Designing projects in a rapidly changing world
Learning from piloting project design in Ethiopia
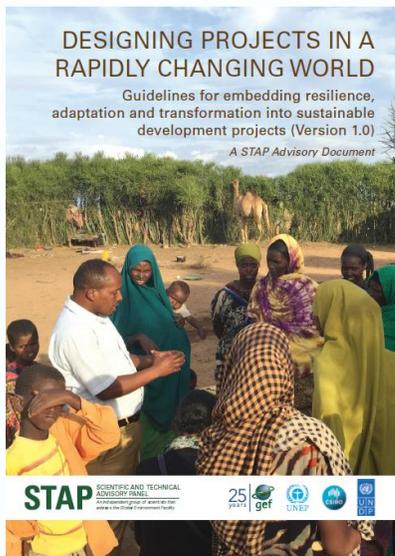
ROTTERDAM MAY 2016

www.csiro.au

Deborah O'Connell, Alice Ruhweza, Yiheyis Maru, Paul Ryan, Alan Nicol

---

Thanks to

DESIGNING PROJECTS IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD
Guidelines for embedding resilience, adaptation and transformation into sustainable development projects (Version 1.0)
A STAP Advisory Document

http://www.stapgef.org/the-resilience-adaptation-and-transformation-assessment-framework/

Why RAPTA?

Aspirational goals around sustainability, resilience, adaptation, transformation

Challenge to make the concepts operational, identify suitable actions, design projects to deliver them, build capacity for R, A, T, and **learn as we go**

RAPTA has been developed to

- bridge different tools and approaches to resilience, adaptation and transformation
- support effective, durable planning by embedding these concepts at heart of project
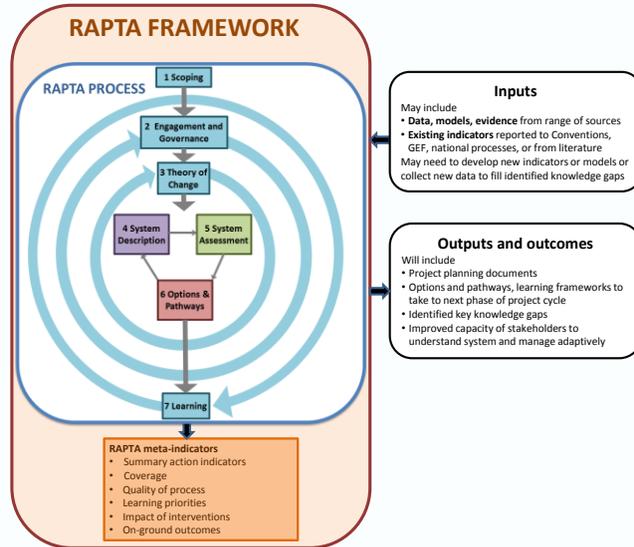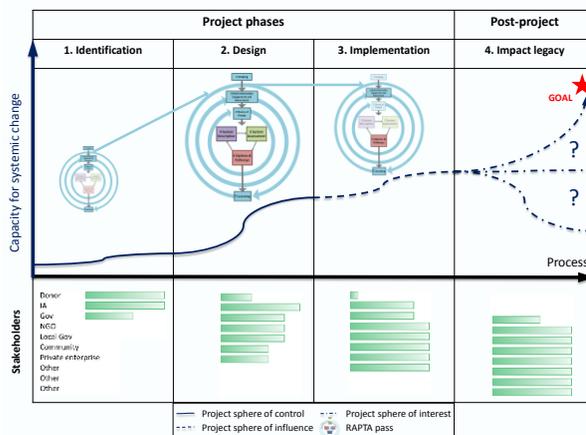
Our use of terms...

- about how to make key <u>interventions</u> in the system...
- informed by the concepts of <u>resilience, adaptation, and transformation</u>...
- applied in an <u>intentional</u> way...
- in order to move towards <u>sustainability</u> goals.

What is RAPTA?

Use of RAPTA in different stages of project development

Ideally:

- A 'rapid assessment' in project identification

- A deep assessment during project design

- An emphasis on Engagement and Governance, and Learning during project implementation

In this very short timeframe:

- Used 'rapid assessment' in the Design phase … so it is under-done

Why Ethiopia?

- Social and politically complex system

- Complex agro-ecology – many changes over relatively small distances on the margins of highlands and lowlands

- System transforms and degrades rapidly

- Challenges can be relatively simple (migration from A to B) but also highly complex and conflict laden

- Very high human and livestock population growth

- Country is well sensitised on climate change and climate variability - current severe drought (caused by El Nino) is on Government's radar

Interactive, iterative use of Theory of Change

- A powerful tool to explore conditions necessary and sufficient to reach goal

- How does the change happen? What assumptions and how to test?

Example of North Shewa

- Helped to frame problem, and think beyond environmental solutions
- Normally seek to address environmental issues – reduce land degradation, reduce overgrazing, introduce sustainable land management.
- But they don't address the drivers
- Helped to understand values and rules and how they interact with the other drivers.

Example of North Shewa

Control factors and thresholds

Alternative desired states

Undesired state
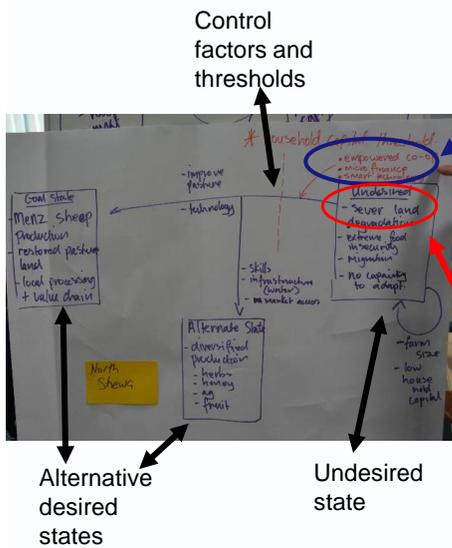
How the project looks with a RAPTA lens:

1. Scales to weigh sheep
2. Form farmer empowered co-operatives
3. Have access to microfinance for the co-operatives
4. Link co-operatives/sellers directly to buyers

These ideas need to be tested in the field, checked with existing literature etc.

How the project would have looked without RAPTA:

1. Focus on land degradation
2. Typically a set of NRM interventions

These NRM interventions may not achieve the Global Environmental Benefits but don't address root cause, which are not necessarily environmental

3 learnings from using RAPTA in design

### 1. Even a partial, rapid RAPTA lens leads to different project design/interventions

- What needs to change? Why? How? In order to achieve food security goal
- Shows which stakeholders to involve and why
- Which other partnerships need to be built
- Gained understanding into systems thinking, systemic causes, points of intervention, and the idea of sequenced pathways
- Showed multiple perspectives, and need to support with evidence base and analysis

Three learnings cont…

### 2. Need enough time, budget and skill to gain full benefit from using RAPTA

- Strength in it's depth
- Needs evidence, data and analysis to support systems analysis
- Options and Pathways requires a lot more time – maybe need to be during early stage project implementation
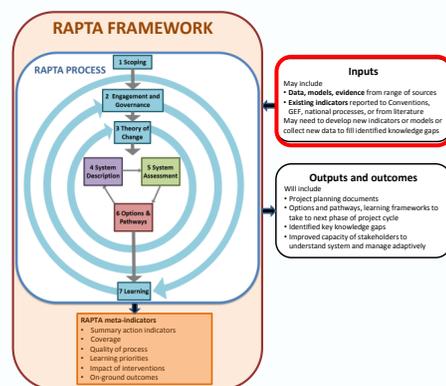
Three learnings cont…

3. **All parts of system need to adjust to address large, integrated goal**:

- Integrated goal – silos must break e.g. government departments for agriculture, environment, water, gender, climate change all need to be at the table
- Requires shift in understanding and collaboration across all these actors
- Use RAPTA *early* in process of design, but still useful even later
- Deliberate learning process and culture needs to be embedded at all levels - need flexibility to iterate and make adjustments based on learning throughout project implementation
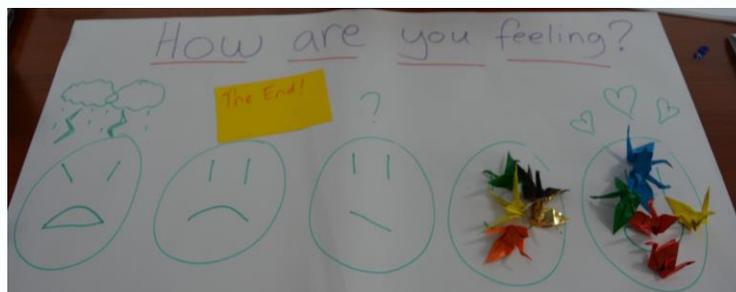
Questions (from stakeholders in pilot)

We think RAPTA is useful

- Embeds resilience, adaptation pathways, transformation
- Promotes systems thinking, integration and learning

But we are in a busy, impatient world crowded with competing ideas

We all want quick fixes and tools…

Are we ready for this?

And are we able to make the adjustments that are needed to use RAPTA properly and gain the benefits?

Thanks for your time, folks!

Dr Deborah O'Connell
e   deborah.o'connell@csiro.au

Alice Ruhweza
e   Alice Ruhweza@undp.org

CSIRO LAND AND WATER FLAGSHIP
www.csiro.au

The work of the CSIRO Enabling Adaptation Pathways team
https://research.csiro.au/eap/