

PIP Module 1

Awareness raising at community level

A step-by-step guide on how to start with the PIP approach in new communities



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Introduction

This Module 1 of the PIP Manual is developed to guide you (PIP facilitators) on how to start working in a village with the PIP approach, i.e. how to conduct community awareness raising sessions concerning the PIP approach. It consists of six (6) steps or sessions which will lead the village to reflect and discuss about their current and future situation and how to achieve sustainable change, including the selection of Farmer Innovators and “degradation sites”, and the validation of the first (draft) Village Vision.

Awareness raising in the first phase of the PIP approach is crucial, as it is the foundation for all following activities, particularly PIP creation with the Farmer Innovators (which is explained in Module 2) and concrete actions in degradation sites that need to be collectively managed and restored. It is therefore important to involve the whole village or community in the activities of Module 1, and get the initial support for the project (PIP) approach and active engagement in follow-up activities.

The community awareness activities in this Module 1 are carried out through the following steps:

- 1. Awareness raising with the village leaders (1st meeting)**
- 2. Awareness raising with the community representatives (2nd meeting)**
- 3. Introducing the PIP approach and preparing next steps (3rd meeting)**
- 4. Village Assembly 1: awareness raising and validation of Farmer Innovators**
- 5. Development of the first version of the Village Vision**
- 6. Village Assembly 2: presentation and discussion of the Village Vision and action plan**

These steps show that community support in this Module is carefully build-up: it starts with the village leaders, then a bigger group becomes involved, to eventually raise awareness and get the support of the Village Assembly. The final product of Module 1 is the first version of the Village Vision, which is the basis for collective activities, particularly those related to natural resource conservation and restoration activities of degradation sites, but also other prioritized actions at village level.

Furthermore, this Module 1 prepares for the first PIP creation activities in Module 2, with the selection and validation of the Farmer Innovators, who will become the driving force behind the PIP scaling-out and closest project collaborators in the village.

It should be emphasized that before starting actions at village level, the project and its strategy are presented to the higher governmental level (e.g. district, chiefdom, province, etc.). It is crucial to involve stakeholders at these levels from the start and gain their support. This is also beneficial for future scaling-out activities, as well as for connecting the future Village Visions and action plans to development plans at these higher levels. Furthermore, by building these contacts from the start, representatives of e.g. district and sub-counties will then more easily participate in some of the meetings organized at the village level. For example in DRC, a representative of the groupement and a representative of the chefferie participated in some of the village workshops to understand how the project works and how the process is developing.

This Module requires you to be fully trained in the PIP approach, and being able to adapt and use the different steps presented in this Module according to what is required in the context where this Module is used. It should therefore be emphasized that although this Module is presented as a step-by-step “**guide**” for raising awareness about the PIP approach and getting started with the PIP at community level, it is definitely NOT a guide with fixed steps that should always be followed as prescribed! We finalize this introduction section therefore with these **recommendations for all users**:

1. Read the whole Module 1 before starting to use it, allowing to have the complete overview;
2. Discuss within the team that is going to use the Module about possible changes for your context;
3. Work on a contextualized plan for each of the six steps with the team, adjusting it where needed;
4. Evaluate each step (session) before proceeding to the next step, and discuss again adjustments;
5. Always make sure to write down the lessons learned and document experiences;
6. Share your experiences with the authors of this Module, so we can include them in a next version!

1. Awareness raising with the village - 1st meeting

Before organizing the first session with village leaders and group representatives, a preliminary visit to the village leaders is made by the project staff. In DRC this is e.g. the village chief and the chairperson of the Village Development Committee. In Uganda this can be people from the Local Council 1 (which consist of the LC1 Chairperson (LC1), and nine other executive committee members (LC for women, LC for youth etc.). The visit provides an opportunity to introduce the project and present its objectives and planned activities. On this occasion, the project staff discusses who to invite for the 1st meeting with the village leaders, including e.g. opinion leaders and influential people who have an interest in the development of the village. A total of max 15 leaders for this 1st meeting is recommended.

In bigger villages these leaders should be identified in the different sub-villages, in order to have a good representation from all different sectors of the village. In such bigger villages the maximum number of participants in the 1st meeting is about 25 persons, in smaller villages this can be less.

It is important to ensure that both men and women are represented in the group of invitees. Women leaders should therefore explicitly be invited. Moreover, spend some time discussing along which other lines the community can be divided (e.g. large/ small/ no landholdings, with/ without livestock, older/ younger, with/ without political influence, religious/ tribal/ immigrant groups). These other possible segments in the community should be discussed and taken into account, so that all of them are represented and involved from the start, as such taking ownership of the PIP approach and the village vision. Based on experiences in DRC and Uganda we propose the following general list of leaders and representatives to participate in this 1st meeting (max 15 persons), and this should be very well discussed in the team and can be adjusted according to the specific context or country:

1. Administrative/political leaders: village and sub-village chiefs/chairpersons (LC1); and parish chiefs
2. Representative of the village development committee or Local Councilors
3. Technical leaders: e.g. agronomist, veterinarian, or environment officers;
4. Leaders of village associations/groups: e.g. VSLAs, agricultural/breeders/traders' associations, youth groups, women groups, organizations of Persons with a Disability;
5. Local civil servants: e.g. nurses, teachers, village health teams
6. Civil society representatives in the village;
7. Church representatives, religious leaders and cultural leaders (representatives from tribes/kingdoms etc.);
8. Vulnerable groups, the voiceless, etc. (discuss who they are in this community: immigrants, tribal minority groups, landless, very poor farmers (with very small pieces of land), young single mothers?)
9. Opinion leaders (knowledgeable elders from the village)

Once identified and invited, a meeting of about 4-5 hours will be organized for these village representatives. Ideally three to five project staff members are present in these first meetings, where relations haven't been established yet and communities are new. The person going to work in the village should be in the leading role, others can record and help facilitate.

The main activities of this 1st meeting are:

- a) Increase awareness about problems and solutions in the village;
- b) Raise awareness about the project (approach) and the PIP approach;
- c) Gather ideas from village leaders and representatives on their support for the project and upcoming activities.

a) Increase awareness about problems and solutions in the village (3.5 hours)

Creating awareness about the current situation (problems) in the village and possible solutions is essential in the PIP approach and for the development of Village Visions. Experience has shown that the level of information and awareness in a community strongly influences the motivation to make plans for the future and enhance ownership. This activity therefore takes about 3-4 hours (indicative) with the following activities proposed to conduct with the leaders of a village:

- **Exchanges and reflection about problems in the village (about 2 hours)**

Participants discuss about the root causes and consequences of current problems in the village, by sharing their experiences and knowledge. This awareness of the (underlying) causes of current problems stimulates them to think about how to address these root causes, with potential solutions or corrective measures. To facilitate this session, the facilitator can go through the following steps:

Brainstorming, writing on papers (45 minutes)

- Ask each participant to write on 3 small cards 3 problems that s/he believes hinder development in the households and in the village, covering the following areas :
 - i. a social problem (related to the living conditions of the community such as education, health, governance, ...);
 - ii. an economic problem (such as agriculture, livestock, markets and value chains, etc.);
 - iii. an environmental problem (related to soil and water conditions, climate change, etc.)
- Display the writings on the wall, pool the cards with similar meanings (to remain dynamic, participants stand up and participate in the grouping of cards);
- Prioritize the problems and classify them according to economic, social and environmental issues;
- Ask participants if there are any key issues that have been overlooked that should be prioritized.

Be mindful about how the prioritization is done! Make sure that this is not done by e.g. only the most outspoken people in the meeting, or only based on frequency. It could be that only one brave person dared to mention a pressing but controversial topic! Discuss beforehand in which way the prioritization is best done (see examples in text box on the next page).

How this exercise was done in DRC (Congo)

In DRC there is a high level of illiteracy even among the leaders, and therefore writing on the cards was difficult for many of the participants. In this case, because it is important to allow everyone to express themselves and to give momentum to the discussions, the solution was to work in small groups on identifying the problems, making sure each participant can provide input :

- Groups discuss the problems that haunt the community without categorizing them (into social, environmental, economic problems) ;
- One representative of each group presents the identified problems in plenary ;
- The facilitator with the support of the participants prioritizes the problems, starting with those most cited by the groups ;
- Finally the prioritized problems are categorized into environmental, social, economic.

This exercise takes about 45 minutes.

Alternative approach for prioritization of problems

Divide in small groups, and let each group pick their top-three priority problems in a certain domain (environment, social, economic). Let the groups rotate, to add two more problems in each category. Rotate once more and the last group adds one problem if desired. Discuss in plenary if anything is still missing. Depending on the group size this can also be done in two parallel groups per domain, with the overlap/ differences between the groups discussed in plenary.

Groupwork to analyze problems (1.5 hours)

Next, participants will be asked to discuss in groups about priority problems, the root causes of these problems as well as their consequences if nothing is done to solve them. Here, to better analyze the problems, participants are encouraged to identify the causes as well as “the causes of these causes” (i.e. the underlying causes), and to identify the effects or consequences of each problem, also consequences in the future (i.e. final consequences).

- The groups will be categorized according to the 3 areas (social, economic, environmental). The formation of the groups is done by simple counting. If there are participants who have more knowledge in one area than in the other two, it is preferable that they are in that area.
- The group work is done for 45 minutes. At the end of this exercise, a table indicating the problems, their causes, and their effects is produced by each group and is presented in plenary for discussion with the other groups for about 45 minutes.

In formation of groups make sure that everyone feels free to express their opinion. Especially because you have leaders and representatives of vulnerable groups together in the session. How free do women and youth feel to express their opinion or discuss with the chief and other leaders? Discuss this and reflect on it before starting, making sure this is addressed! In case this poses challenges: consider to split the groups per topic into two, e.g. men/ women, youth/elderly or village leaders/ representatives of vulnerable groups.

- **Exchanges about possible solutions in the village (about 1 hour)**

After analyzing the problems, the participants will work in groups to propose solutions. This exchange can also be done by brainstorming.

The participants exchange all possible solutions to the identified problems and discuss them in plenary. The sharing of solutions will help to motivate each other and develop more open-mindedness that solutions are possible to these problems. Generally, sustainable solutions address the root causes of the problem, i.e. the underlying causes. For example, the problem of low agricultural production can only be solved by addressing causes such as low soil fertility, erosion, poor farming practices, etc. However, this might require to also address other underlying causes, such as lack of knowledge of good land management practices, too much pressure on the land due to a growing population, etc.

For sure, during just this first meeting it is not possible to come to a complete analysis of problems and solutions, but it is worth it to start reflecting and raise awareness with this group, and go more in-depth at later opportunities.

- **Additional information by the facilitator (total 20 à 30 mins)**

The facilitator (who is or should make themselves familiar with the environment and context) can prepare examples of sensitive problems that hinder development in the households/communities and, if these problems have not been identified in the previous discussions, propose them for discussion, in order to increase awareness of these problems and what can be done about them. Explicitly mention controversial topics (e.g. domestic violence, alcoholism, or how to include teenage mothers or immigrants in the community); some topics may not come up easily yet could really be something that the community could discuss to improve a certain situation together.

These discussions lead to a table indicating the problems, their causes, their effects, and possible solutions to these problems. This chart will serve as a basis for further discussion in later meetings and workshops.

b) Inform about the project approach / PIP approach (30 mins)

After this exercise with a reflection on the village's problems and solutions, the facilitator will inform the participants about the project's approach in general and the PIP approach in particular.

Thus, in this first meeting with the leaders and representatives, the key elements of the PIP approach are introduced, focusing on the "PIP philosophy" and why PIP is different from other approaches, the importance of developing a vision and a plan, the foundation and guiding principles (in short), and that in general all PIP principles can also be applied to other stakeholders, other than farmers. It is essential here to make the link to the previous exercise, explain clearly (in a nutshell) and with inspiring examples (e.g. using videos like the PIP video if possible) how the PIP approach works, and emphasize the importance of natural resource management and watershed/land restoration (with land as the foundation of existence in farmer communities).

Since the PIP approach will be explained much more in detail in the third meeting, this 30-minutes exercise serves as a first introduction to the PIP approach, and aims to inspire the leaders and make them enthusiastic to engage in the project and the next sessions of this Module 1.

- ***Preparing this part of the 1st meeting with the project team is essential, making sure that the facilitator can explain the PIP approach and its core elements in a clear and concise way, with inspiring examples, testimonies, visuals, etc.***

c) Get the support of the leaders and discuss upcoming activities (30 mins)

Through brainstorming, the facilitator asks the participants (village leaders) how they will support the project and the PIP approach in their village. The ideas and responses are written on a flip chart and briefly discussed. If possible each participant should contribute an idea or commitment!

Before closing the meeting and as a first follow-up action, the participants (and especially the village leaders) are asked to convey the messages of this first meeting to the other villagers and to the members of the groups that they represent.

Furthermore, each participant is requested to invite 2 other persons from their group, sub-village or direct surrounding to come to the next (second) meeting, which will be conducted with a much bigger group. This is another moment to reflect on the diversity in the village: after identifying community problems and solutions: are all relevant groups represented or should others still be invited?

→ this 1st meeting with the community takes about 4-5 hours in total.

2. Awareness raising with the village - 2nd meeting

The purpose of the 2nd meeting is to extend awareness raising to a bigger group of community representatives. This provides also the opportunity to start discussing aspirations of the village, and explain about the importance of the Village Vision. This way broader ownership of the PIP approach and project objectives is built in the community, with more villagers becoming aware about upcoming activities. The number of participants in this 2nd meeting could be quite high, given that each leader present in the 1st meeting was requested to invite 2 others, and this might make facilitation of this meeting a challenge. We suggest therefore a maximum of about 50 participants, or max 90 in bigger villages, ensuring a balanced representation of women and men, various age groups and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

In communities where a “Village Development Committee”, a Local council, or the like already exists and plays a key role in all the questions related to the village development, all the members should obviously be invited for this 2nd meeting.

There are 2 main activities to be conducted with this larger group in this 2nd meeting:

- a) Present the synthesis of the 1st meeting (with the village leaders)
- b) Participatory appraisal and identifying aspirations in the village

a) Present the synthesis of the 1st meeting (30 mins)

Before starting with the participatory appraisal of the village situation, one of the leaders (e.g. the village chief) will be asked to present a summary of the discussions from the 1st meeting and possible follow-up activities and discussions held between the community representatives and the community after that 1st meeting / session (**30 minutes**).

- ➔ The facilitator can support the selected leader in the preparation of this synthesis by drawing or writing together the main results of the 1st meeting on a paper.

b) Participatory appraisal of the current situation in the village (2 hours)

At this stage of discussion, the participants will be divided into different groups in order to make an appraisal of the current situation in the village. These working groups will be formed according to the different themes that will be discussed: economic, social and environmental. The groups per theme could still be split into e.g. men/ women, more/ less wealthy, youth/ elderly, leaders/ representatives of vulnerable groups, etc. to allow everyone to feel comfortable expressing themselves and discussing problems relevant to their group. The number of groups (5-6 people per group) will depend on the number of participants.

This appraisal/diagnosis is conducted in the following two steps :

- 1) Each group discusses the current situation in the village considering their theme (economic, social, environmental) and from their perspective, covering e.g. existing infrastructure, land issues, forests

and vegetation, rivers, crops, or any other aspect that they consider important, highlighting existing problems such as erosion, deforestation, unhealthy crops, bad roads, lots of children, etc. **After discussing the group makes a drawing of the current situation!** We suggest that in each group one representative from the 1st meeting is present to enrich the discussions with what has been previously discussed and contribute to raising more awareness within each group. This can take up to **1 hour**.

- 2) The different drawings from the groups that discussed the same theme will be pooled in order to get a picture of the current situation from the different perspectives of the stakeholders. This gives a quick overview of the current situation and the problems from the participants' perspectives that need to be addressed. Given the large number of participants, the facilitation of this session can be supported by village leaders or other volunteers from among those who participated in the 1st meeting, including the sharing and prioritization of problems (i.e. highlighting most important issues or those issues mentioned most often by the groups) in collaboration with the project facilitators. Again, think beforehand about how the prioritization is done. Perhaps each group can identify their top 2 or 3 problems, and these problems are all listed as priority problems from different perspectives. This may take up to **1 hour**.

c) Causes of environmental problems and desired changes (1 hour)

Next, all participants return to their initial group, but will now focus on the environmental problems, which are of key importance in the PIP approach and require urgent attention (and collective action by the village). In the groups the participants therefore discuss the past situation and trends for the environmental problems that were identified in the previous session, and the desired changes they envisage concerning the environment and natural resources in the village. A secretary from each group will be asked to fill in the table below with the ideas provided by the participants. This may take up to about **1 hour**.

- **Past situation:** In relation to the environmental problems identified in the previous session, discuss how the situation was in the past (20-40 years ago). For example, if the current problem is low harvests due to land degradation, participants can share what the situation was like in the past (older people can speak up to help younger people understand). This can lead people to understand the human actions that have contributed to this degradation. Understanding such problems better will lead them to identify more appropriate solutions.
- **Future trend:** Discuss the future trends of each environmental problem if nothing is done. This may lead the participants to become more aware of the risks and danger they are in, and to understand how the current situation may worsen in the future if nothing is done.
- **Desired changes:** Formulate aspirations about desired changes in the future concerning each environmental problem, assuming that actions can and will be undertaken to tackle these problems. So what is the ideal future situation in about 5 to 10 years concerning the state of natural resources and the environment in general?

Problems	Past situation (20-40 years ago)	Future trend if nothing is done	Desired future situation if action is undertaken

- ➔ *If time allows the participants can also do a short brainstorm on aspirations for other issues, the social and economic topics identified as priority problems in the earlier session. This can also serve as input for the drawing of the future situation, but again: emphasis should be given on the environmental issues, and additionally on other issues!*

d) Final plenary about natural environment (1 hour)

In this final plenary of the 2nd meeting there are 2 activities that need to be done:

- **Discussion about environmental problems:** The groups present the results of their discussions about the environmental problems in the village, based on the table, hence for each environmental problem explaining the past situation, future trends and aspirations (the desired future situation). One of the groups will start, present on row of their table (hence one problem), and then the next group takes over with another problem. This continues until all environmental problems have been addressed and all information from the groups has been presented. This will give a clear picture of the status of natural resources and what the village would like to do restore their living environment.
 - **Define degradation hotpots:** Directly following from the previous discussion on environmental problems, the plenary will discuss which two degradation sites in the village are prioritized for immediate action. These two degradation sites should be sites where action is required by neighboring farmers (all having a plot in the same site/slope) to work together on tackling erosion and restoration of the land. These sites can (at this stage) still be rather small (indicative 20-40 ha), and are preferably located at a visible place, e.g. a slope with a considerable number of plots where erosion is an imminent problem and easily observed. It's not important to make an exact delineation of the site in this meeting, but **roughly choosing the sites and reaching an agreement is essential at this stage**, because it will allow to purposely identify some Innovative Farmers (PIs) within these sites who can start and coordinate the collective action and make a plan for land restoration of the sites (see next sessions where this is further explained).
- ➔ ***The role of the facilitator is to clearly explain why selecting two sites is important and what the intention is of the project (i.e. to start at an early stage with collective actions in degraded sites and as such provide an example for the whole community).***

Important to take into account when choosing a site is that it should ideally be a micro-watershed, i.e. an area which can be treated/managed entirely, from the top to the bottom. In Burundi some of the chosen sites were slopes, and when trenches were dug these stopped at the border of the site and provoked erosion or even gully formation just outside the site. This can be avoided when the site is a micro-watershed, because it has only one outlet where the water drains of.

Once an agreement has been reached about the 2 degradation sites, the facilitator can **finalize the meeting by asking two volunteers to already start making a drawing of the desired future situation of the village**, i.e. a visualization of the aspirations and desired changes, primarily focused on the natural resources (the environment) but also other aspirations can be included / visualized. This is a nice homework exercise for a small group of participants, and can be taken to the next meeting and presented as an inspiration and example. Such a drawing with the aspirations and desired changes was done successfully in DRC (see example next page), and serves as input also for the Village Vision which will be made soon (see sessions 4, 5 and 6).

➔ **Important! Ask the volunteers to include in this drawing the 2 selected degradation sites!**

How a first drawing was made in Kalehe (DRC)

In **Kalehe** the participants already started to draw the future situation in their groups when they discussed about the environmental problems (under activity c). This took however more time (about 45 minutes extra) and is therefore presented here as “optional” (because it will make the time needed for this 2nd meeting too long, more than 5 hours). The advantage however to take this extra time is that paying more attention to drawing reinforces the emergence of new and richer ideas among the participants and allows better participation in each group. In Kalehe, in the plenary, the different groups presented the results of their discussions and the aspirations with this drawing, which was really nice. Next, in the plenary, 2 volunteers who were good drawers were chosen to make one consolidated drawing as homework from all the group drawings and the aspirations formulated by the groups.

➔ **this 2nd meeting with the community takes about 4,5 hours in total.**

3. Introducing the PIP approach - 3rd meeting

This 3rd meeting is conducted with the same group as the 2nd meeting, and has as objectives to :

- a) Discuss the drawing of the desired future situation
- b) Present the PIP approach and PIP principles
- c) Present the PIP in practice and the crucial role of the Farmer Innovators
- d) Selection of the Village Vision Committee
- e) Discussion on the organization of the first Village Assembly

a) Discuss the drawing of the desired future situation (30-45 minutes)

This 3rd meeting starts with the homework done by the two volunteers: the drawing of the future situation of the village and its environment and natural resources, based on the discussions and aspirations from the previous meeting. This is a nice starter activity to refresh the discussions, emphasize again the importance of taking collective restoration activities, and prioritize environmental activities. This presentation and discussion should take max **45 minutes!**

b) Present the PIP approach and PIP principles (1,5 hour)

The presentation of the PIP approach will cover the following elements:

- *Demonstrate how PIP is a foundation for sustainable action through the 3 principles of a strong foundation: **motivation, resilience, stewardship***
- *Discuss the guiding principles of the PIP approach: **integration, empowerment, collaboration***

Make sure that, before this meeting, you have translated these bold concepts to the language of the area where you are operating in.

i. Introduction (20 mins)

As an introduction, the facilitator uses image 7 from the PIP Image Box and asks participants:

- *What do you see in the image?* Their answers will relate to a household that dreams about an integrated farm, with beautiful crops, diversified and improved livestock, land protected against erosion, with practices such as agroforestry and composting.
- *Why is it important to have a vision and plan for the future?* The facilitator gathers participants' responses through brainstorming, and explains that the PIP approach is a bottom-up approach, which aims to change the mindsets of households and communities and motivate them to invest in their farms and households. This is done by stimulating farmer households to draw a vision (the household PIP), to plan and to invest in that vision through collaborative efforts, based on their capacities, strengths, and opportunities instead of expecting external support.

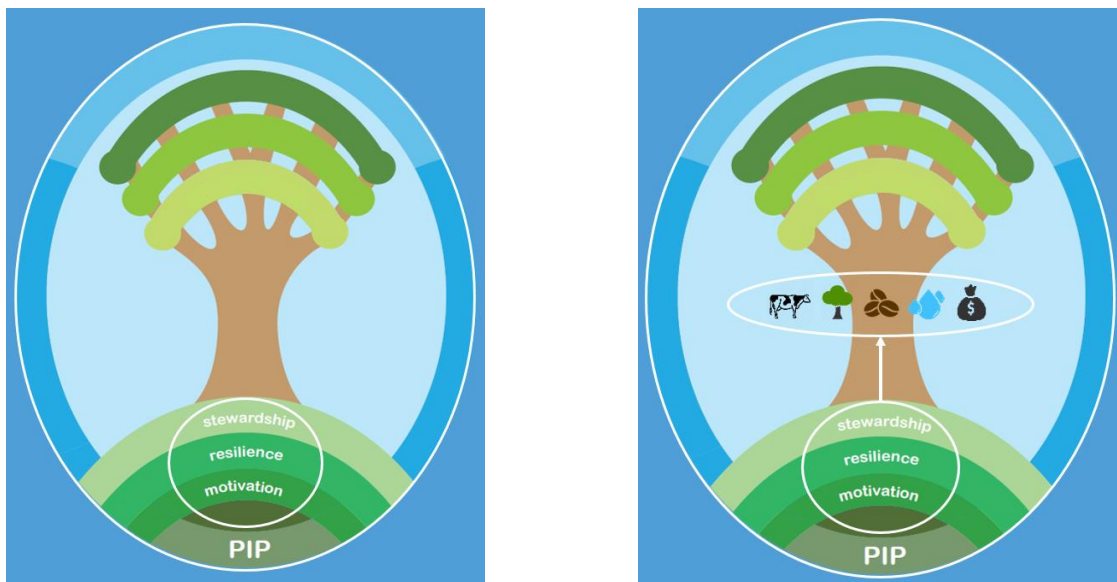
ii. The PIP foundation principles (50 mins)

• The PIP solid foundation (10 mins)

In this section the facilitator starts by explaining the importance of building a solid foundation with the PIP approach before making other investments.

Through brainstorming, the participants are asked to express themselves on how they see the sustainability of the achievements of the development projects that have taken place in their villages (probably coming to the conclusion that most of the projects lack sustainability because they often tackle the symptoms instead of building a solid foundation first).

After collecting the participants' responses, the facilitator explains the importance of building a solid foundation first before starting concrete development activities, using the following drawing as a guide (the facilitator can also draw this “PIP tree” on a flip chart and explain while drawing!):



With the help of the image on the left, the facilitator explains that “just as a tree needs good fertile soil to grow, the development of households and communities need people (you!) who are intrinsically motivated to invest in their future”. This is the foundation for ownership and sustainability of activities to be implemented in the communities, such as (referring to icons in the image on the right) “*livestock activities, reforestation, value chain development, water projects and income-generating activities*”.

Building this solid foundation is the ultimate goal of the PIP approach: **in all PIP activities we work to transform people into motivated stewards of their land and natural resources, thus achieving more resilient farms, households, communities and landscapes.**

Next, the facilitator presents the components/principles of this foundation in the PIP approach: **motivation, resilience, stewardship**, and then explains the participants each of these principles.

- **Motivation (10 mins)**

The facilitator asks: What do you think **intrinsic motivation** means? How is it different from extrinsic motivation? He explains that extrinsic motivation is based on payments, gifts, hand-outs, etc. Why is intrinsic motivation necessary? After gathering the participants' responses, the facilitator can add:

- Give examples of how donation-based approaches or other extrinsic motivators influence the intrinsic motivation of people, and lead to failure of projects because beneficiaries do not have the motivation, do not take ownership of these projects, hence there is no sustainability of the undertaken activities.
- Share a testimonies (see box on the next page) or a video of a PIP farmer that show the power of intrinsic motivation for self-development (contrarily to expecting external aid).
- Take the opportunity to discuss the wait-and-see attitude that is probably very common in the community, and discuss its effects. **“Wait-and-see attitude” means that people wait for free external assistance to “help” them, passively, not using their own capacities and potential.**

Example of a testimony from Nzeyimana Jados, commune Buraza in Gitega/Burundi:

"Before we were trained in PIP, we were in miserable conditions. We had no vision for our future. I had a bad habit of laziness and I did not help my wife in agricultural activities. I spent a lot of time in the bar. After being trained in PIP, we understood that the foundation of a household is trust and collaboration with the household members. Then we learned to plan together according to our resources and I learned to collaborate with my wife. We planned various activities and after three years now, we have achieved much of what we planned. Instead of just mixing our crops on a field without appropriate associations, we now practice good integration in our field, based on a plan. We plant banana, mulch it and integrate it with Japanese plum trees (tree tomato) on one side. On the other side, we integrate the banana with pumpkins and eggplants. We have 3 compost pits to produce organic manure for our field. We have protected our entire field from erosion by making trenches on the contour lines, and we mulch our banana trees.

Thanks to the changes we have made through the PIP approach, our production has now increased. Our bean production has doubled from 200 to 400 kg; our maize has increased from 120 to 300 kg. Whereas our banana used to produce only 8, max 10 kg of bunches, we can now harvest up to 20-30 kg of each banana bunch. In addition, we now grow cabbages, eggplants, amaranths, carrots, beets and leeks all year round because we use irrigation. Concerning the breeding, it has also improved. Our cow is now kept in a permanent improved barn. We also have a diversified breeding, with 5 rabbits, 4 hens and a goat. We appreciate that we are managing the harvest better than before. Most of the family's needs are met through the PIP approach. We have already achieved 80% of our planned activities.

- **Resilience (10 mins)**

The facilitator asks: What do you think **resilience** means? The facilitator can complete their responses by explaining that resilience is the ability of a population or “a system” (like a household or village) to recover, to continue to function after a shock.

After gathering the participants' responses, the facilitator can do this exercise with the group: Based on the analysis of the village's problems (done in previous sessions), sort out one (or more) problem(s) that show that resilience is very important in dealing with these problems.

Example of an issue: Climate change is a common phenomenon, expressed in most villages. The PIP approach builds resilience by encouraging households and communities to plan more diversified activities, based on good land management, and to better organize and collaborate to achieve their vision/plan. For example, in the event of a climatic shock (e.g. a long drought, or extreme rainfall), a diversified household with a diversity of integrated activities will be more resilient and can continue to function, particularly when the land is protected as well to such climate shocks. In addition, collaboration and mutual support within families and communities builds social resilience, with increased trust between villagers and stronger social networks.

- **Stewardship (10 mins)**

The facilitator introduces this principle by asking: What do you think **stewardship** means in relation to natural resources and the environment? Write the participants' answers on a flip chart. Then ask: Why is it necessary to take care of natural resources? The facilitator completes their responses by explaining that environmental awareness and good stewardship are essential for “sustainable development” in the village, and that any action or investment should take into account environmental protection (see exercise below). Stewardship therefore means “taking care of the natural environment”, being aware of the need to conserve natural resources is central. This is central to the PIP approach, and is made visible in the (household) PIP and in the Village Vision.

Exercise: The facilitator explains that farmers often invest in their farmland without taking conservation measures. For instance, farmers use improved seeds on already degraded land which is infertile. This makes investment useless, because improved seeds will only result in better crops if the land is managed sustainably. Based on this example the facilitator can reinforce the message by asking the participants how the land in their community has evolved over time and ask the participants: what actions do you do to take of the natural resources; do you consider yourself a good steward, if yes, why? If not, which message do you take home to better preserve natural resources and become a good steward?

Example of a testimony on environmental awareness from a PIP farmer from Burundi:

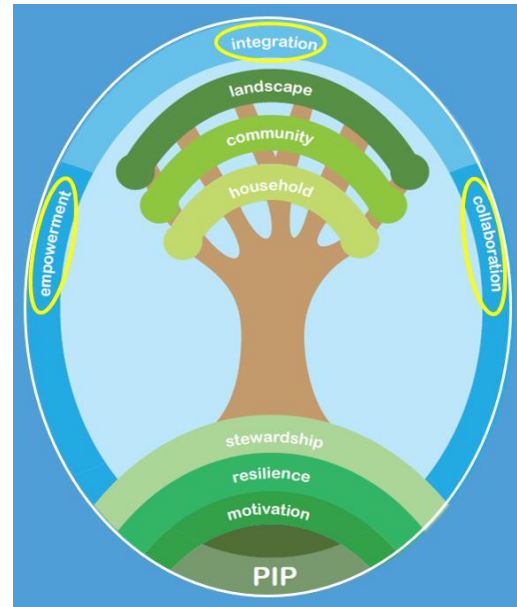
"During awareness raising workshops when developing the village vision, we realized that problems of erosion are collective problems that require collective solutions. For example, my house and fields are located downstream in a marsh (valley) area which is affected by erosion from the upstream area. My neighbour and I had already planned to move out of this area because of the runoff from the upstream area that was damaging our homes and land. When we became aware of this, we started to work together to protect in the upstream area, together with other neighbours living there. Now the problem has diminished, and my crops are no longer submerged by water and affected."

After these discussions, the facilitator concludes (showing again the “PIP tree”) that a foundation with intrinsically motivated, resilient households and communities that really care about natural resource protection (stewards) is essential for other solutions to be more sustainable (5 mins).

iii. The PIP guiding principles (20 mins)

After a short break, the facilitator continues by explaining the three guiding principles of PIP in understandable terms: empowerment, integration, and collaboration, again with the help of Image 7 and the PIP-tree with the PIP Guiding Principles.

The facilitator can introduce by saying, "We have just heard the principles of the PIP foundation, which are like the goals of the PIP approach: to build a strong base of motivated people who are stewards of their land and a resilient farm. Now we will look at the guiding principles of the PIP approach, which are recurrent throughout the PIP process, and which should be adopted by all people working with the PIP approach, as a normal way of doing things, used in everything we do".



- **Integration (5 mins)**

The facilitator first asks: What do you think integration means? Then he explains that the PIP approach encourages integration, and that by integrating different activities on the farm and in the household, families gain more benefits because one activity can support another activity! Then the facilitator and participants discuss examples of integrated farm management, using image 7 as a guide: how integration contributes to resilience, and the benefits of integrating actions at household and community level (i.e. investing in a common future).

- **Empowerment (5 mins)**

The facilitator continues with empowerment as another guiding principle of the PIP, and asks "What do you think empowerment means? Why is this important? After gathering their ideas, he explains and discusses with participants what empowerment means in the PIP approach: Having confidence in your own ability to improve the future; i.e. learning to fish for yourself instead of waiting for others to give you fish. Find a word in the local language that best describes "empowerment" (Kujitegemeya in Kiswahili).

Next, the facilitator asks the participants: what are the activities that community members do not often do, even though they are able to do them themselves? Record the activities on a flip chart, which are examples of activities all community members can start with without external support!

- **Collaboration (5 mins)**

The PIP trainer may also ask the following questions: Why is collaboration necessary? What activities need to be done collaboratively to be most effective? Here he can mention the digging of trenches or bunds on contour lines for land conservation, planting trees (reforestation), selling products together on the market, joining joint savings and credit groups, etc.

The facilitator can conclude that the principle of collaboration is essential throughout the PIP process: by thinking, planning, and working together on common goals, in households, in communities, greater impact and lasting change can be achieved!

Concluding exercise: The facilitator asks participants to discuss, in pairs, which of the foundation or guiding principles they consider most important and why. If time allows some of the pairs can briefly explain, and differences can be heard.

c) Present the PIP in practice and the crucial role of the Farmer Innovators (2 hrs)

• The Village Vision (15 mins)

The facilitator explains that creating the Village Vision is a key element of the PIP approach. From the previous 2nd meeting a drawing of the present situation is already available, but now it is the time to create a more complete Village Vision, the dream of a better future that the village community aspires to achieve within a certain time horizon, usually ranging from 3 to 5 years. By focusing on the village's own means and resources, the Village Vision becomes a framework for village members to collaborate and coordinate actions toward common goals, a common destiny. It is expected that the community members will be stimulated by this common vision to invest in a better future for their village with various activities to solve common problems, starting with what they are capable of (e.g. addressing the problem of land degradation through collective actions of erosion control, reforestation, solving social conflicts, etc.)

The Village Vision can also inspire development plans developed at the higher institutional level to take into account the real needs of the villages in their planning and, where appropriate, to support actions that go beyond community capacity.

The facilitator can ask the two volunteers to show again their drawing, including the location of the identified degradation sites, and then explains that the next steps for the creation of the Village Vision are as follows:

- Select or appoint a Village Vision Committee which will make the first version of the Village Vision (this will be done at the end of this 3rd meeting)
- Sensitize the rest of the village in an Assembly on the reflections so far formulated to collect more opinions and aspirations to be included in the Village Vision (see step 4 of this Module);
- Create a first (preliminary) Village Vision with a small group of villagers (see step 5 of this Module);
- Validate the first Village Vision with the community (see step 6 of this Module);
- Develop the final version of the Village Vision (in about a year, when most households in the village have already made their household PIP).

• The household PIP (15 mins)

The facilitator shows a drawing of a household PIP (e.g. from Burundi or Uganda, with the present and future desired situation) and discusses with the participants what they see. After gathering participants' responses, the facilitator explains that the PIP approach begins with households becoming aware of their own future vision, based on their aspirations and capacities, and that they develop an action plan to get there. As the PIP drawing shows, there are different kind of activities visible in this vision, concerning agriculture, livestock, natural resource management, income generation, and household improvements. The facilitator shows these components on the drawing: being aware of the current situation and feeling the need and ability to change and reach the desired future situation are the first steps in the PIP

approach. To conclude: show the PIP on the wall (as shown in the PIP Image Box) and discuss the benefits with the participants of hanging the drawing on the wall.

- **Scaling the PIP approach in the village (5 mins)**

The facilitator explains that the PIP approach will be disseminated in the village through farmer-to-farmer trainings by means of the **Farmer Innovators (or PIs, from *Paysans Innovateurs* in French)**, and tells the number of PIs that are planned/needed in the village (usually 20-25, but can vary depending on the number of households in the village). He furthermore explains that the PIs will be trained first and then spread the creation of (household) PIPs by training an average of 10 households each during a “PIP competition” organized at village level. Next to scaling the PIP creation this PIP competition aims to build cohesion, trust and collaboration in the village.

- **The role of the Farmer Innovators / PIs (15 mins)**

It is important to explain and discuss the role of PIs and their importance, because they are the pillar for the success of the PIP approach in their village. Their responsibilities are :

- To participate in the PIP trainings to create their household PIP, be first to be trained in PIP;
- To participate in any other trainings to support the implementation of their PIPs;
- To serve as a role model for their communities through the implementation of their PIPs;
- To train other farmers on the PIP approach, i.e. PIP creation and other trainings;
- To share knowledge and information with other farmers;
- To mobilize their communities in development activities (e.g. on sustainable land management);
- To monitor new PIP farmers trained and report regularly to the project field staff.

- **Decide on the criteria and strategy for selecting the PIs (1 hour)**

Next, the group will discuss the criteria for selecting the PIs and the strategy for choosing them. Given the role that PIs are expected to play, the selection of the PIs is a crucial step: they are the foundation for the whole process. Four main criteria with corresponding indicators should be used in the selection process:

1. **Social status in the community:** How well is the farmer socially accepted by others? Does he/she have a solid social status, a good reputation, and is seen as a neutral person by the majority of the community?
2. **Attitude to move forward:** to what extent does the farmer have a drive to improve? This refers not only to innovations in agriculture, but also to other activities, showing a willingness to make progress.
3. **Performance of the farm:** How well does the farm perform, also in comparison with others? How engaged is the farmer in farming activities, are there innovations on the farm, and are there better practices?
4. **Willingness to innovate:** is the farmer willing to experiment with new practices, to take some risk to improve and invest in the farm, and put aside old convictions and beliefs?

Important to emphasise is that the PIs ideally represent inspiring examples for the diverse segments in the community. Hence, the four criteria could be relative to different segments of farmers: poorer/wealthier, large/small farm size, men/ women, etc. The more diverse the group, the more likely that people from different segments in the community will feel inspired by them and follow their example.

Once these main criteria have been discussed, the community representatives will be asked to provide additional criteria that they feel are important and appropriate to the context: what do you think are other criteria for the selection of Farmer Innovators? Here the facilitator can present criteria from other locations for inspiration (see example below from Uganda). Next, the participants can work in groups to propose criteria, and then present these for validation in a plenary session.

➔ **Another important criterium is that at least some of the PIs should have a plot in the earlier identified degradation sites or sites (see 2nd meeting). Depending on the size of these sites we recommend that at least 3 PIs should be located in each of the two sites, which would speed-up the collective action and restoration work of the sites!**

To finalize this section, the group discusses the methodology to be used to select the PIs. The facilitator asks the participants to suggest how they think this selection would be best done, meanwhile making sure that their suggestions are participatory and inclusive. As was the case in Burundi, there may be cases of favouritism, and it is up to the facilitator to ensure that this problem is addressed in a timely manner if it occurs. Usually a small committee is made or appointed at the end of the meeting that will make the short-list of potential PIs, which will be presented in the 1st Village Assembly (see next step 4).

PI selection criteria used in Uganda

- The PI must have a coaching ability
- Be able to read and write
- Must be living within the village
- Must have access to land for farming
- Must not be coming from a home with conflicts among household members
- Must be willing to allocate time to the project
- Must have a spirit of voluntarism.
- Only one person should be selected from each household
- Must be a practicing farmer-see bullet 4 from the top
- Must not be a drunkard

In DRC, the community representatives coming from each sub-village, under the chief of that sub-village, organized a meeting in their sub-village. After having presented the criteria for the PI's selection, the participating community members and the community representatives collaborated to make a first list of PIs which was to be validated in the 1st Village Assembly.

d) Selection of the Village Vision Committee (30 minutes)

In villages that have a “Village Development Committee” or the like, the Village Vision Committee can just be a sub-committee, appointed by the VDC; in that case this step is very fast. However, if there is no VDC or if the participants in this 3rd meeting decide to appoint a new Village Vision Committee with volunteers or people interested in village development, the selection should be done during this 3rd meeting and might take **about half 30 minutes**, based on criteria to be discussed, like for instance:

- Active involvement in village development activities;
- Being an inspirational example for a certain segment in society and having a leading role in solving village problems and stimulating others to join;
- Respected person in the village;
- Other similar criteria as used for the selection of PIs.

The designated Village Vision Committee will be a group of max 10 people or – in case of bigger villages – 15 people, and is presented/approved during the 1st Village Assembly. They work on the Village Vision development during step 5 as presented in this Module.

e) Discussion on the organization of the first Village Assembly (15 minutes)

Before closing the meeting, the facilitator and community representatives fix a date for the 1st Village Assembly and designate volunteers to present the results from the first 3 meetings:

- Present the **current problems**, how they were in the past and the trends if nothing is done as discussed in the meetings;
- Present the **possible solutions** to these problems and **the aspirations** for change that were defined in the meetings;
- Present what the PIP approach is about in the form of **a sketch**, i.e. a short performance (theatre) by some volunteers in which they express what they have understood concerning the PIP approach so far (see box below).

In DRC, the participants suggested people for the sketches who are known to be talented among those who participated in the meeting and some other community members. The project then organized a short meeting with these people and discussed what the subjects for the sketches considering the problems and aspirations formulated, and with more emphasis on environmental issues but also other key issues which were raised. Then they went to prepare the sketches. Before the village assembly (see next step) it is suggested to meet again with the group and listen to the sketches they prepared to provide advice for improvement. This will assure that the sketches are impactful and really serve to raise awareness among the community members at the Assembly

→ **this 3rd meeting with the village takes about 5 hours in total.**

4. Village Assembly 1 : Awareness raising and validation of Farmer Innovators

After the meetings with the community representatives, awareness raising continues at village level, with the aim to enrich the aspirations already expressed in the previous meetings, as input to the Village Vision which will be elaborated by a **Village Vision Committee** in the next step (see section 5). The community representatives who participated in the previous meetings have an important role in this 1st Village Assembly as they will present the results and ideas exchanged in the previous meetings, and perform a sketch about environmental and social aspects related to the PIP approach. The following steps show the suggested topics of this 1st Village Assembly.

a) Introduction (20-30 minutes)

- Opening remarks and welcome (by the village leader or local authority)
- Introductory remarks by project staff, and an explanation of the 3 objectives of this 1st Village Assembly, which are:
 1. **To present the results of previous meetings** on the problems that limit the development of the village and the aspirations that have been formulated so far, in order to gather additional input from the participants;
 2. **To present the PIP approach** and its contribution to village development;
 3. **To validate the Farmer Innovators**, and come to the final list and approval of the PIs by the Village Assembly
- A sketch prepared by community representatives who volunteered in the previous session (see 3rd meeting) in order to raise awareness on environmental and social (empowerment) aspects. Examples of key topics and messages that can be performed in the sketch are:
 - land degradation issues, causes and solutions;
 - planning and empowerment in households;
 - implementation of integrated activities;
 - collaboration in the village;
 - collaboration and institutional support to solve village problems.

b) Presentation of the results of the previous meetings (45 minutes)

- The volunteers (representatives) designated in the previous meeting present the results of the first 3 meetings concerning problems and solutions identified, as well as the aspirations for change, using the overviews that were made as well as the drawings of the current and desired future situation of the village.
- The participants validate and complete the results by bringing-in additional problems, solutions and aspirations. If the group is big then a megaphone can be used so that everyone can express themselves.
- The facilitator explains what will be done with the results and the next step: drawing the Village Vision by a Village Vision Committee. This is the moment to present the members of this committee as appointed in the 3rd meeting and ask for approval by the Assembly.

c) Presentation of the PIP approach (45 minutes)

- Using Images 1 & 9 of the PIP Image Box, the facilitator asks participants what they see and if the situation is similar in their village. All participants should have the opportunity to speak.
- Next, the facilitator explains the PIP approach in an easy-to-understand language, for example: *PIP is a new approach that encourages households and their families to develop a vision, to plan and invest in that vision for 3-5 years, to improve the current situation (of the farm and the household) with an awareness of their own strengths, resources and opportunities for self-development.*
- The facilitator presents Image 7 of the PIP Image Box and asks them what they see (this image illustrates people dreaming about their vision, with an integration of various activities and where the land is well managed). Alternatively, Image 16 can also be used.
- Then the facilitator talks about the PIP principles with the support of some examples or local proverbs. Empowerment deserves special attention, i.e. questioning the attitude of waiting for free external assistance that many people have (wait-and-see attitude), and emphasizing that people have enormous potential if they develop the right mindset and attitude.
- Next, the facilitator explains how the PIP approach will be implemented in the village, emphasizing the selection and training of Farmer Innovators, and the scaling by means of farmer-to-farmer trainings to “next generations” of PIP farmers (G1, G2, G3, etc.).
- Once this is explained and understood by the participants, the facilitator explains about the crucial role of the Farmer Innovators, and reads the criteria for their selection followed by asking the question to the participants if they have anything to add about the criteria.

d) Validation of the PIs (45-60 minutes)

- The project staff receives the list of PIs (Farmer Innovators) proposed by the community representatives and reads it aloud to the community present. The suggested PIs are then presented to the community to be validated or invalidated. In the latter case, the community is asked to propose a replacement.
- Example: In Burundi, in order to avoid conflicts during the selection process, more than the required number of PIs was pre-selected and presented. To make the final selection of the 20-25 PIs, all candidates were asked to line up. Next all community members were requested to line up behind the candidate that they supported, without the latter being able to notice those who had or had not chosen him. The candidates with the biggest number of “supporters” were eventually chosen. This can be done also per sub-village or locality to make sure that there is a good geographical spreading of PIs in the village.

e) Conclusion – closure

- This 1st Village Assembly is concluded by reminding the participants about the objectives of the PIP approach and project, and inform them about the next steps: the development of the Village Vision by the Village Vision Committee and the start of the training of the Farmer Innovators.

→ **this 1st Village Assembly takes about 3 hours in total.**

A visit to the homes of the selected Farmer Innovators by the project staff is essential, as it allows to confirm if they really meet the conditions!

5. Development of the first version of the Village Vision

The vision and planning stage at village level will be carried out by the members of the Village Vision Committee. The project staff will accompany this committee to develop the first version of the Village Vision, which will mainly include actions and objectives that the village can achieve according to its means. Clear communication about this is necessary to avoid raising unrealistic expectations in the community. The main purpose of this first Village Vision is therefore to help identify the main priority actions in each village, and generate the intrinsic motivation in the village to undertake action. This requires that the villagers become aware that the Village Vision and the accompanying action plan are meant to help community development, and that the costs of implementing it come from the community itself. Ownership is thus crucial, and the action plan should therefore not be developed to seek external support.

It should be emphasized that this first Village Vision is still a draft: it is the beginning of the process of developing the Village Vision, which will be improved at a later stage when implementation of the PIP approach is more advanced. At the current initial stage of the PIP approach the villagers have not yet learned about the importance of planning: they should first do the PIP (visioning and planning) at household level, and next at village level, using their experience with the household PIP. Hence, developing the first Village Vision is not an easy task, and we therefore suggest that they start by planning (collective) activities that can be quite easily implemented in one year.

Lesson learned from DRC:

At this initial stage of the PIP approach a 3-5 year comprehensive plan is difficult to understand, and not feasible for this first version of the Village Vision. The Village Vision Committee will therefore make a Village Vision (drawing) of the 3-5 year aspirations, and from these aspirations make a planning for the first year only, considering priority activities that the community is able to undertake with their own means.

Steps to take for developing the first Village Vision

Supporting the committee in developing the first draft of the Village Vision and action plan may involve the following steps, which total an average of 5-6 hours of training (see Appendix for a planning support workshop schedule). Discussing and making the action plan (the third and last step in this session) might take more time and even an extra day, so if time allows two days can be planned for to come to a higher quality first Village Vision.

a) Draw the actual and future desired situation of the village (60 minutes)

One of the committee members recalls the diagnosed problems and the defined aspirations from the earlier meetings. Furthermore there is already a rough drawing of the desired future situation of the village available from the 2nd meeting, but it is recommended that the Village Vision Committee draws a new version of the current and future situation anyway, using all input and suggestions from the previous meetings and the first Village Assembly. Hence the actions are:

- Elaborate the drawing of the current situation taking into account the exchanges that took place in the previous meetings: illustrate the state of the current situation of the village, the problems to be addressed, locate different recognizable elements in the village (as land marks) such as infrastructure, farmland, forests, rivers, etc. and the different problems to be addressed in the village such as soil erosion, deforestation, state of the crops, roads, etc.
- Draw the future situation illustrating all the aspirations or objectives for change that the community has formulated for a period of 3-5 years. While drawing, locate each aspiration in its place in the village: locate where the reforestation activities will be carried out in the village, where the road will pass, where a new public water source will be built, etc.

It should be noted that some elements, such as the social aspects, are not easy to draw, even though they can be found in the list of identified problems, aspirations and in the action plan! Consider including them in the drawing by use of a symbol.

b) Prioritize aspirations for the first year (30-45 minutes)

Based on the longlist of aspirations and future vision, the Village Vision committee decides which aspirations are achievable in the first year and which should be prioritized. These aspirations can be in either of the 3 pillars (environment, social, economic) or in just one or two, depending on what the committee decides. It is important at this stage to focus on **collective activities that can be relatively easy and at the short-term** undertaken by the community! Please note that degradation sites that need to be collectively managed by a group of farmers were already identified at an earlier stage.

Given that environmental actions are so important, the facilitator will focus at this stage on collective actions for the environmental domain, such as the restoration of degraded communal land where the whole community can work together to stabilize the land, tackle erosion (or control a gully), or plant trees (e.g. on landslide scars, along the river, etc.).

c) Elaborate the action plan for the first year for each priority aspiration (3-4 hours)

In order to elaborate the action plan for the Village Vision the following steps are taken:

- Define a specific goal for each aspiration
- List the activities to achieve this goal
- Make a planning for this aspiration
- Reflect on the mobilization of local resources (means needed)

An example is first elaborated with the whole group (1 hour), and then the committee members work in small groups (1 hour) to plan the other priorities, and finalize to discuss the work in plenary (1 hour).

➔ It is recommended to plan for only 2-3 priority collective actions, given that this is just the start and more collective action will follow when a final Village Vision is made!

i. Define a specific goal for each aspiration

The committee members are supported in formulating a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) goal for each priority aspiration. For example: “By December 2023, the tops of hills X and Y and the borders of roads Z and W will be reforested”.

Experience from DRC

It’s important to define goals as SMART as possible, because actions then become much more tangible and concrete. For example, goals like “increase agricultural production”, or “restore the ecosystem in our village” are not SMART and as a result it is difficult to define concrete actions for such goals.

ii. List the activities to achieve this goal

The committee members discuss and write down all the activities that contribute to the achievement of this goal. For the example given, the activities might be :

- Setting up agroforestry nursery sites: making land available, sowing in germinators, making banana leaf containers, filling and transplanting into containers, watering, maintenance and monitoring of plantings;
- Planting, replanting, maintenance and follow-up of plantations.

iii. Make a planning for this aspiration

The following format is given as a guide to plan all the activities listed under the previous step. This is just an example, and villages can improve/change by adding columns (e.g. a result column), remove columns, or by making a more detailed schedule (e.g. for 12 months).

Specific aspiration / goal :

Activities (description)	Who?	Where?	When?	Means needed			Person responsible (for organizing and monitoring)
				Description	Costs	Source	

Specific aspiration / goal : Plant 10 trees per family in 2023 (example from DRC)

Activities (description)	Who?	Where?	When?	Means needed			Person responsible (for organizing and monitoring)	Notes
				Description	Costs	Source		
Awareness raising on the importance of trees	Village Development Committee with local agronomist	In each sub-village	April	-	0	-	President of the Village Development Committee	
Establishing a nursery with 12,000 seedlings	An appointed tree nursery group	Find an available site	April-August	Seeds, materials, etc.	200 \$	Own contribution of all hh	President of the Village Development Committee	

Suggested Action Plan format for Uganda (CommonGround project)

- GOAL
- Activity
- Place
- Inputs/Resources
 - Sources of resources
 - Quantity
 - Unit price
 - Total costs
- Responsible person
- Timeframe
- Status
- Comments

Lesson learned from DRC:

In DRC the Village Vision was elaborated by the Village Development Committee, which already existed in most villages. However, in some villages bad experiences with the transparent management of community funds were reported, particularly due to the low credibility of some leaders. For this reason, it is necessary to pay attention to capacity building of the VDCs on topics such as leadership, transparent management, accountability, etc. so that they are up to the task of steering the Village Vision. The priority themes for capacity building of the committees leading the implementation of the village visions are:

- Building leadership skills among the committee member;
- Community organization/structuring to implement the plans developed;
- Financial management techniques (to ensure transparency in management);
- Advocacy techniques to ensure that village visions are taken into account in the chiefdom plans (at higher levels);
- Training of local people in charge of technical aspects according to needs, such as the installation of a tree nursery, designing and digging trenches, etc.
- Monitoring and evaluation of progress (with appropriate tools)

*iv. **Reflect on the mobilization of local resources***

In general, communities are not used to mobilizing local financial resources for community/collective activities: their focus is mostly on mobilizing human resources, such as manpower, in order to carry out planned activities. However, some activities require financial means, and doing this can reinforce the spirit of collective action and ownership. Once again: it is crucial that the costs related to the realization of the priority actions from the first Village Vision come from the community itself!

- ➔ The calculation of the **means needed** for each activity is usually done after the workshop, because in this workshop there is often not enough information to complete the column of costs for the

means needed. This can be done later by the committee members, supported by the project staff, or another (half) can be planned with the Village Development Committee to work on the means needed.

A useful tool used in DRC:

To support community-based local resource mobilization, we can use the Wealth Ranking Tool (ICRISAT, 2009). This tool classifies village households according to their level of wealth, based on criteria defined by the community. The tool distinguishes households in the village into:

- Households that can be considered by the community as rich (example of criteria: they have a large farm (ha), good crops, good diversified livestock, nice house, employs a workforce, etc.);
- Households that can be considered moderately wealthy (example: who have a medium-sized farm, some animals, some sources of income,...),
- Households that can be considered poor (example: without land or working on marginal land, selling labour to others, selling their fields to support themselves, etc.)

The Village Vision committee will define the criteria and will discuss/validate them with the community to avoid bias and conflicts. Finally, depending on the estimated amount of needs to finance the priority actions in the Village Vision, the committee members can agree with the community on the contribution of the community members according to their category (based on the Wealth Ranking).

For example: if the financial means to produce 50,000 seedlings for reforestation has been estimated at 1,200,000 Francs (the labour being provided by the community) and if, considering the number of 1,000 households in the village, we find 50% of average, 20% of rich, 20% of poor, 10% of very poor, the contribution by category can be calculated (agreed on) according to their financial capacities.

6. Village Assembly 2: Discussing the Village Vision and action plan

The draft Village Vision (current situation, future, and action plan) thus developed is presented to the community in a second Village Assembly to create ownership and enhance their motivation to adhere to the collective priority activities envisaged to solve the urgent problems of the village. In this 2nd Village Assembly community members will have the opportunity to enrich or validate the draft action plan for the first year developed by the committee. Based on this input and possible new ideas, the Village Vision committee can then come together again to finalize the first draft of the Village Vision. Once this is done implementation of concrete collective actions according to the action plan can begin!

➔ **Again: it is recommended to start with only 2-3 concrete collective activities!**

Examples of concrete activities from the Village Visions and action plans :

- Setting up tree nurseries for the reforestation of the hill tops
- Tracing of trenches / contour lines and planting of hedges to fight against erosion
- Production of organic matter through composting
- Meetings to promote good governance
- Construction of markets
- Promoting livestock housing and fodder production
- Agricultural feeder roads
- Weekly community meetings
- Community cleaning actions (collectively, e.g. every week or month)
- Community awareness raising meetings on family planning
- Land conflicts sessions/workshops

As explained before, the final version of the Village Vision will be developed later after the 1st PIP competition, as by then the community members will have more experience with (household PIP) planning processes, and will be more open-minded and with more knowledge. This would also be the moment to connect community actions and planning to higher level development plans, e.g. from the district or communes. This process is further explained in another Module of the PIP approach.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 : Programme for the planning of the Village Vision of Muhongoza/Kalehe littoral (DRC)

Duration	Activity	Responsible
5 mins	1. Opening and welcome	Authority from the local administration
	2. Presentation of the participants	
5mins	3. Presentation of the programme	Facilitator
5 mins	4. Presentation by one of the participants of aspirations and actions already formulated for each pillar (social, economic, environmental)	One of the committee members
60 mins	5. The present and future situation – drawing the Village Vision based on previous versions	All committee members
30-45 mins	6. Prioritizing activities for the 1 st year and rough planning of these	All committee members
1 hour	7. Facilitate the planning of one priority aspiration as an example/exercise: formulate objectives, list the actions, plan the actions and the means needed (filling the form).	All committee members
1 hour	8. Group work to plan the remaining aspirations and objectives	All committee members
1 hour	9. Plenary to discuss the results of the groupwork	All committee members
20 mins	10. Recommendations for a strategy to mobilize local resources	
5 mins	11. Closure with an encouraging message	
	Closure	

Duration: 5h-6h

Annex 2 : Design of the future situation of Kashara and Mikamba (DRC)

