on common interests and on the shared local assessment.
- Acknowledge farmers' expectations and the diverse viewpoints and profiles in the profession.
- Co-create initiatives based on these expectations.
- Specify each partner's tasks clearly and organize the implementation of initiatives.

Readjustments
Improvements

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EVALUATION

- From the outset of the project, develop monitoring and evaluation plans.
- Establish indicators that are coherent with set objectives and monitor on a regular basis.
- Evaluate both during and at the end of the project, to redirect if necessary and understand successes and failures.
- Capitalize on results to conduct the project again in other locations.

- Structure and adapt communication materials about accompanying change for the target audience.
- Respect the process of change: draw attention to the issues, generate interest, take action.

CONTACT

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To find out more: ecosysteme.danone.com

CO-CREATION AT DANONE
A practical guidebook towards co-creation,
key lever for social innovation

DANONE ÉCOSYSTEME

INSTITUT DE L'ELEVAGE

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