



Optimising the Performance of Producers and their Organisations (OPPO) for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development

With experiences and examples from the Pacific

Ted Schrader, Melike Hemmami, Jana Dietershagen and Judith Ann Francis

GUIDE

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Papers, manuals and worksheets

Background papers, tool manuals and worksheets that are referred to in this guide are all available at: <https://edepot.wur.nl/533968>

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Foreword

Optimising the Performance of Producers and their Organisations (OPPO) is essential for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development. This guide perceives producers and their organisations as key actors for making value chain development and agribusiness models more inclusive. It aims at farmer empowerment for building resilient and nutrition sensitive food systems, for feeding and nourishing growing populations and for realising inclusive and sustainable agro-economic development in general.

This guide has been prepared through a fruitful collaboration between the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Pacific Island Farmers' Organisation Network (PIFON) and its member organisations, several key Pacific experts and leaders of national producer organisations.

The OPPO approach has been developed by the Centre for Development Innovation of Wageningen University and Research. The OPPO tools are used in international training courses provided by WCDI and are used for the design of farmer-inclusive agro-economic development programmes.

Initiated under the CTA/IFAD co-funded Project 'Promoting Nutritious Food Systems in the Pacific Islands' (Innov4AgPacific), CTA, through collaboration with WCDI, introduced the OPPO approach and tools to the Pacific with the aim to *"Build, for Specific Value Chains, Prototypes for Change and Scaling"*.

Seven Pacific OPPO champions have emerged through the training and technical back stopping they received from WCDI, CTA and PIFON in applying the OPPO approach and tools to develop inclusive business models that benefit Pacific producers. They are: Joanna Bourke (Nishi Trading, Tonga), Jiu Daunivalu (Fiji Crop and Livestock Council, Fiji), Faafetai Fata (Samoa Farmers' Association, Samoa), Maryjane Hou (Virgin Coconut Oil Producers Association, Solomon Islands), Karness Kusto (Marshall Islands Organic Farmers Association, Republic of the Marshall Islands), Routan Tongaiaba (Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development, Kiribati) and Timote Waqainabete (Nature's Way Cooperative, Fiji). The OPPO champions worked on their own cases, trained many other professionals and collaborated with hundreds of farmers, fishermen, producer organisations and small and medium enterprises. This raised the interest of Governments, governmental and non-governmental organisations and development partners in several Pacific countries.

This guide not only presents the OPPO approach and selected tools, but also integrates lessons learned in scaling the OPPO approach for transforming the Pacific agricultural sector and building resilient nutrition sensitive food systems. We hope that this inspires the readers to apply the tools, for which manuals and worksheets are shared, to their own farmer-inclusive agro-economic development cases.

We wish to thank all the Pacific agricultural stakeholders who reinforced the need for practical tools for farmer-inclusive development to empower producers' organisations and their members.

We acknowledge and are grateful to PIFON and its members for the endorsement of the OPPO approach and continued partnership.

We take this opportunity to also express a special word of gratitude to the seven Pacific OPPO champions, for being the pioneers who tested and applied the tools in their national context and trained farmers as well as other Pacific partners. They were instrumental in mobilising support for the OPPO approach and are committed to continue to build capacity of Pacific producers' organisations.

Enhancing governance, strengthening collaboration and improving trust among value chain actors, particularly between producers and their organisations and their partners such as buyers, financiers and governments, for upgrading 'nutrition- sensitive' local value chains remains our shared priority and goal.

Hedwig Bruggeman, Business Unit Manager Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation

Ibrahim Khadar, Director CTA

Tawfiq El-Zabri, IFAD Country Director for the Pacific Islands

Quotes

"OPPO is a practical approach that provides a lot of practical tools for seeing the reality from different perspectives, with emphasis on farmer ownership and empowerment. OPPO starts with producers' and producer organisations' own practical business cases and their ideas and objectives. OPPO seeks to arrive at sector transformation and farmer-inclusive business models, with involvement of actors from the private and public sector. Agricultural transitions cannot be done and cannot last without farmers and their collective action."

Ted Schrader, Senior Advisor Rural Economic Development, WCDI, The Netherlands

"Farmers are entrepreneurs, and our Pacific farmers want to move from subsistence and semi-subsistence farming to a commercial level and we want to professionalise our farmers, to get better market and financial access. We can achieve this by implementing the OPPO tools. I endorse the OPPO approach and tools as valuable for PIFON members."

Afamasaga Toleafoa, Chair Samoa Farmers Organisation and PIFON, Samoa

"We need to first look at what are the needs of the farmers and change the way they think. The OPPO tools support the empowerment of farmers, ensuring that they are linked to the market. We also recognize the need to train government officials and extension officers, so they understand the value chain better. This will ultimately effect change in policies that favour the needs of farmers."

Sakiusa Tubuna, Sub Regional Co-ordinator for Pacific, IFAD, Fiji

"CTA and our co-partners are pleased that PIFON and Pacific stakeholders have validated the inclusive OPPO approach and tools for leveraging the development of Pacific food crops and fisheries value chains and will support efforts to scale-out the programme."

Judith Ann Francis, Senior Programme Coordinator, Science and Technology Policy & Project Leader, Innov4AgPacific, CTA, The Netherlands

List of acronyms

B2B	Business to Business
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HAACP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IML	Informal Money Lenders
FCLC	Fiji Crop and Livestock Council
FO	Farmers' Organisation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MELAD	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NWC	Nature's Way Cooperative
OPPO	Optimising the Performance of Producers and their Organisations
PO	Producers' Organisation
PWA	Pacific Week of Agriculture
PIFON	Pacific Islands Farmers Organisations Network
PIPSO	Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation
SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperative
S&C	Saving and Credit
SFA	Samoa Farmers' Association
SIVCOPA	Solomon Islands Virgin Coconut Oil Producers Association
SME	Small and medium enterprise
VC	Value chain
VCA	Value Chain Analysis
WCDI	Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research
WUR	Wageningen University and Research

1 OPPO: for farmer inclusion

1.1 Background: addressing agricultural development differently

The origin of OPPO

OPPO stands for: 'Optimising the Performance of Producers and their Organisations'. It is an approach that was developed from practice for use by practitioners. Two fundamental questions which relate to the challenge of addressing agro-economic development differently, are at the basis of OPPO: (1) why are small-scale farmers not generally perceived and treated as entrepreneurs and (2) why do development projects so often fail?

Family farms: enterprises that feed the world

Considering that farmers operate in several markets (input, output, labour and financial markets) and take significant risks (both at the production and market side), it is fair to state that farming is business, farms are enterprises and farmers are entrepreneurs. Ninety percent of all farms worldwide are family farms, mostly smallholders. These 500 million family farms represent one third of the world population and provide 80% of the world's food. Family farms constitute the majority of the world's small and medium enterprises and make up the largest part of the private sector. Family farms are and will continue to be crucial for food availability and nutrition security. They are key actors for agri-food sector development, for local economic development and for feeding the population of growing cities.

Farming is business, Farms are enterprises and smallholder farmers are entrepreneurs



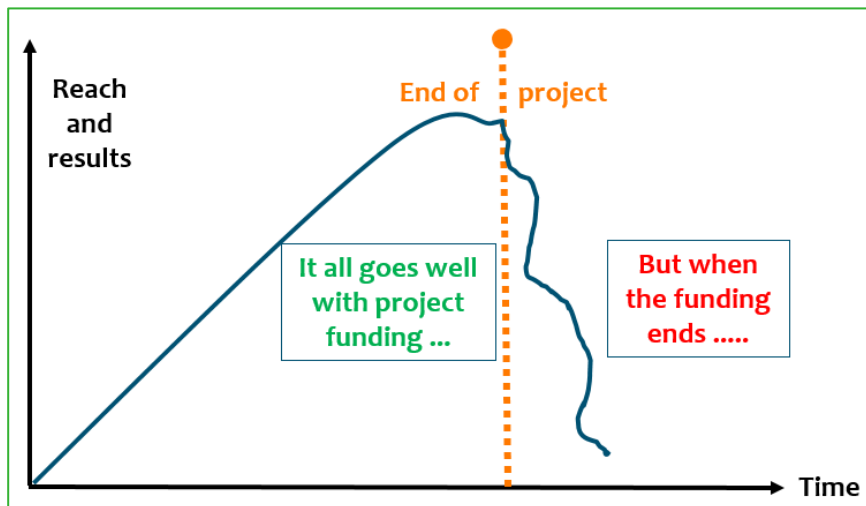
Photo's: ADB, UNDP,CTA, IFAD, Kastom Gaden Association

Fundamental change is needed

Whereas farmers are entrepreneurs, many do not necessarily have an entrepreneurial attitude. Their market orientation is often weak, and some look to government and donors for support. Opportunities for investments and credit are limited because the agricultural sector is generally seen as high risk and the finance eco-system does not sufficiently favour farmers, given their inability to meet criteria to qualify for loans due to inadequate documentation or lack of capital.

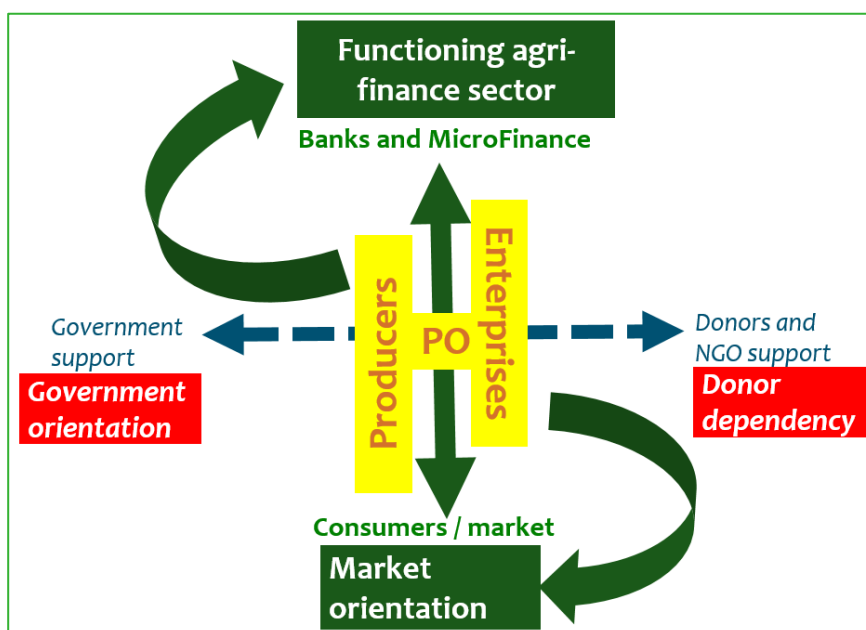
Agricultural investment projects need to be better designed. The figure below visualises the observation that whereas agricultural development projects may give a boost, the continuity of development activities and results is not ensured. This broadly observed phenomenon needs to change to support inclusive agro-economic development.

The fate of many, if not most projects:



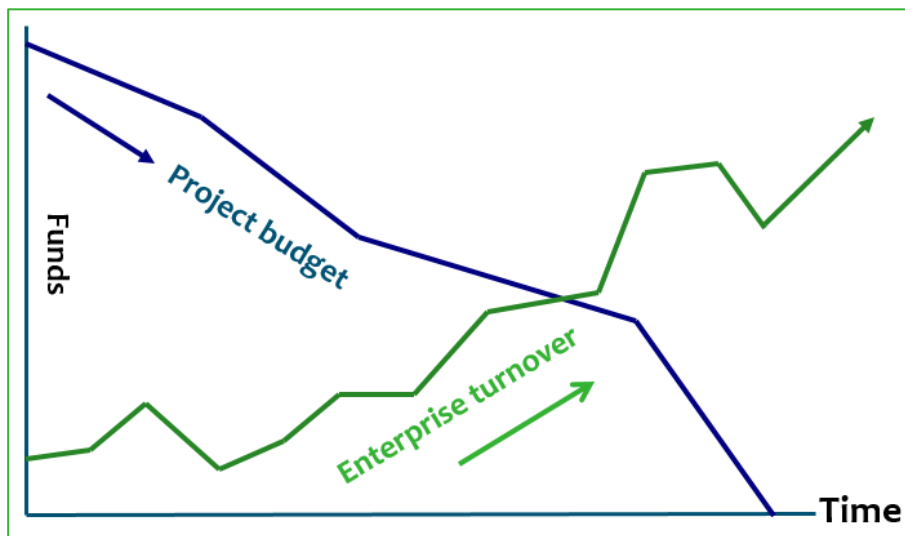
Agricultural development programmes are using public funds (Government and donor funds) to support farmers. In many situations this has led to a government and donor dependency that hampers farmer entrepreneurship and sustainable development. The figure below suggests that with a 180-degree change the agri-finance sector and market sales can be the drivers and sources of sustainable funding. Farmers can then become more autonomous leading to more sustainable results.

Therefore a 180-degree change is needed:



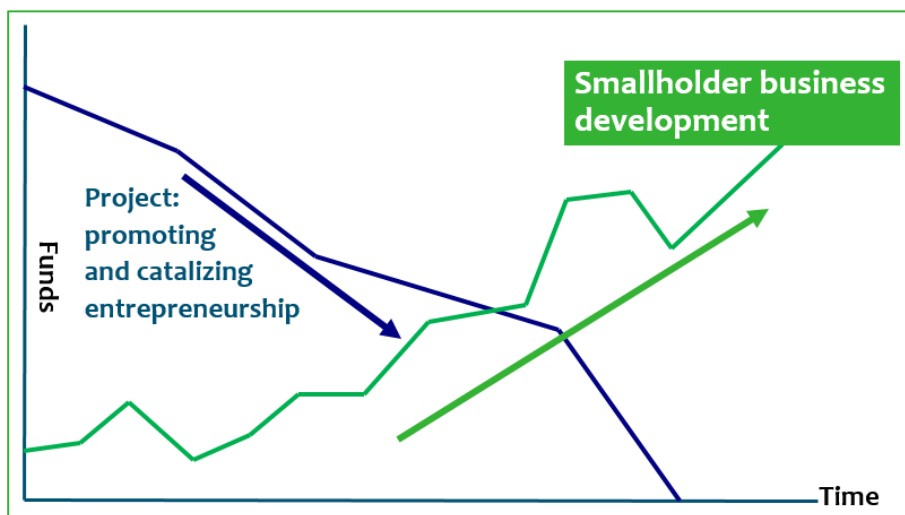
Projects and enterprises are fundamentally different. Projects start with a large initial budget, which decreases over time, as it is spent during the project implementation period. Enterprises start with small capital investments and can grow over time when benefits are reinvested, new markets and partners are found and/or bank loans are obtained.

Projects and enterprises are fundamentally different:



There is a stronger need for programmes and projects that modestly support local farmer entrepreneurs to establish and develop their business. For that to happen, they need to be adapted to the realities of local entrepreneurs and take local initiatives and own investments as the starting point. Like it is done for the grafting of trees, we need programmes that graft public funds on business development initiatives of producers and their organisations (who are the mother tree with the roots in the soil).

Grafting public funds on smallholder business development initiatives:



The limited success of donor-driven agricultural development interventions, the challenges and opportunities of smallholder farmers and the need for better performing food systems call for a reconsideration of current approaches and newly defined roles for farmers and other value chain actors including financial institutions, governments and external supporters.

1.2 Five principles guide the OPPO approach

Five principles for approaching agro-economic development differently

Agricultural producers are still only partially involved in the design and implementation of agricultural development programmes. Efforts of governments, companies and donors to listen to, and to learn from farmers are remarkably limited. The habit to treat farmers as target groups or beneficiaries of development programmes is persistent. A different approach towards effective and inclusive agro-economic development requires adherence to five essential basic principles:

1. **Treat farmers as entrepreneurs.** Do not perceive and treat farmers as 'beneficiaries' or 'target groups', as this will keep them in a dependent position.
2. **Ensure ownership of change processes right from the start.** Build on farmers' agency: start with farmers' own ideas and initiatives, priorities and own organisations and resources.
3. **Walk the talk - work on practical cases.** Preferably, these cases are significant in terms of: the number of farmers involved, production volume and sales and the possible contribution to food and nutrition security and farmer income and livelihood improvement.
4. **Organise agro-economic development as a team sport.** Promote genuine collaboration between farmers and stakeholders from the private and public sector (traders, processors, banks, government, etc.). Organized farmers can work together with other stakeholders as partners for sustainable development and inclusive agribusiness.
5. **Align external support to farmers' and stakeholders' own plans and own resources.** Ensure that development programmes and projects complement farmers' and other stakeholders' own plans and resources. This is important for ownership, sustainable results and continuity.

These five principles guide the OPPO approach. Compared to other approaches, the distinctive features of the OPPO approach are the strong focus on:

- Farmer entrepreneurship and farmer agency, taking farmers' own ideas and initiatives and farmers' own organisations and own resources as the starting point.
- Practical cases, allowing to keep the connection with farmers and local realities and to make a real change in the lives of farmers and their families.
- Opportunities for value chain development, both at the production and market side ('production-push' and 'market-pull').
- The mobilisation of farmers' own resources, the involvement of financial institutions and the cautious use of external financial support.
- Farmers' collaboration with private and public sector stakeholders.
- A more enabling environment for smallholders.

The OPPO approach can be applied to any agricultural sub-sector (crops, horticulture, forestry and fruits, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture).

It is important to underline that although the OPPO approach:

- concentrates on improving the performance of producers and their organisations, it stresses the need to see realities from different perspectives, the important and complementary roles of other stakeholders and the need to develop private-public partnerships.
- Starts off with a practical case, the strategy is to bring farmers' experiences and views to higher policy and decision-making levels to leverage fundamental changes towards farmer-inclusive business models, sector transformation and a more enabling environment for smallholders.

1.3 The oppo cycle: analysis for action in six intervention areas

Analysis and action to improve the performance of producers and their organisations

The cycle for developing farmer-inclusive value chain business cases and/or agribusiness development programs is visualized in the figure below and follows three key areas: Analysis (green part at the right of the figure), Action (blue part at the left of the figure) and Intervention areas (red part in the middle).



Analysis (green part at the right):

OPPO offers a toolbox for complementary analyses with, and for farmers. Analysis starts with the selection and description of a specific case for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development. The analyses then go into more depth by zooming in on the farmers, the farmers' organisation(s), the sub-sectors, value chains and the stakeholders of the selected case.

Action (blue part at the left):

OPPO is focusing on analysis for action. The analyses lead to the identification of challenges and opportunities, which in turn are input for strategic and operational planning. OPPO puts strong emphasis on farmers' involvement in the design, implementation and adaptation of agro-economic development programmes and projects. This starts with defining strategic orientations and continues with operational planning, stakeholder alignment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Intervention areas (red part):

Based on field experience and the principles and distinctive focus of the OPPO approach, six intervention areas for farmers' action and collaboration with other stakeholders are proposed. Two intervention areas relate to the production side: 'Production factors and agro-inputs' and 'Agricultural practices'. Two

intervention areas relate to the market side: 'Post-harvest value creation' and 'Market relations and sales'. Two intervention areas relate to system change and agribusiness sector transformation: 'Agri-finance' and 'Enabling environment'. These intervention areas are closely related to and allow for designing well-integrated programmes and projects for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation as well as learning and adaptation (in grey) form an integral part of the OPPO cycle:

- Learning and Adaptation for Analysis (green): The new insights and knowledge gained from one tool are input for reflection and thus learning for another tool and subsequently leads to a more grounded implementation of planned activities and better results.
- Monitoring and Evaluation for Action (blue): Monitoring and evaluation needs to be done consistently while implementing the tools, in order to tailor actions to new realities and re-adjust tools where necessary.

Table 1 Intervention areas

Intervention areas	Remarks
1. Production factors and agro-inputs	Farmers need to have the right production factors, of reliable quality, at the right time, at the most affordable price. Through their organizations, they can improve accessibility and affordability. Collective procurement (buying or getting agro-inputs together) is the key word for this intervention area. Developing a business at the input supply side is a possible option for rural entrepreneurs.
2. Agricultural practices	Production is the core business of farmers. It is essential that farmers continuously adapt and innovate production practices to improve production, productivity and quality. Producers' organizations can facilitate the professionalization of agricultural practices in different ways. In this intervention area, the focus on human capital: collective learning, testing and innovation.
3. Agri-finance	Access to financial services is a key issue in most agribusiness cases. Farmers need to manage their finances, analyze production costs, sales and profits. Farmers need to (pre)finance their production and marketing activities. For that they need to understand and engage with banks and microfinance institutions and submit bankable proposals. Having collateral is generally a major concern (both for farmers and banks). Producers' organisations can play an important role in this intervention area.
4. Post-harvest value creation	This relates to operations on primary products (harvested crops, animals, wood), to create added value. 'Post-harvest' operations change the characteristics and the market value of a product, as compared to the value of the primary produce. Options are storage, transport, grading, cleaning, processing, packaging and others. This domain is very important for producers' organisations who can set up specific farmer-owned businesses.
5. Market relations and sales	Collective marketing (selling together or organizing common sales outlets) is the key word for this intervention area. For producers, it is important to have market intelligence (what, when, where to sell?) and to have good relations with buyers. Collective marketing can help to improve bargaining power, to avoid middlemen and brokers, and to reach higher value markets. Innovating market relations (for instance contract farming) is also among the options that are possible in this area.
6. Enabling environment	The voice and influence of smallholder farmers is generally weak. Action in this intervention area is about getting a better policy and business environment. This can be for many different issues: policies and regulations, service provision (extension, veterinary services), improvement of infrastructure, adaption of tax conditions, governance of food safety standards and many others.

Collaboration and cooperation

Farmers and their organizations are key value chain actors and business partners. They need to be more involved in shaping agro-economic development, such as value chain development programmes. Inclusive agribusiness depends on investments, and relations and partnerships between different groups and will only be successful when there is a clear business case benefitting all actors, public and private, in a specific market context.

OPPO allows producers and producer organisations to analyse their context and design strategies for improving their positions in value chains and other programmes. The different actors whose perspectives must be considered in the inclusive agribusiness model are: producers and their organisations, agribusinesses (agro-input providers, processors, traders, wholesalers, supermarkets)

both at local, national and possibly international level, financial service providers (micro-finance, commercial and development banks, credit unions and others), national and local governments and government agencies, donors and development partners.

To bring about effective change and to improve their performance, producers and their organisations have to collaborate with other (private and public sector) actors and stakeholders, both for analysis, action planning and for the implementation of practical activities in all six intervention areas.

1.4 Learning and applying OPPO tools

For whom: professionals interested in farmer-inclusive agro-economic development

The OPPO approach targets professionals who are interested in farmer-inclusive development, working with and for farmers, either from the private sector or public sector. This can be in any agricultural sector and in any part of the world where farmer empowerment is a challenge and opportunity.

The OPPO approach and tools are specifically interesting for leaders and professional staff of producers' organisations and for facilitators who are designing farmer-inclusive programmes and coaching producers, their organisations, partners and collaborators, such as private companies (input providers, processing companies, ...), financial institutions, civil society organisations, public sector organisations and development partners.

Purpose: making a difference for producers and their organisations

The OPPO approach and the application of OPPO tools aim at achieving the following objectives:

1. Initiate the development of a farmer-inclusive value chain/ agribusiness case;
2. Profile farmers, assess their resource endowment and understand farmer motivations;
3. Analyze and assess the governance, management and performance of farmers' organisations;
4. Map and analyze the sub-sector and value chains of the agribusiness case;
5. Undertake market system analysis with a focus on improving stakeholder performance and collaboration;
6. Reflect on the principles and possible design of farmer-inclusive agribusiness models;
7. Formulate strategic orientations and identify options for practical action in six intervention areas, based on the identification of the challenges and opportunities of agricultural producers and their organisations.

The ultimate goal is to enable professionals to use the tools, to become 'game changers' who - directly or indirectly - make a difference for hundreds if not thousands of family farms.

How to learn the OPPO approach and tools?

Emphasizing the importance of farmer entrepreneurship, inclusion and action, several practical OPPO tools are outlined in this guide to support analysis and action planning, with the aim to enhance the benefits for producers in terms of food, income and trade.

Learning by doing is the preferred training strategy. The starting point of an OPPO learning trajectory is the general understanding of the approach, the OPPO cycle of analysis for action and the specific purpose of the different tools. This guide provides that general introduction.

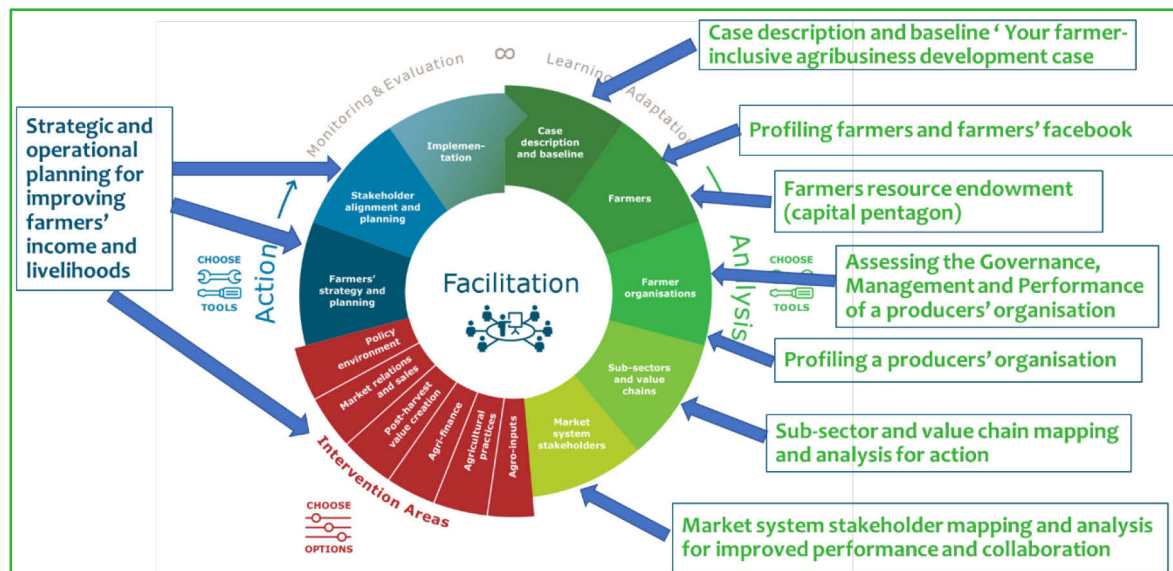
The learning trajectory continues with the application of practical tools, of which the first one is 'Your farmer-inclusive agro-economic development case'. During the learning process, this case is analyzed from different perspectives, starting from the farmer level and gradually moving to the entire market system. For each of the analytical steps, practical tools are suggested. The focus of the analyses is the identification of challenges, opportunities and options for action in different intervention areas.

An OPPO training course can be face-to-face, on-line, or a blended combination. The time investment can vary from some days to three weeks. A full OPPO course of three weeks would include case studies and field visits, as well as the exercising of tools and facilitation techniques. The OPPO training

and learning continues by applying the tools in the local context and reflecting and building on the lessons learned.

1.5 OPPO tools that are shared in this guide

For this guide, eight tools have been selected from the extensive 3-week WCDI OPPO course toolbox. The aim is that the tools are applied on a practical case. Links to more detailed manuals (explaining the tools) and related worksheets and formats are provided throughout the guide.



Two additional papers are also shared. The paper 'farmers organizing themselves' supports the tool for assessing producers' organisations. The paper on 'farmer-inclusive agribusiness development' supports strategic reflections.

Knowledge, joint learning, collaboration, trust and partnerships are key for innovating in agri-food systems for improved farmers' incomes, livelihoods and nutrition. In the context of the supported Innov4AgPacific blended learning approach for upscaling of OPPO in the Pacific (cf. chapter 8), the selected tools have been validated by Pacific farmer leaders and experts and endorsed as relevant by Pacific stakeholders. Each of the tools is illustrated with examples from the Pacific.

1.6 What to expect in this guide?

Chapters	Overview
Chapter 2	The OPPO process starts with the selection and description of a specific case for producer-inclusive agro-economic development.
A farmer-inclusive agribusiness case as the starting point	<p>The tool 'Your farmer-inclusive agribusiness development case' allows for case selection and description and to set the focus on improving the performance of producers and their organisations for the practical value chain and agribusiness development case of the OPPO practitioner. A system of questions and answers, starting with 3 P's (product, place and producers) guides the development of a first basic document on a farmer-inclusive agribusiness development case. This document provides input for a concept note and for baseline information.</p> <p>After the first case description, the analysis goes into more depth by zooming in on the farmers (chapter 3), farmers' organisations (chapter 4), the sub-sector and value chains (chapter 5) and the stakeholders and their functioning and collaboration (chapter 6).</p>
Chapter 3	Farmer inclusion starts with farmers. Two tools help the practitioner to stand in the shoes of farmers, e.g. to see realities from their perspective.
Farmer inclusion starts with farmers	<p>The tool 'Profiling farmers and farmers' facebook' aims to give a face to farmers, telling their story, identifying key issues and challenges from their perspective. Farmer profiles and life histories can be valuable input for proposals, reports and websites.</p> <p>Own capital is the starting point for farmer entrepreneurship. The tool 'Farmers' resource endowment (Capital Pentagon)' is helpful for assessing the natural, physical, financial, human and social capital of farmers and to visualize these in a pentagon figure. The aim is to identify actions that would strengthen the farmers' resource endowment.</p>
Chapter 4	After 'Farmers' the focus of this chapter is on Farmers' organisations. The paper 'Farmers' organizing themselves' introduces ten perspectives for exploring different dimensions for understanding farmers' organisations.
Producers' organisations and collective action	<p>This sets the stage for the tool 'Assessing the Governance, Management and Performance of a producers' organisation'. The 'GMP assessment' is done according to 16 dimensions. The aim of the assessment is to define actions to improve the internal organisation (governance and management) and the performance of the organisation. The tool 'Profiling a producers' organisation' suggests a basic format for presenting a producers' organisation to partners and the outside world.</p>
Chapter 5	The next important step is sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis.
Sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis	<p>The tool 'Sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis for action' introduces six perspectives for systematically analyzing the value chains of a particular sub-sector, from a farmer-empowerment perspective. It explains the steps and provides worksheets for mapping and analyzing the sub-sector and for identifying strategies and practical options for product and market development for agricultural producers and their organisations.</p>
Chapter 6	The sub-sector and value chain analysis is followed by market system stakeholder mapping and analysis. The tool 'Market system stakeholder mapping and analysis for improved performance and collaboration' helps to identify the broad range of stakeholders that are directly and indirectly involved in an agribusiness case. Four actor groups are distinguished: VC operators (main actors), VC supporters and enablers (supporting actors, from private and public sector) and external facilitators (donors and development partners). The tool helps to identify these actors, to reflect on current roles and on options to improve stakeholders' performance and collaboration.
Stakeholder collaboration and farmer-inclusive agribusiness models	<p>The paper 'Towards farmer-inclusive agribusiness development' shares some perspectives and experiences related to the development of farmer-inclusive business. These help to design farmer-inclusive agribusiness development programmes.</p>
Chapter 7	All tools are geared towards the identification of challenges, opportunities and options for practical action. The analyses allow for the formulation of strategic orientations, which are the basis for action planning.
Strategic and operational planning for improving farmers' income and livelihoods	<p>The tool 'Strategic and operational planning for improving farmers' income and livelihoods' explains how to move from analysis to action. It helps to define strategic orientations that are based on OPPO analytical tools. The strategizing process leads to the formulation of outcomes and the planning of practical activities. The six OPPO intervention areas are used as a reference.</p>
Chapter 8	This chapter reflects on the process of scaling the OPPO approach and tools in the Pacific region. An OPPO follow-up blended learning and technical backstopping approach was initiated under the Innov4AgPacific Project with seven OPPO champions (farmer organization leaders, agribusiness experts and government representatives) from six Pacific Island countries for gaining buy-in and scaling the OPPO approach in their own country-context. The focus is on lessons learned and implications for further scaling through blended learning approaches.
Building facilitators' and farmers' capacity for change: lessons learned	

2 A farmer-inclusive business case as the starting point

2.1 Introduction

Experience shows that practical and lasting change is best achieved by working on real-life cases. The tool 'Your farmer-inclusive agribusiness development case' invites practitioners to identify their case and to start developing it. This is the first step of the OPPO approach.

There are three possible starting points. The first option is farmer ownership: a case that starts with farmers who strive to improve their revenues from farming, processing and marketing. The second option is a company-led case: companies, processors or traders who seek to source from small farmers and involve them in the value chain and market development process. The third option is an initiative from other stakeholders giving specific attention to the involvement of small farmers, women and youth in agribusiness development and to employment creation.



2.2 Defining your case

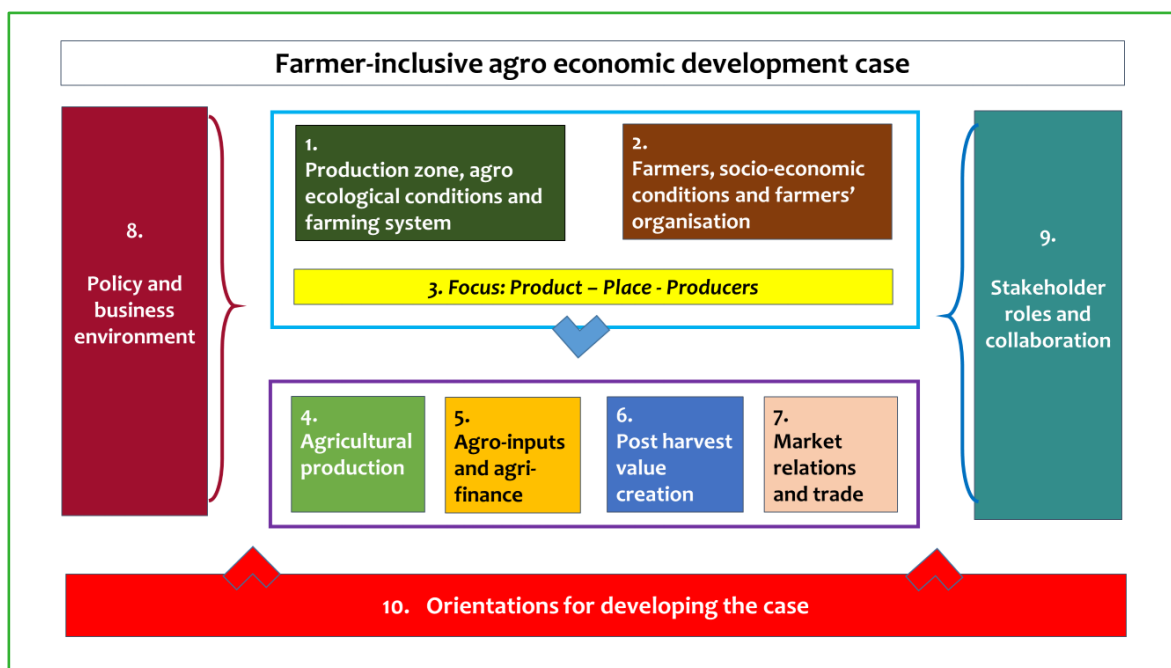
Farmer-inclusive cases need to be clearly defined. They should focus on a clearly defined production zone ('Place'), where certain groups of farmers ('Producers') operate, producing, processing and marketing certain commodities ('Products'). The tool invites you to define a practical farmer-inclusive agribusiness development case according to these three P's.

2.3 Initial case description

After defining the scope and focus of the case, the tool helps to collect basic information about: agricultural production, agro-inputs and agri-finance, post-harvest value creation and market relations and trade. Specific attention is furthermore given to the policy and business environment and stakeholder roles and collaboration. The collected information is input for identifying first orientations for developing the case.

Aims of the tool:

- ❖ To select a practical case to work on.
- ❖ To review a range of questions for collecting and presenting basic information that touches upon different dimensions of the case.
- ❖ To build awareness about what information is not yet known or unavailable.



2.4 Worksheets

To facilitate the description of the case, the accompanying manual explains the steps to go through and the worksheet 'Farmer-inclusive agribusiness development case' guides the process. The case description has 10 chapters. The first part (case definition) has three chapters and the second part (initial case description) has 7 chapters. Each chapter is composed of several paragraphs. Each paragraph has a box with guiding questions for you to answer. You develop your case by answering these guiding questions with the objective of providing specific information about your case. In this way, you develop the description of your case.

2.5 Applying OPPO tools For further development of the case

It is important to get as much information as possible on the case. This is however not always possible. Knowing the missing information is also important. The different OPPO tools will help you to get more information. This means that the case description document is a living document that can be developed further. When you prepare a programme, the case description is your baseline. It can be used for developing a concept note and/or a programme or project proposal.

2.6 Pacific experiences

Example of a Pacific Farmer Inclusive business case

(Please note: this is not a full business case but just an excerpt from the whole case.)

Making Dalo FIT:

Fiji Dalo farmers' action and collaboration for improving local **F**ood production and nutrition, improving farmers' **I**ncome and promoting **T**rade

Name: Jiu Daunivalu, CEO, Fiji Crop and Livestock Council

Country: Fiji

Dalo farmers of Nasalia and surrounding areas of Naitasiri are to be formally organised, and it requires regular visits to meet with them, assess their situation, and identify their issues/challenges. In the case of Nasalia and Na Gone ni Colo district, the areas are badly affected by Dalo Beetle, it requires more training on Dalo Beetle eradication. Farmers also need training on financial literacy, business planning and accessing finance, post-harvest process and understanding rules and standards for the local and export markets.



A demand-pull approach is to be used whereby farmers plant according to the quota agreed on with the buyers, and plant to support their family's daily consumption of a major staple food, which is high in nutrient value e.g. Dalo leaves and branches are also rich in Vitamin B. Lower consumption and reliance on highly processed imported food is recommended to the farmers and their families/communities to reduce the prevalence of non-communicable disease (NCDs) that is a major cause of death in Fiji (diabetes, stroke, heart attack). Nasalia village needs a storage/packhouse facility to be built next to the road, to minimise transportation costs via the river, and for easy access to the buyers. However, the road needs upgrading/maintenance for safety and made more accessible to all types of vehicle.

The above areas of improvements are required to support this business case and to optimize the performance of the farmers of Nasalia and their cluster, and the Fiji Dalo Farmers' Association as a whole. FCLC's role is to strengthen the farmers and their organisation, provide technical advisory support services and advocate and network with the Government, banks and other key stakeholders and organisations that matters to the farmers.

My role in managing the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council (FCLC) is to ensure that farmers are formally organized and farmers' profiles are collated/registered in the FCLC Farmers Database. They will automatically become members of respective commodity or farmers organisations/associations, such as Fiji Dalo Farmers Association or Fiji Ginger Farmers Association if their primary crop is Dalo or Ginger.

OPPO tool 'A farmer-inclusive business case'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

3 Farmer inclusion starts with farmers

3.1 Introduction

Family farmers are many and diverse. 500 million farmers produce more than 80% of the world's food and occupy 70-80% of the earth's farmland. They are key to support rural economies and to create sustainable and resilient food systems. Yet, they are often poor and food-insecure themselves. Remarkably, farmers are often not listened to, heard nor seen. Understanding farmers' daily lives and reflecting on the resources they have or lack, helps to identify actions for improving their livelihoods and for keeping a focus on farmer ownership, farmers' resources and farmer empowerment.



In the OPPO approach, which puts farmers central, farmer profiling and investigating farmers' own resources are important first steps when preparing for the design of a farmer-inclusive programme.

3.2 Profiling farmers – farmers' facebook

Profiling farmers is about giving farmers a face, by showing them as actors. Farmer profiles are stories of individuals or households who find themselves in a certain situation and who seek to conduct farming and related activities as best as they can. It is about people who have clear ideas about main challenges and top priorities for changing their context and lives for the better. Stories of family farmers can raise awareness about their importance in society and highlight the challenges they face.

When the FAO launched the decade of family farming (2019-2028; <http://fao.org/family-farming/decade/en>), it stated that stories are needed to showcase one or more of the following:

- How family farming contributes to supporting the economy and/or protecting biodiversity, environment, or cultural heritage in a specific place;
- How family farmers are coping with challenges like climate change and/or outward migration from rural areas, and its effects on their communities;
- Innovations from family farmers and traditional knowledge that is applied to solve modern problems;
- The next generation of farmers: what is the reality for today's young farmers and how can youth be employed in the agricultural sector at large?
- The female farmers: while women hold only 15% of farmland, they perform about 50% of the labour on farms, they are engaged in processing and marketing activities and are of prime importance for improving children's food and nutrition;
- The diversity of family farmers (including fisher folk, pastoralists, mountain farmers, indigenous people, and others);
- Contributions of family farmers to food and nutrition in urban areas.

The tool 'Profiling farmers and farmers' facebook' is indicated for anybody interested to know and understand farmers better and learn from their experiences and points of view, to share and use these for farmer-inclusive development purposes.

Aims of the tool:

- ❖ **To get into the shoes of farmers, seeing realities from their perspectives.**
- ❖ **To listen to farmers and to learn about their daily realities, achievements, assessments, challenges and ambitions, leading to a deeper situation analysis.**
- ❖ **To design farmer-inclusive agribusiness programmes on the basis of farmers' proposals and suggestions.**
- ❖ **To give farmers a face.**
- ❖ **To be aware about biases towards farmers.**

The tool encourages you to visit farmers, and to collect first-hand information to show the diversity of farmers and to describe their livelihoods, achievements, challenges, ambitions and suggestions of change. It suggests a systematic approach for steps to go through before, during and after interviews with farmers.

The worksheet suggests easy templates for the preparation and implementation of the tool, according to the steps explained in the manual:

Before the interview:

- Objectives of the farmer profiling
- Sampling
- Collecting basic information
- Selection of topics and questions

During and after the interview:

- Visiting the farmer(s) and conducting the interview(s)
- Telling the story / the write-up
- Pictures
- Evaluation

The tool is flexible and can be tailored to the situation at hand. Analysis of key elements that recur in many farmer stories is particularly useful for detecting most important challenges and opportunities. A checklist of possible questions helps you to get information that you might otherwise miss. The outputs are farmer profiles and/or farmer life histories, which can be put together in a farmer 'facebook'.

Collecting many stories and profiles, of different categories of producers can be particularly useful for showing a more representative picture of their livelihoods and challenges. Farmers' Facebooks and profiles can be for a specific commodity or for a certain geographic area.

They can be specifically used for the following purposes: farmer consultation, identification of challenges and opportunities, programme design, management and evaluation, communication, lobby and advocacy.

Example Farmer life history from Kiribati

*Determination and smart investments pay-off:
Vegetable grower on Abaiang Island, Kiribati
successfully diversified his sources of income to
grow his business*

Biroto, a vegetable farmer on Abaiang Island in Kiribati, is one of the 5 brothers in the family and married to a beautiful woman named Teburenga to Bweebwe. He has been living in Abaiang for more than 20 years and has 4 children. In 2017, his oldest son was in his final year of primary school and ready to join the secondary school the following year. Because of his oldest son, he began to worry more and think of how to get his school fees in the coming years and think of other livelihood expenses like food, clothes, church contribution and so forth. Back then, Biroto's main source of income is derived only from selling copra and fish but this was not enough to even meet his daily expenses.

In 2017, he decided to join the Abaiang Vegetable Growers' Association as he thought this is another way of earning extra money. So, he managed to ask the committee representative in his village to pay his registration fee of \$1.00. Biroto did not have any agricultural background when he first joined the organization, but he was committed to learn and attend every training and workshop conducted by the extension officer. Biroto was living miles away from the training centre but the farmers' association through the assistance of the extension officer provided free transport for all members. During the training the extension officer provided free seedlings to all members so after every training Biroto brought back 2 trays of seedlings for his garden.

He began his household mixed garden (10m by 10m) and planted 100 cabbages. When the cabbage was ready to harvest, he sold the cabbages in the domestic market at the price of Au\$2.50 per head to the locals and some retailers on the island. He earned Au\$250.00. He continued planting and selling until he managed to sell 200 cabbages in South Tarawa and earned more than Au\$600.00. After a few months, he now received more than Au\$2000.00. Besides cabbages, he decided to sell pig meals (copra mill), starting with 50 bags of copra meals and sold it for a price of Au\$6.00/bag. In return he earned Au\$600.00. On the other hand, his wife Teborenga also served the students with lunches and sold lunch boxes for the price of \$2.00 for each box.



Biroto's cabbage farm

they are ready to meet their expectations and expenses and are aiming to grow their business more. In the future the family wants to open their own canteen with their own food ingredients.

Written by Routan Tongaiaba, Senior Agricultural Officer, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development (MELAD), Kiribati



Biroto at his farm

The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development (MELAD) provided additional training to him in using an integrated piggery and compost production system designed for him to fertilize his cabbages to avoid soil depletion and to use the land sustainably.

After saving money for several months, Biroto was able to buy a motorbike at the cost of \$1890.00 to rent and earn more money. He bought 1 brand new motorbike and rented it out at a rate of \$20.00 per day. At the end of Dec 2017, Nabirito and his wife are satisfied because they now got more than what they have been dreaming of and

Example Farmer Facebook: Coconut farmers in the Solomon Islands

A national farmers' association wanted to produce a representative gallery of profiles of coconut farmers in the country. It was decided to have 9 representative farmers from the 9 provinces in the country. To ensure a certain level of representativeness and to show the diversity of coconut farmers, it was decided to have the following 9 profiles per province:

1. Female farmer, member of the coconut farmers association
2. Female leader farmer, member of the coconut farmers association
3. Female youth farmer, female farmer, member of the coconut farmers association
4. Male farmer, member of the coconut farmers association
5. Male leader farmer, member of the coconut farmers association
6. Male youth farmer, member of the coconut farmers association
7. A producer (male or female) who is really innovative
8. A farmer who is doing value addition/processing on the farm

For practical reasons, the respondents (1-4) were chosen from among farmers participating in a self-assessment. The sample was furthermore organized so as to have one larger and one smaller farm enterprise for profiles 1 and 2 (either female farmer/larger farm and male farmer/smaller farm or the other way around). For the innovative farmer, the consideration was that the innovations should be representative of the region or of remarkable interest.



OPPO tool 'Profiling farmers and farmers' facebook'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

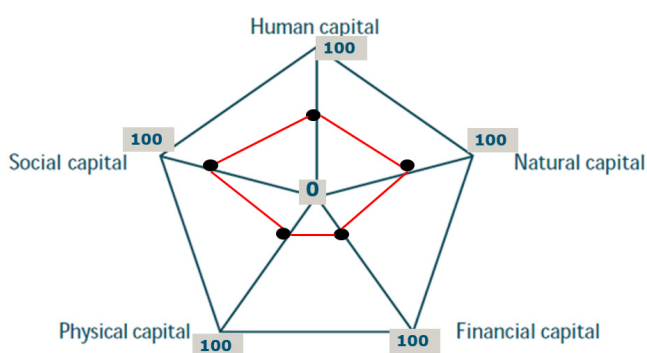
3.3 Farmers' resource endowment (Capital pentagon)

The capital pentagon tool builds on the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), which provides a framework and checklist of important issues that define the livelihoods of people and sketches out how these are linked to each other. The key elements of the framework are: Vulnerability context, Livelihood assets, Structures and processes, Livelihood strategies and Livelihood outcomes.

The tool 'Farmers' resource endowment (capital pentagon)' concentrates on the livelihood assets. It zooms in on the human, natural, physical, financial and social capital of producers. The manual defines and explains the importance of these five capitals in detail and suggests indicators and questions for assessing the 5 capitals.

The five capitals are the assets or resources farmers can use and combine. Together, these comprise the resource endowment, which determine the options that farmers and other people can consider for securing or improving their conditions. Own capital is the starting point for farmer entrepreneurship. For any particular case, the central question is: "What are the resources of farmers and what can be done to improve these?"

Exploring and assessing human, natural, physical, financial and social capital helps to reflect on the resources farmers have and on how this has an impact on the strategies they adopt. The relative strength of the five capitals can be visualized in a 'pentagon'. The focus of the tool is on identifying options to strengthen the farmers' capital endowment, e.g. make the five capitals more robust, predictable and balanced.



Awareness of the resources that farmers have access to, and the identification of options to improve these, is essential for farmer empowerment and for designing programmes that are farmer-inclusive. The tool is suggested for anybody interested in exploring and assessing different perspectives for farmer agency and collective action, based on farmers' own resources and to proactively look for options to improve the farmers' resource base. Assessing the farmers' resources with the Capital Pentagon is especially relevant for action research, programme design, monitoring and evaluation.

Aims of the tool:

- ❖ **To assess the current resource endowment of farmers, through the analysis of five capitals (human, natural, physical, financial and social).**
- ❖ **To assess and show the relative importance of the 5 capitals in a capital pentagon.**
- ❖ **To identify possibilities to strengthen farmers' resources.**

The manual and the worksheet explain how the 'Capital Pentagon' exercise is done in three steps:

1. Reflect on the current farmers' resource endowment (5 capitals)
2. Analyse and show the relative importance of the 5 capitals in a capital pentagon
3. Identify possibilities to strengthen farmers' resources

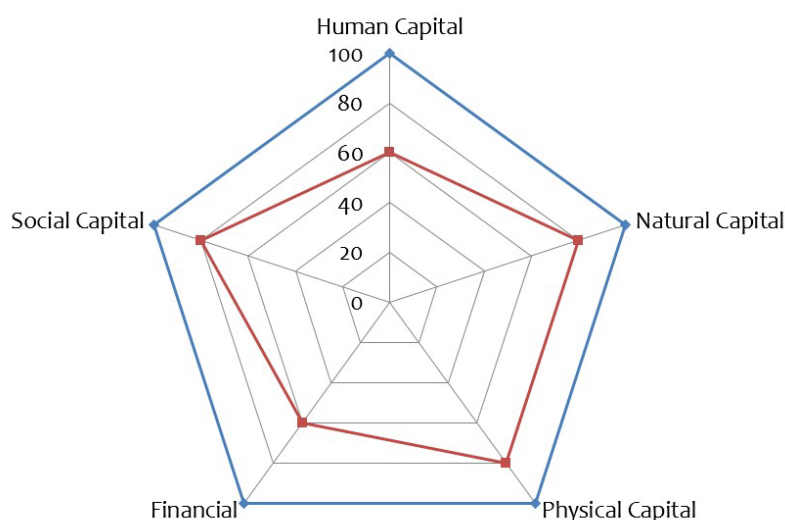
Example Capital Pentagon - Putting Value to Breadfruit in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Let us consider the work done by Karness Kusto, President, Marshall Islands Organic Farmers' Association (MIOFA) in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. MIOFA has identified breadfruit flour as a priority for value chain development. They have organized action for improving tree management and collecting and processing breadfruit into consumer products. MIOFA has used the capital pentagon tool to develop the business case 'Putting Value to Breadfruit' around Breadfruit flour production.



The MIOFA Capital Pentagon diagram below based on the assessment of all five capitals shows that MIOFA has good social, natural and physical capital:

- Natural Capital – Abandoned land available and resilient varieties that can be expanded. A lot of breadfruit that is currently going to waste.
- Social Capital – The culture of forming relationships which can create a better enabling environment and market relations is strong.
- In order to meet strategic considerations developed from their value chain mapping, they need to improve human and financial capitals.
- Human Capital – Develop knowledge and skills in pruning, harvest, transport, value addition and other activities for improving breadfruit production, postharvest handling and processing.
- Financial Capital – Access financing to establish processing facilities.



OPPO tool 'Farmers' resource endowment (Capital pentagon)'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

4 Farmers' organisations and collective action

4.1 Introduction: empowerment for collective action to achieve farmers' goals

In the OPPO approach, much attention is given to the governance and management of farmers' organisations, which are the basis for farmer empowerment. Farmers' organisations are seen as a means for farmer empowerment and a vehicle for achieving goals through collective action. The main driver for farmer cooperation is to address challenges and/or harness opportunities together, with the aim to improve income and livelihoods, and to enhance autonomy, resilience and independence.



These goals can only be achieved by working hard together for achieving socio-economic benefits. Based on experience, the OPPO approach distinguishes six intervention areas for farmers' organisations, ranging from input supply to the voicing of farmers' interests.

Empowerment	Socio-economic benefits	Achieve goals
Awareness, knowledge and information	1. Access to production factors and agro- inputs; collective procurement/ supply to members; leading to lower cost and/or better quality	Address challenges
	2. Access to technology, advice and experience sharing leading to production, productivity and quality improvement and reduction of production costs	Harness opportunities
Capacity and skills	3. Access to credit and financial services	Livelihood improvement
	4. Creation of added value to own production (storage, processing, branding, ...) and value chain development	Profit and income
	5. Collective action for improved market access, sales and bargaining power	Autonomy, resilience and independence
	6. Lobby and advocacy – voicing farmers interests and needs; Increased influence in policy and business environment	

4.2 Farmers' organising themselves

The paper 'Farmers organising themselves – 10 perspectives' provides background that helps to explore and reflect on the current level of organisation of farmers (or the lack of organisation). The introduction to different dimensions for understanding farmers' organisations sets the stage for assessing the Governance, Management and Performance of farmers' organisations and for discussing options for collective action of organised farmers.

Ten perspectives

- 1. Why would farmers organise themselves?**
- 2. Informal and formal farmer groups**
- 3. Diversity, commonalities and definition of farmers' organisations**
- 4. Predominant motivations of farmers' organisations (ICU – do you C me?)**
- 5. Development over time**
- 6. Internal governance and management**
- 7. Membership base and organisation rate**
- 8. Zoom on cooperatives and collective action for farmer benefits**
- 9. Higher tiers for business development and farmer representation**
- 10. Profiling and classifying farmers' organisations**

OPPO tool 'Farmers' organising themselves – 10 perspectives'

The paper can be downloaded [here](#).

4.3 Collective action

Collective action is defined as: a group doing something for a purpose. For smallholders, who have limited means and influence, collective action is important. In fact, producer organisations can undertake activities that individual farmers can't do.

Collective action can manifest itself in different ways: members can physically participate in joint activities, cost share the organisation of activities, invest in fixed assets of farmer-owned enterprise, contribute to costs of management and staff. For agricultural producers, collective action has two major purposes:

- 1. Individual benefit:** collective action for the provision of services to members. By working together, individual farmers have the following benefits: learning about improved farm practices, improving access to goods and services that are needed at the farm, better sales of farm production via collective marketing. For this form of collective action members provide working capital and/or pay commission for the services delivered. Farmers are satisfied if the benefits obtained outweigh the cost of membership.
- 2. Business development:** collective action for developing member-owned enterprises. By working together, farmers can become the co-owner of a (social) enterprise that: produces or sells inputs, stores, transports farmers' produce, processes farmers' products, markets farmers' produce or a combination of these. Farmers' capital is invested in the company (share). The profit is paid out as dividend and/or reinvested in the company, leading to higher share value.

Often, the first and second purpose of collective action can be combined:

- Farmers can establish saving and credit groups or even a cooperative bank as a farmer-owned enterprise that is to the benefit of member farmers for accessing credit.
- Farmers can establish a cooperative for seed production, artificial insemination or fingerling production as a farmer-owned company, which delivers to farmer members and other customers.
- Farmers can set up a cooperative processing unit or marketing cooperative which is to the benefit of individual farmers if these enterprises lead to better products or manage to sell at higher value markets.

4.4 Assessing the governance, management and performance of farmers' organisations (GMP assessment)

Assessments of producers' organisations generally look at Governance and Management (internal organisation) and at Performance (services to members).

Governance is the way how a group of people (e.g. a producers' organisation) decides to do things together. Typical points of attention are elections, member participation and independence vis-à-vis other actors. Good governance has, among others, to do with transparency of decision-making processes, respect of rules and regulations and internal by-laws, responsiveness to member needs, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, accountability of elected leaders, orientation at consensus and conflict prevention.

Management is about directing, planning, using and controlling the organisation's (human and financial) resources in order to achieve the set objectives of the organisation. Management translates strategies into operational plans and implementation. The managers (staff and elected committee members) should be practical and efficient and should be accountable to the Board and members.

Performance is about the collective action and delivery of the organisation. For six intervention areas, the GMP scoring looks at two aspects: (1) the efforts of the organisation (current activities) and (2) the benefits gained by members as a result of the activities undertaken (member benefits).

The 'GMP assessment' tool shares commonly used indicators and helps you to systematically look at the following 16 dimensions:

Internal Organisation		Services & Benefits for Members
Governance	Management	Performance
1. Legal status & compliance with legislation	7. Staffing	11. Production factors and agro-inputs
2. Cooperation among producers' organisations	8. Financial management	12. Good agricultural practices
3. Democratic member control	9. Planning	13. Agri-finance
4. Member economic participation	10. Implementation and M&E	14. Post-harvest value creation
5. Independence		15. Market relations and sales
6. Financial autonomy		16. Enabling environment

For each of these dimensions, different points of attention are explored, for which indicators are suggested. For organisations that you know, you can make an assessment in a relatively short time, and you can suggest actions to improve governance, management and performance. For organisations that you do not know well, the GMP tool may help to profile the organisation.

The tool is best used when preparing for the capacity development of producers' organisations, for example when developing an annual or a multi-annual work plan. Producers' organisations can use the

suggested dimensions and indicators to assess themselves (self-assessment). Governmental organisations, NGO's or donors can use the tool for external assessment, with the aim to identify options to strengthen producers' organisations and support their capacity development.

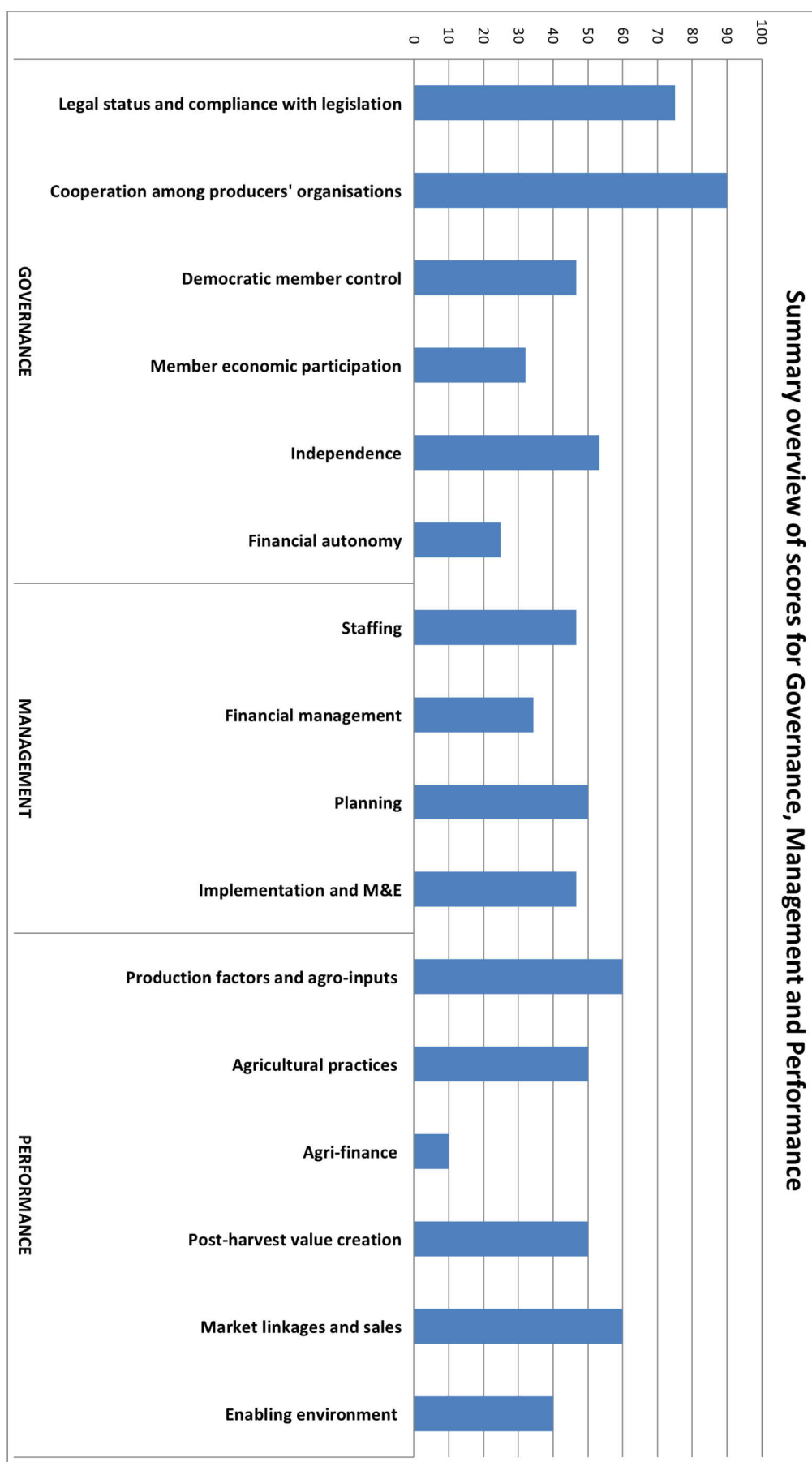
Aims of the tool:

- ❖ **To assess 6 dimensions for the governance, 4 dimensions for the management and 6 dimensions for the performance of a producers' organisation.**
- ❖ **To map the scores for governance, management and performance in a graph, giving a quick overview of the relative strong and weak points of the producers' organisation.**
- ❖ **To identify options for improving the governance, management and performance of a producers' organisation.**

The application of the tool consists of five steps:

1. Assessing the Governance of the producers' organisation
2. Assessing the Management of the producers' organisation
3. Assessing the Performance (services and benefits for members)
4. Visualising the scores for the 16 assessment dimensions (Excel)
5. Identifying options for improving the GMP (Governance, Management and Performance) of the producers' organisation.

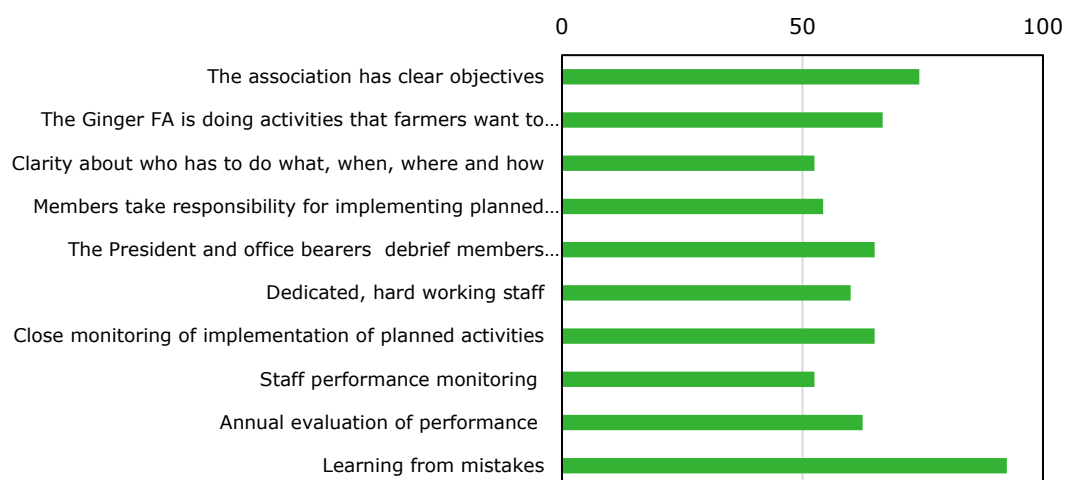
In the GMP manual, points of attention and benchmarks for scoring are suggested and explained. The GMP worksheet follows the same structure.	0	Absolute minimum
	1	Very weak
	2	Weak
By referring to suggested indicators, you are asked to give scores, for the different points of attention, ranging from 0 to 5:	3	Acceptable
	4	Very good
	5	Perfect, there is nothing left to improve



Example of Management Dimension No 9 – Planning: Management Assessment by Fiji Ginger Association Members



Planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation



OPPO tool 'Assessing the Governance, Management and Performance of Farmers' Organisations (GMP ASSESSMENT)'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

The excel exercise sheet example can be downloaded [here](#).

The excel exercise sheet template can be downloaded [here](#).

4.5 Profiling a farmers' organisation

This tool suggests a basic format for presenting a producers' organisation, according to four parts: (i) Who are we? (ii) What do we do? (iii) How do we operate? And (iv) How to contact us? A list of possible annexes to the organisation profile is suggested.

The tool consists of this explanatory note and an empty format to fill out. It is best used when a producers' organisation seeks to succinctly present itself to the outside world. The profile can be upgraded by adding pictures and graphs. The profile could be disseminated through different channels (printed folders, website, social media, ...)

Aims of the tool:

- ❖ **To facilitate the basic description of a producers' organisation.**
- ❖ **To make the organisation (better) known to the outside world.**

OPPO tool 'Profiling a farmer's Organisation'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

5 Sub-sector value chain mapping and analysis

5.1 Introduction: value chain analysis is important for producers and their organisations

Sectors and sub-sectors

- In agriculture different sectors are generally distinguished: Field crop sector, of which maize, taro, cassava, rice and others are sub-sectors
- Horticulture sector, of which tomatoes, oranges, breadfruit and others are sub-sectors
- Livestock sector, of which dairy, poultry, sheep and goats are sub-sectors
- Fisheries and aquaculture sector, of which shrimps, tilapia and tuna are sub-sectors.



Value chains

In agriculture, the concept of a chain applies to a sequence of related productive and commercial activities, undertaken by different actors, from local production to final consumption. This includes all intermediary steps, e.g. local trade, processing and storage, marketing and transport, wholesale and retail.

In the agricultural sector, different, interchangeable terms are used for chains: production chains, value chains, marketing chains, supply chains, distribution chains. The two most commonly used are 'value chain' and 'supply chain'. A supply chain perspective concentrates on how a product moves from suppliers to buyers, which is most appropriate for sourcing traders or companies. A value chain perspective focuses on activities that create value as the product moves towards the end consumer. This is most appropriate for a farmer empowerment perspective and purpose.

Value chain operators

Value chains always go from the primary producers to the end consumers. There are many options and possibilities to create value in the agricultural sector. To get a product from the farmer to the consumer, there may be several intermediate actors, such as local traders, processors, wholesalers and retailers. We call these actors 'value chain operators': they undertake value adding activities and they own the product at some stage of the chain. Farmers' organisations that buy produce from their members and then own it are also value chain operators.

The two tables below are checklists for identifying value chain operations and operators.

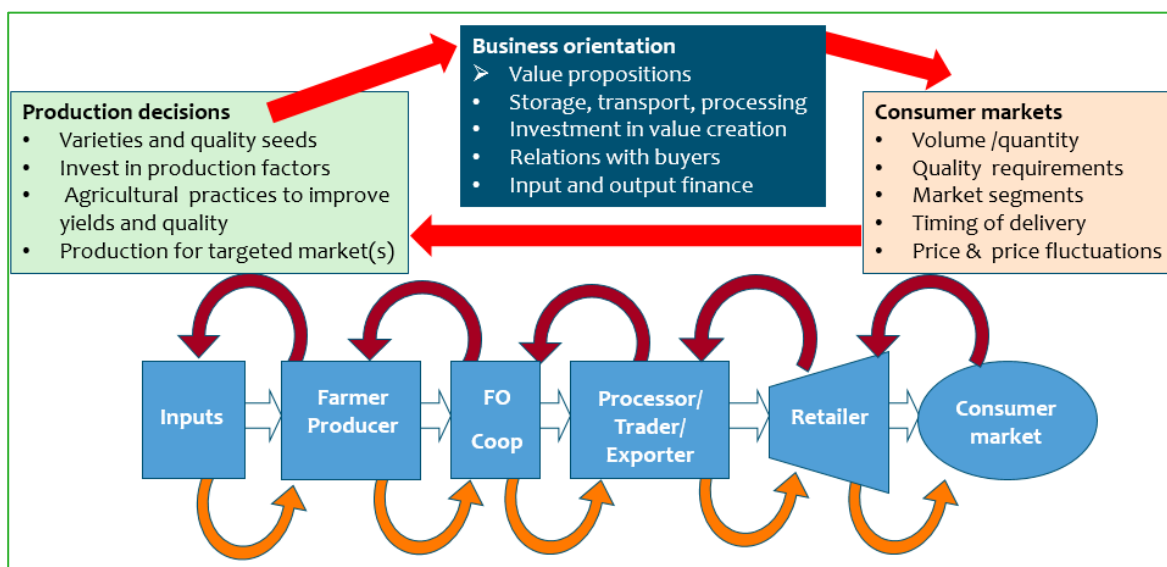
Possible value chain operations			
Drying	Sorting and grading	Home / local processing	Branding / labelling
Threshing, winnowing	Storing and conserving	(semi) industrial processing	Tracing / certifying
Cleaning, washing	Transporting / distributing	Packaging / repackaging	Putting by-products to value

Value chain operators who can add value	
❖ Farmers	❖ Transporters
❖ Farmers' organizations	❖ Pack houses
❖ Cleaners	❖ Wholesalers
❖ Traders	❖ Retailers (different types)
❖ Processors	❖ Exporters
❖ ...	❖ ...

As the (agricultural) product moves along the value chain, the costs increase, because each actor is doing something to make the product more attractive for the next actor on the chain. This creates additional value and the value and price of the product increase.

Importance of sub-sector and value chain analysis for producers and their organisations

Farmers invest in improved agricultural practices and value adding activities if there are good prospects for financial benefits. However, farmers are often not sure of being able to sell their products at a fair price, which is a major reason why they refrain from investing in production improvement or in post-harvest operations. Low and inconsistent production and poor quality are in turn the reason why they often have difficulties to meet market demands. The challenge is how to break out of this vicious cycle by connecting market demand to production decisions and (new) business orientations:



For several reasons sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis is of great importance to farmers and their organisations:

1. **Market prospection.** The mapping out of value chains, showing how the primary produce moves and changes until finally reaching consumers provides insights that support farmers to reason from market demand to production decisions. This is a first step towards empowerment. Often, farmers only look at markets when they have a surplus to sell.

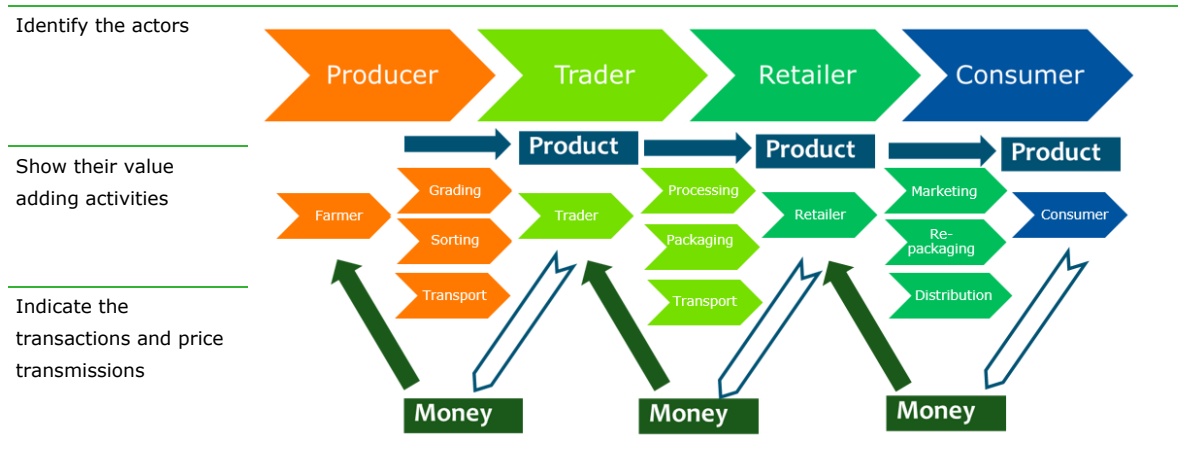
2. **Market access and market power.** The understanding of market mechanisms, opportunities, consumer preferences, traders' and processors' requirements, prices and price fluctuations is a condition for (small) farmers' profitable market integration and improves their negotiation and bargaining position.
3. **Improved operational management.** The understanding of markets, consumers, prices and quality requirements enhances the attention of farmers for increasing production efficiency, reducing the production cost price, increasing quality and timeliness of supply. This improved operational performance is essential for farmers' competitive position vis-à-vis competitors.
4. **Collaboration and coordination of chain activities.** The understanding of value chains and the sub-sector at large induces farmers to think (more) about how best to relate to other actors. The knowledge and understanding of markets and value chains also prepares farmers better for lobbying, advocating and negotiating for a better policy environment and business climate.

The Pacific Islands Farmers' Organisation Network (PIFON), PIFON has done extensive value chain training and captured stories of mind-set change in their updated 'Agricultural value chain guide for the Pacific Islands' which can be found here: <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/107243>. In a short film produced by PIFON, farmers and several other actors reflect on the importance of value chain training and analysis. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogRZKdR9Aps>.

5.2 Mapping value chains – three subsequent steps

For any sub-sector, the drawing of a value chain can be done in three steps:

1. **Identify the actors.** The first step for drawing a value chain is to identify the value chain operators and to visualize their sequence along the value chain. In the figure below there are four value chain operators: producer, trader, retailer and consumer.
2. **Show their value adding activities.** The next step for drawing a value chain is to show the value adding activities of the identified value chain operators. To clearly show which actor is doing what, it is recommended to use the same colours for the actors and their value adding activities. This is exemplified in the figure.
3. **Indicate transactions and price transmissions.** Along value chains there are transactions: goods are sold from one value chain operator to another. With a transaction, the ownership of the product changes from one operator to another in exchange for money. This is also shown in the figure. Important questions are: how much is paid at each level and what are the costs of the activities done by the different actors? The difference between the costs of the value adding activities and the additional value that is generated is the net value that is created.



5.3 Sub-sector and value chain analysis: six perspectives

It is important to look at sub-sectors and value chains from different perspectives. Six complementary perspectives are suggested. The first three perspectives allow to identify different Product-Market-Consumer combinations.

Perspectives	Observations
Products	Farmers (and facilitators) generally talk about commodities in very generic wordings (like 'cassava', 'maize', 'milk' or 'fish'). It is important to be much more specific and to think about the diversity of products that can be made out of the farmers' primary produce, which is the starting point of any value chain. Awareness about the diversity of products fuels the thinking about options for product development (including different quality grades). To facilitate the identification of products, and to be sensitive to the diversity of products, it is useful to think of four product categories: primary products, intermediate products, final processed products and by-products.
Markets	Farmers' 'products' need to go to 'markets'. Also, for 'markets' farmers are generally not specific enough when responding to market demand. Often, they say: we need to improve market access, but which markets? To improve the reflection on markets, two basic questions are important: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What are the market locations? 4 levels are distinguished: village/local markets, district/provincial markets, national and foreign (regional international) markets.- How important are these markets? Differentiate: the importance of volumes sold (limited, average or large) or of the demand (limited, average or high).
Consumers	The next step is to look better at the consumers, for some of the most important, or most promising product-market combinations. For this analysis, key questions and assessment suggestions are provided for volume of demand, consumer profiles, product requirements, prices and seasonality.

The reflections according to the first three perspectives aim to look beyond the primary production of farmers and to identify Product-Market-Consumer combinations (PMC combinations). Once the product, consumers and market location are specified, it is easy to formulate a PMC combination.

After the description of the PMC combination, its importance can be indicated: high (xxx), intermediate (xx) or limited (x).

The following three perspectives allow to critically look at the relations along the value chains of the sub-sector.

Perspectives	Observations
Value adding activities	There are many options and possibilities to create value in the agricultural sector. These value adding activities can be done by different value chain operators. With this perspective, you reflect by answering the following questions: What is being done in the commodity sub-sector of your case? Who are currently doing it? What could farmers do?
Transactions and price transmissions	With this perspective, you look at the transactions (movement of the product from producer to the consumer) and the price transmissions (the price paid at different stages) from the consumer to the producer. This allows to observe and analyze: the difference between the consumer price and the farmers' price; the costs of the value creation activities (transport, storage, processing, losses, packaging, interest on bank loans, ...) and the net value (profit) that is harnessed by different value chain operators. It is then interesting to think about possible options for farmers or farmers' organisations to improve their business results. Could they operate better or smarter?
Market relations and sales	After getting the picture of all actors and steps along the value chain, the next step is to review farmers' market relations and sales and to establish what is currently done and not done. There are many options and possibilities for value chain operators, including farmers and their organisations, to improve market relations and sales. Ask yourself: what is the current situation? What is done and not done by farmers? What are challenges and opportunities? What could farmers do to improve their market relations and sales? The results of this reflection are input for strategic thinking about improving farmers' commercial relations.

The analyses according to these six perspectives are the preparation for sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis.

5.4 Sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis tool

This tool supports you to systematically analyse and map the value chains of a particular sub-sector, from a farmer empowerment perspective. It is for professionals who want to support farmers and their organisations to better understand the sub-sector they are part of.

The tool helps to identify strategies and practical options for product and market development for agricultural producers and their organisations. The focus is on exploring product-market-consumer combinations, creating additional value to farmers' primary produce, and improving farmers' market relations and sales.

It is recommended to involve producers and their organisations as much as possible in the process of analysing and mapping value chains, especially if there are signs of keen interest to improve revenues from farming, processing and marketing of their produce and willingness to collaborate with other value chain operators.

Aims of the tool:

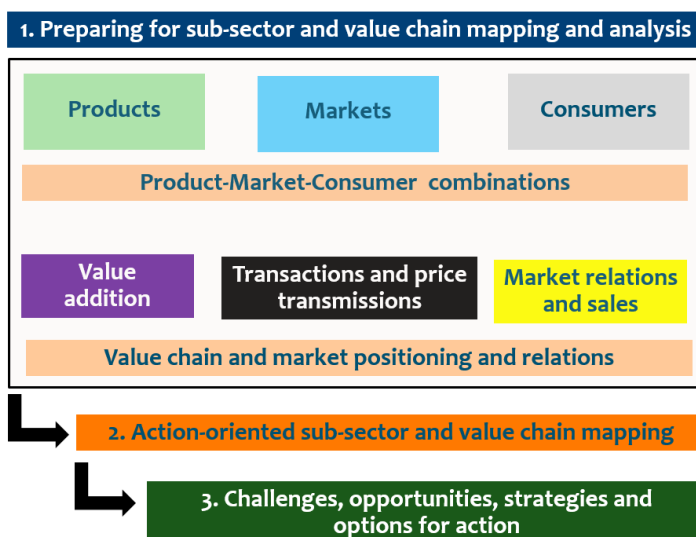
- ❖ **To understand the concepts of 'value chain' and 'sub-sector' and the importance of sub-sector and value chain analysis for producers and their organisations.**
- ❖ **To apply sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis to a specific case.**
- ❖ **To apply different perspectives for sub-sector and value chain analysis.**
- ❖ **To map value chain actors, operations and transactions.**
- ❖ **To identify farmers' challenges, opportunities, strategies and options for action for the particular case at hand.**

The manual 'Sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis for action' takes you in more detail through the following subjects: Introduction to value chains and sub-sectors; the importance of sub-sector and value chain analysis for agricultural producers and their organisations; mapping a value chain: actors, operations and transactions and sub-sector and value chain analysis: six perspectives. The last part of the manual explains the application of the tool in three steps:

Step 1: Preparing for sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis

Step 2: Action-oriented sub-sector and value chain mapping

Step 3: Identifying farmers' challenges, opportunities, strategies and options for action



Example Value Chain Mapping Process - Farmers can map

Figure 2 shows how value chain maps can be easily prepared by farmers during a workshop, e.g. members of the national dalo and ginger federations in Fiji. The map below (figure 3) shows the dalo (taro) value chain in Fiji:

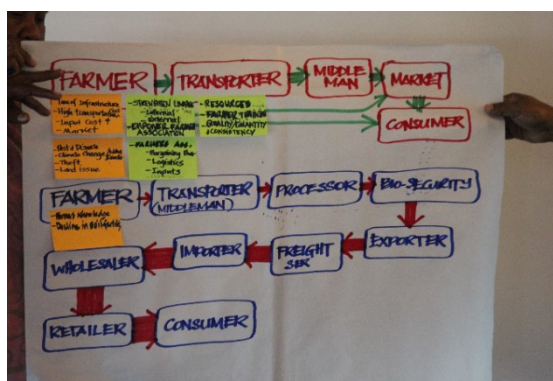


Figure 2 Ginger value chain map created by workshop participant



Figure 3 Dalo (Taro) value chain in Fiji. 20% of the produced dalo is for home consumption

Figure 4 below shows the map (figure 3) when digitalized:

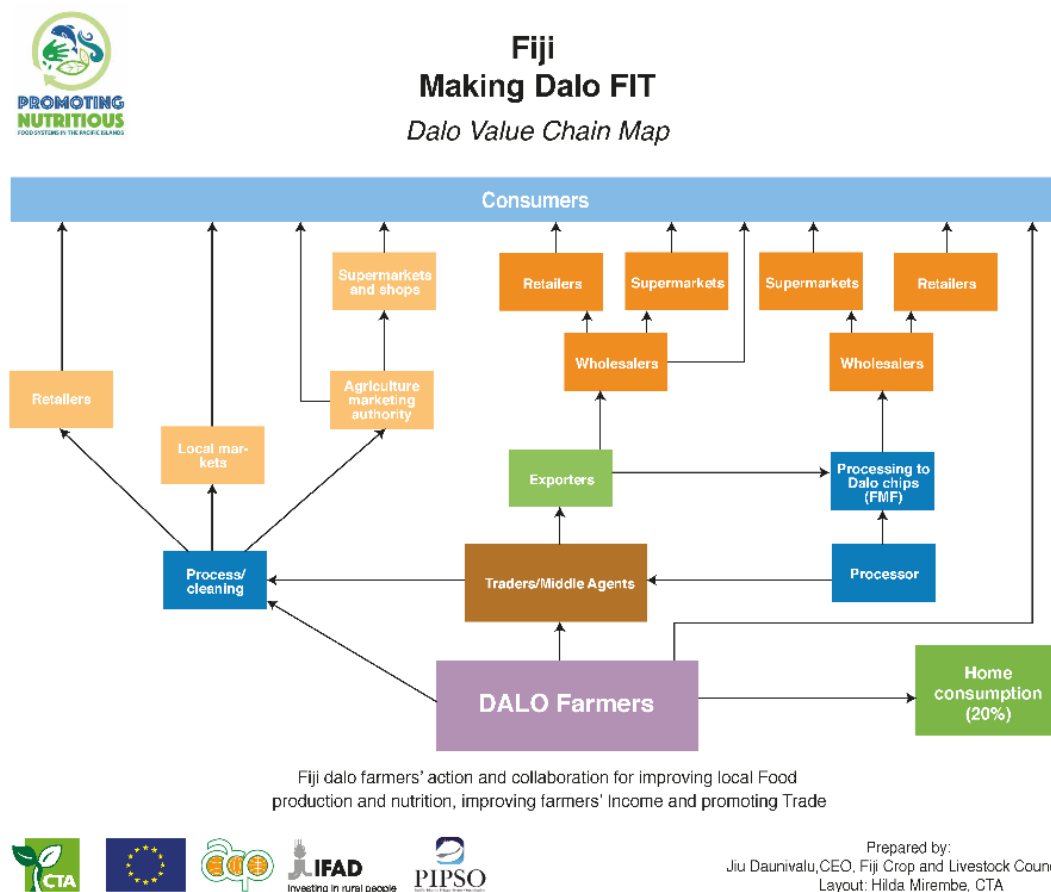


Figure 4 Digitalized Dalo value chain map for Fiji

OPPO tool 'Sub-Sector Value Chain Mapping and Analysis'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

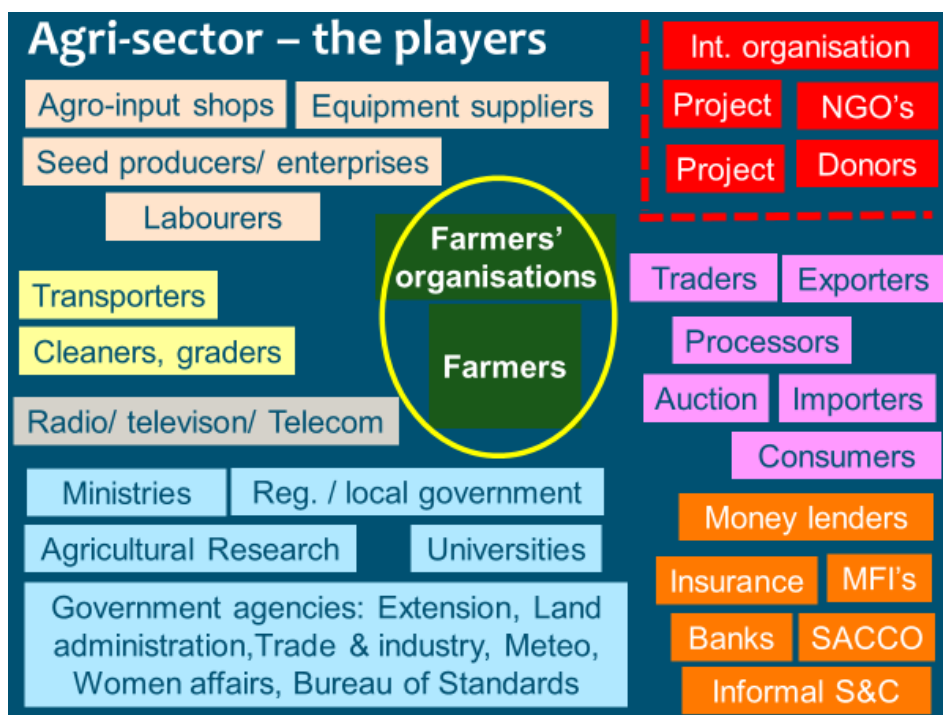
The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

6 Stakeholder collaboration and farmer-inclusive agribusiness models

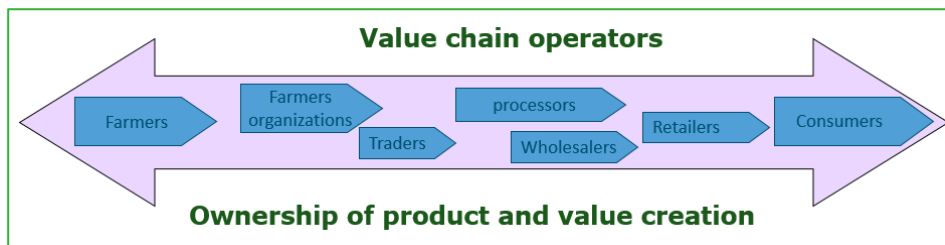
6.1 Introduction

Agribusiness and value chain development entails more than value chain operators who do business together. In any agribusiness system, there are many more actors and stakeholders. Actors and stakeholders can be classified according to four major actor groups. Farmers need to position themselves vis-à-vis these actors and engage with them.

The figure below gives an idea of the many players who are active in the agricultural sector:



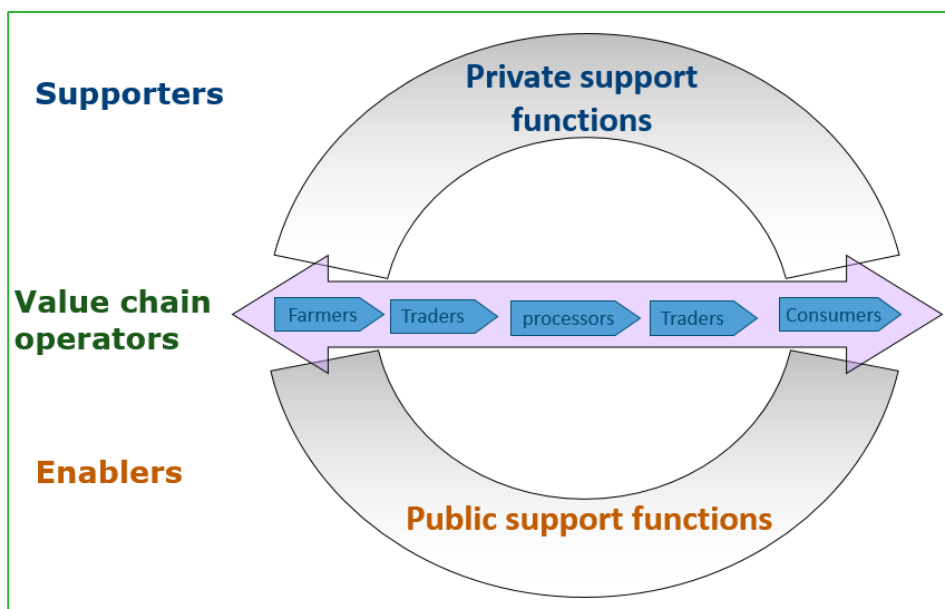
Value chain operators are entrepreneurs/ enterprises performing basic functions along a value chain. They create value and own the product at some stage; think of producers, processors, traders, wholesalers, exporters, retailers and consumers.



Value chain supporters provide support services to value chain operators, who pay for it. We call these business-to-business (B2B) services. Chain supporters have a stake in the value chain, but, contrary to value chain operators, they do not own the product. The following private sector actors are supporters: labourers, agro-input providers and seed companies, financial services (Banks, MFIs, SACCO's, informal money lenders), middlemen and brokers, transporters, storekeepers, equipment suppliers, electricity and water suppliers, agribusiness support services and any other provider of services. Public sector organizations can also provide support services to chain operators. However, these are not business-to-business services but services paid for from the government budget. Public sector services are therefore put under the enablers.

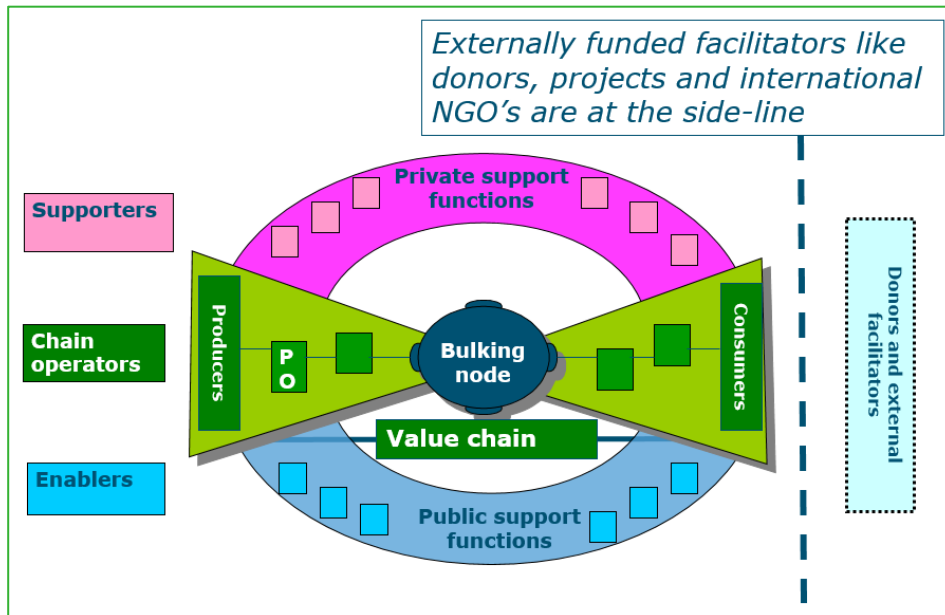
Enablers define and control the policy environment and/or create conditions for private sector players to develop their business. Value chain enablers are usually public sector organizations and include government structures at different levels and all kinds of public services. The following actors are enablers: Ministries, regional/district authorities, local administrative offices, government agencies (extension service, cooperative promotion, trade office, bureau of standards, ...), publicly funded research institutes and universities, law enforcement (police, courts, border control), tax revenue authority and others.

The actors of the market system can be visualized in a figure that looks like the one shown to the right. The value chain operators are in the middle and the supporters and enablers are shown as two half-moon circles above and below. This looks like a hamburger, or a fish burger if you like. The value creation is mainly done by value chain operators: they are the meat or the fish of the burger.

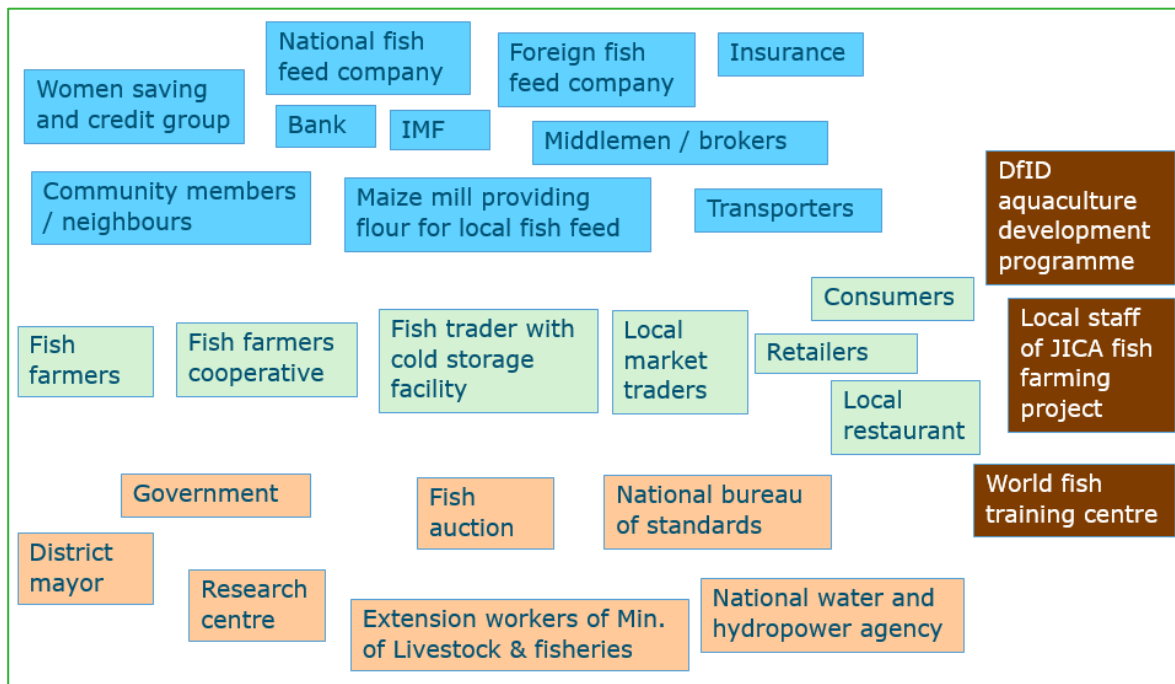


Externally funded facilitators. In many countries, donor-funded development projects and programmes, development organizations and/or international and national NGO's provide significant technical and/or financial support. These externally funded facilitator, who have in common that their activities are based on funds that are not generated in the national economy, should also be added.

We propose to visualise them as standing at the side-line, like the trainer of a football or rugby team. This makes it clear that donors, projects and NGO's are only temporarily there and are not there to stay. It does not imply that they are not important. On the contrary, they can provide training and information services, bring stakeholders together, facilitate market linkages, support strategy development, accelerate innovations and support scaling and institutionalization.



For any agribusiness case, it is necessary to identify all the players, to structure them according to the four actor groups and to represent them in the form of a 'burger'. The figure below is a for a hypothetical aquaculture case:



6.2 Market system Stakeholder mapping and analysis for improved performance and collaboration

With the tool, 'Market system stakeholder mapping and analysis for improved performance and collaboration', the analysis moves to the market system. In addition to value chain operators, the three other stakeholder groups are included: supporters, enablers and externally funded facilitators. The tool helps to identify the broad range of stakeholders that are directly and indirectly involved in an agribusiness case, to categorize them according to four actor groups and to reflect on how to improve stakeholder roles and collaboration. This is interesting for all stakeholders that are part of an agricultural market system. They can reflect, from their perspective, where they are located and what can be done to improve stakeholder collaboration.

This tool is most applicable when there is a need to reflect on stakeholder relations, especially the relations of agricultural producers and their organisations with other actors and stakeholders, both from the private and public sector. It is recommended to use this tool in combination with the 'sub-sector value chain mapping and analysis' tool, with tools for designing inclusive business models or tools for further exploring specific forms of stakeholder collaboration, such as farmers and companies or farmers and financial institutions.

Aims of the tool:

- ❖ **To identify all stakeholders that are directly or indirectly relevant for your case and to visualise them according to different stakeholder groups ('burger' shape).**
- ❖ **To assess the current roles of stakeholders and to reflect on improving stakeholder roles and collaboration for the development of producer-inclusive agribusiness.**

The tool is applied in three steps:

1. Identify and map the stakeholders ('burger'). In this step you identify all the stakeholders that are directly and indirectly important for your farmer-inclusive business development case at hand. These stakeholders are categorized according to the four stakeholder categories and arranged in a 'burger' shape.
2. Review current and desired/required stakeholder roles. The next step is the systematic reflection about the importance, the current and the required/desired roles of each of the identified stakeholders. This is the basis for strategizing for better stakeholder roles and collaboration.
3. Define a stakeholder collaboration strategy for farmer-inclusive agribusiness. In this step, you reflect like a trainer of a football or rugby team. Starting from the current situation, the key question is how to arrive at a better team and a better team play. Like a trainer, you reflect on some important questions. The answers to these questions lead to a strategy for improved stakeholder collaboration for (more) farmer-inclusive agribusiness development.

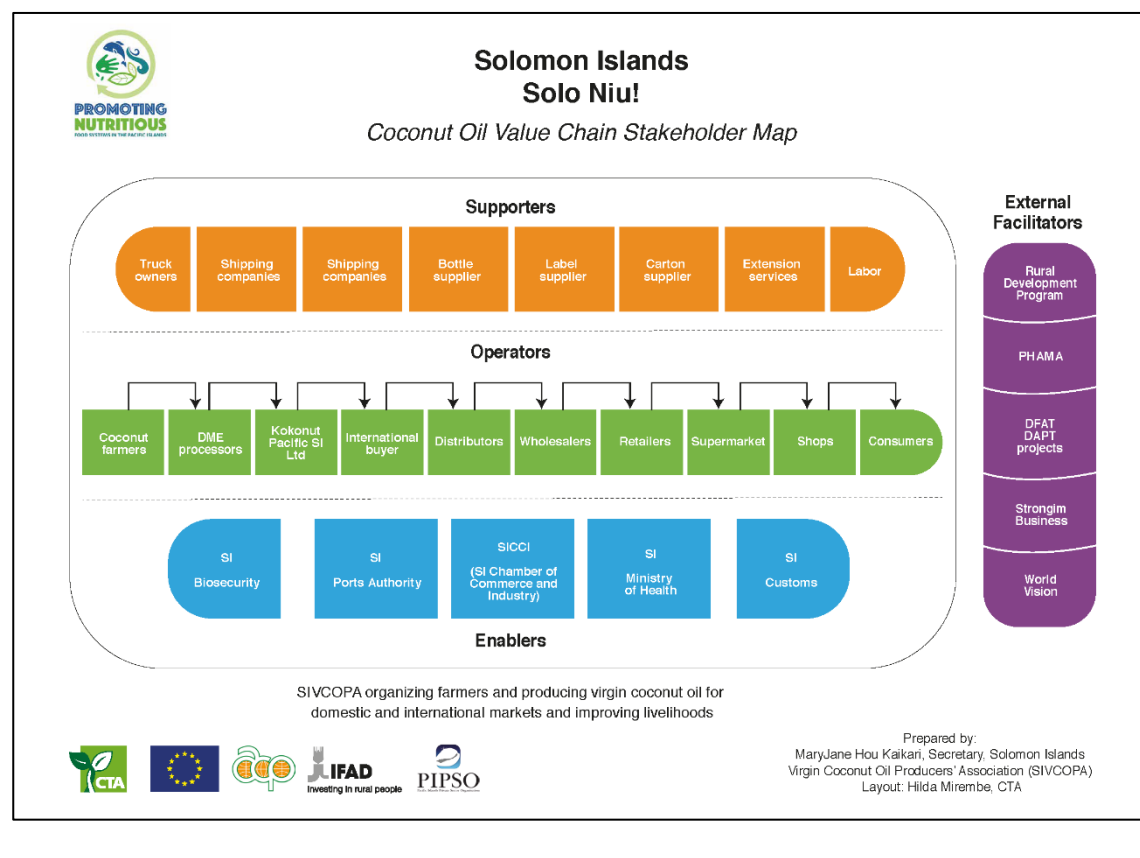
OPPO tool 'Market system stakeholder mapping and analysis for improved performance and collaboration'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

Example of a stakeholder map process – Solomon Islands Virgin Coconut Oil

The map can begin by identifying the actors and reporting the various groups by posting all the actors on flipchart paper. The flip chart map can then be digitalised. See example for Virgin Coconut Oil in Solomon Islands.



6.3 Inclusive agribusiness models and principles

The strategy for stakeholder collaboration complements the strategies for product and market development that you developed on the basis of the sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis. At this juncture, you can proceed with the design of farmer-inclusive business by reflecting on business model options; farmer-company relations and inclusive business principles (cf. note 'Towards farmer-inclusive business development'). Other options are action research on the relations of producers and their organisations with specific other actors, for instance financial institutions or seed or input providers or using the business model canvas for outlining the farmers' business case or preparing business plans and bank loan proposals.

The paper 'Towards farmer-inclusive agribusiness development' shares some perspectives and experiences related to the development of farmer-inclusive business. Five sections discuss the following:

Inclusive agribusiness	Two complementary perspectives are explained: stakeholder collaboration and social inclusion.
Business model options	<p>Ten different business model options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Company driven: Leasing model, Intermediary model and Informal agreements- Contract farming: General contract farming model, Nucleus estate additional sourcing model, Franchising and Joint venture or joint shareholding model- Producer driven business models: Tenant farming/sharecropping, Cooperative model and Collaborative trade model <p>In addition Public-Private partnerships and Certification are discussed. It is observed that business models can be combined and should be tailored to the realities of the business case.</p>
Farmer-company relations	<p>For most agricultural sub-sectors, the challenge is to build farmer-company relations. We speak of a farmer-firm relation when farmers and companies are collaborating and coordinating activities with each other, with the aim of doing business with each other repeatedly. To do so they engage in at least some communication and planning before the transaction, and perhaps even before the start of production. This allows to move towards preferred buyer-supplier relations over a longer period. Farmer-firm relations can be existing or emerging. Points of attention for, and lessons learned from developing farmer-company relations are shared.</p>
Promoting shared ownership and farmer autonomy	<p>Six business model features and related questions are important for reflecting on the empowerment and autonomy of farmers: Product flow, Product ownership, Services, Contracts, Voice and Finance flow.</p> <p>The development of an inclusive business model, contract farming, mutual trust and shared ownership and voice takes time, high commitment and intensive communication between suppliers and buyers.</p>
Assessing inclusive business principles	<p>The paper shares six principles for farmer inclusive business as developed by the LINK methodology: Chain-wide collaboration; Effective market linkages; Fair and transparent governance; Equitable access to services; Inclusive innovation and Measurement of outcomes. Statements for sellers and buyers to score the six principles are shared in the paper.</p>

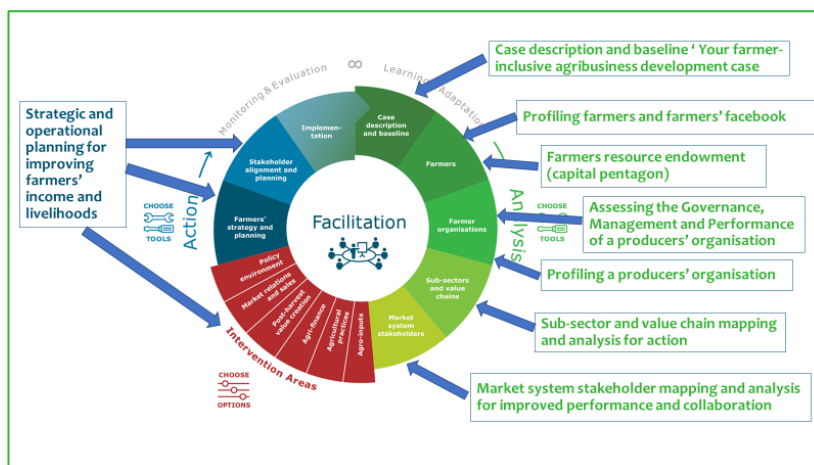
OPPO tool 'Inclusive agribusiness models and principles'

The paper can be downloaded [here](#).

7 Strategic and operational planning for improving farmers' income and livelihoods

7.1 Introduction

The right side of the OPPO figure (green) is about analysis with and for farmers. It starts with the selection and description of a specific case for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development. It then goes into more depth by zooming in on farmers, farmers' organisation(s), the sub-sectors, value chains and stakeholders of the selected case.



The left side of the OPPO figure (blue) is the action side. OPPO emphasises the importance of farmers' involvement in the design, implementation and adaptation of agro-economic development programmes. For the case at hand, the action starts with visioning and defining strategic orientations and continues with operational planning, stakeholder alignment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and learning and adaptation.

Intervention areas

The red part in the middle indicates six intervention areas for farmer-inclusive development:

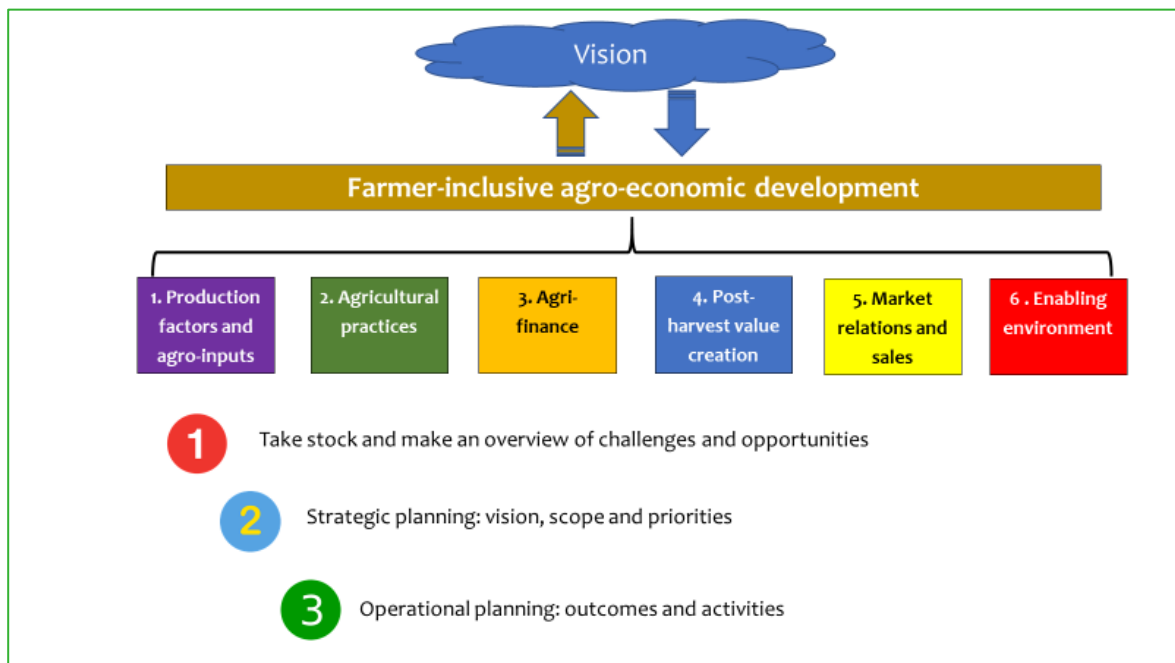
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Production factors and agro-inputs | 4. Post-harvest value creation |
| 2. Agricultural practices | 5. Market relations and sales |
| 3. Agri-finance | 6. Enabling environment |

OPPO suggests using these intervention areas for making the transition from analysis to action. Most often, action is needed in several, if not all six intervention areas. The collective action of farmers' organisations can also be structured according these six intervention areas. Improving the 'Governance and Management of farmers' organisations' is generally important and a precondition for good performance. This is suggested as a specific point of attention under the sixth intervention area (Enabling environment).

The tool 'Strategic and operational planning for improving farmers' income and livelihoods' suggests a three-step process for moving to action:

- 1. Take stock and make an overview of the identified challenges and opportunities.** In this first step, you take stock of the challenges and opportunities identified with the OPPO tools and you structure these according to the six intervention areas.
- 2. Planning.** After overviewing all challenges and opportunities, you formulate the long-term vision, you define the scope of the programme/project for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development and you set priorities.
- 3. Action.** In this step, you define the primary and intermediary outcomes and you plan for conducting operational activities.

The challenges and opportunities, the selected priorities, the outcomes and the activities are generally across the different intervention areas. The combined effect of actions in these areas are expected to lead to farmer-inclusive agro-economic development, as shown in the figure below.



You are ready to use this tool once you have analysed your case by using complementary OPPO tools, which allowed you to look at related issues from different angles. Identified challenges and opportunities are the basis for developing a strategic plan and operational work plans.

Strategic and operational planning is preferably an effort that strongly involves producers and their organisations, as well as other stakeholders that are directly or indirectly involved in the agribusiness development case. The tool is important for:

- Farmers and farmers' organisations: to take well-informed strategic decisions for improving their performance, with the aim to improve revenues from farming, processing and marketing.
- SME's, companies, processors and/or traders: to work together with farmers and their organisations.
- Other stakeholders: to orient their activities in support of farmers' livelihood improvement and rural-economic development in general.

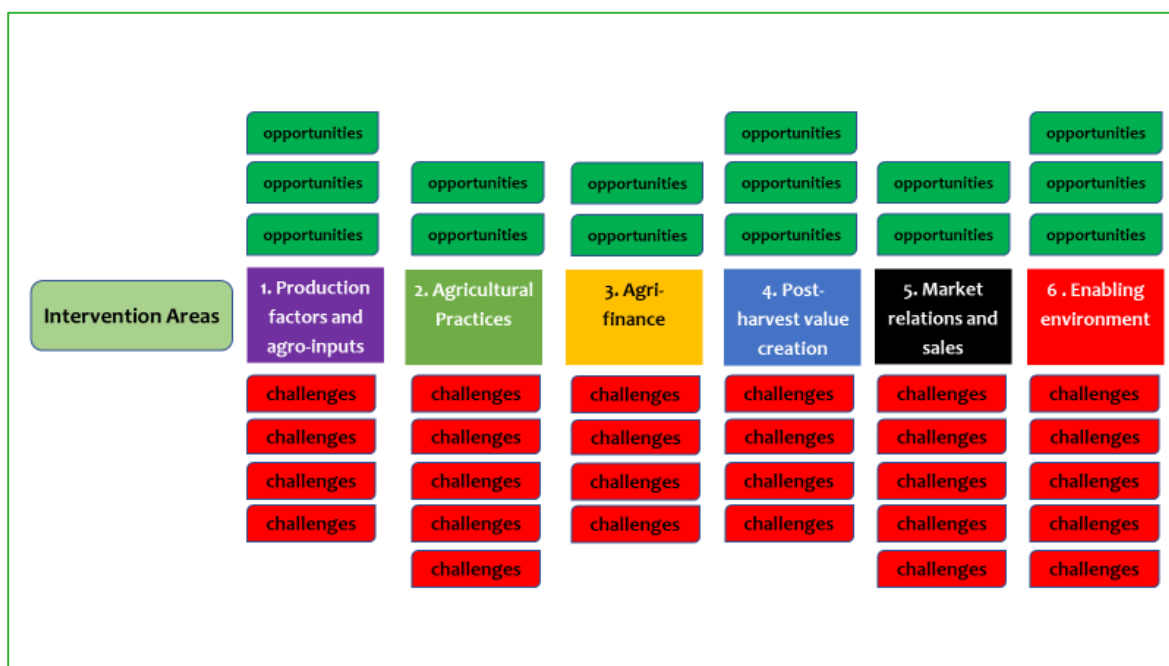
Aims of this tool:

- ❖ **To make an overview of challenges and opportunities according to six intervention areas, based on the results of different tools.**
- ❖ **Select key issues to address.**
- ❖ **To define outcomes and plan activities for the key issues that are retained.**

7.2 Taking stock of challenges and opportunities identified with different tools

The OPPO tools, which were presented in the preceding chapters and for which manuals and worksheets were shared, can be used for analysing an agribusiness case. The tool 'Strategic and operational planning for improving farmers' income and livelihoods' explains how to take stock and structure the identified challenges and opportunities.

By taking stock of the results of the analyses, in terms of challenges and opportunities according to the six intervention areas, you will have a rich harvest. It is recommended to share the overview of challenges and opportunities with the farmers, farmers' group(s) and other stakeholders involved in your case. For this purpose, you can prepare and present an overview (PowerPoint, flip chart). After writing the challenges on red cards and opportunities on green cards, you can make an overview that looks like the figure below.



7.3 Strategic planning

The strategic planning is done in three steps: Defining the desired situation (vision); Defining the scope and timeframe of the strategic plan and Setting priorities.

A Vision is a succinct statement that describes the ideal situation, a programme or project (of farmers, of government or other actors) seeks to contribute to. A vision is ambitious, forward looking and aligned to important values or long-term goals (such as the sustainable development goals). It should be inspiring and motivational to partners and investors. A vision is stated in clear language without technical jargon. It is like a point on the horizon or a direction on the compass you want to move to. A vision represents the changes in farmers' livelihoods, activities, environment, conditions and relationships in society that we wish to see occurring in the future. The formulation of a vision is preferably done in close collaboration with the farmers and their partners.

Three P's define **the scope of your strategic plan** for farmer-inclusive agribusiness development:

- Place / Production zone: what is the geographical scope of your plan? What is the location of the production zone and what are key characteristics (acreage, agro-ecological conditions, farming systems and environmental change)?
- Product and sub-sector: What commodity is central to the case? What is the importance of this commodity in the farming system and for farmers' livelihoods (food and income)?
- Producers: who are the producers for and with whom the plan is developed? What is the number of farmer households? What are farmer categories and the conditions of the farmer households? What are the roles of men, women and youth? Are farmers organised in formal and/or informal organisations?

While writing your case description, you have already set boundaries and defined the scope using the 3 P's. Geographical boundaries and commodity orientation are important for the focus of your case, which is important for the next steps of strategic and operational planning. It is also important for determining the stakeholders that need to be involved and for efficient use of resources.

A point of attention is the **time frame of the strategic planning**. Because contexts usually change quickly, it is advised to consider a period of 3 to 5 years for strategic planning. This time frame is also the most common time horizon for strategic plans of farmers' organisations, government programs and donor-funded projects.

Priority setting. It's obvious that not all challenges and opportunities can be addressed during the time span of the strategic plan. It is even better to focus on a few issues first, rather than try to do everything at the same time. That's why you have to set priorities, e.g. selecting the most important challenges and opportunities. In the OPPO approach, it is strongly suggested to first consider the priorities of the farmers themselves. This is essential for farmer ownership and own efforts and investments. Consider also the priorities that are set by other key stakeholders (Ministries, local government, processing plants, financial institutions,). This is essential for policy alignment and active involvement and participation of public and private sector actors and stakeholders.

7.4 Operational planning

The Operational planning is done in 5 steps: Formulating the goal of the strategic plan; Formulating the primary outcomes; Formulating the intermediary outcomes; Identifying practical activities and reflecting on stakeholder collaboration and Discussing the programme structure with stakeholders.

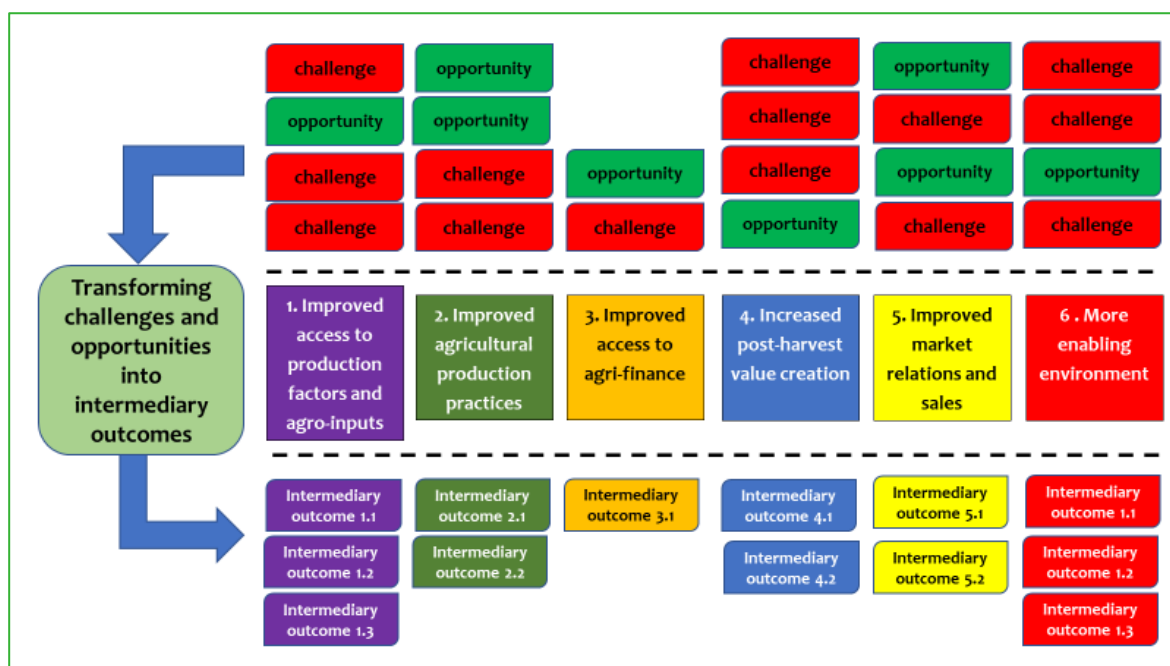
Once you have stated the vision, defined the scope and time frame of the strategic plan and set priorities, you can **formulate the goal of the strategic plan**. The scope, time frame and priorities are input for formulating the goal of the strategic plan.

For the **formulation of primary outcomes**, it is suggested that the six intervention zones are used to structure the planning. The primary outcomes are then basically the following:

- Improving access to production factors and agro-inputs
- Improved agricultural production practices
- Improved access to agri-finance
- Increased post-harvest value creation
- Improved market relations and sales
- More enabling policy environment

Formulation of primary outcomes should however be more specific than the basic formulations above and reflect the realities and priorities of your case.

By addressing the challenges and harnessing opportunities, the primary outcomes, formulated for the different intervention areas, can be achieved. The next step is to transform the prioritized challenges and opportunities in **intermediary outcomes**. This is visualised in the figure below.



The basic structure of primary and intermediary outcomes is the basic structure of your programme and can be used for operational planning, monitoring, evaluation and communication.

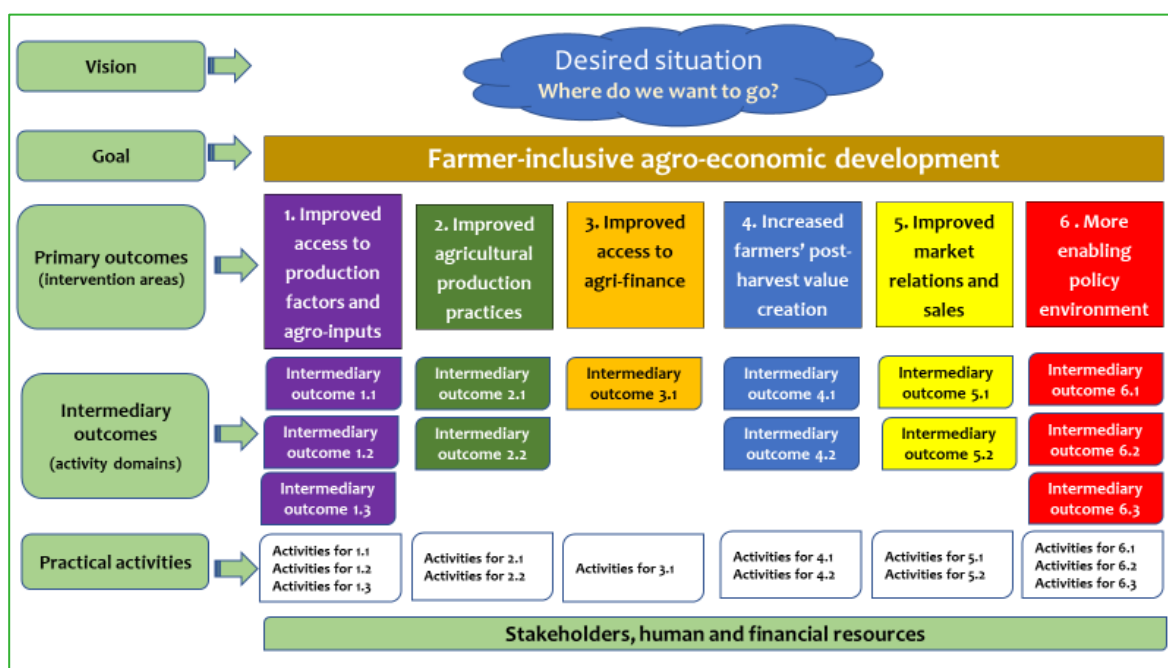
Identifying and selecting practical activities for addressing the prioritized challenges and harnessing opportunities, which are now under different intermediary outcomes, is the next step of your operational planning process. The identification of practical activities is generally done during brainstorming sessions during which options for action are brought forward. This can be internal to the farmers' organisation and/or it can be done during sessions that bring different stakeholders together. The manual provides a number of issues and questions that need to be considered while brainstorming on the activities to undertake, namely: available resources, options for action and the need to plan for a combination of complementary actions.

During brainstorming sessions, all ideas and suggestions for activities are welcomed and listed. This may result in a long activity list, more than can be carried out during the implementation period. Last but not least, it is thus important to **select the most important, promising or feasible activities**. To manual suggest a range of criteria that can be considered for selecting activities.



Choose your options - just like choosing your food baskets. (Photo taken during the Pacific Week of Agriculture in Samoa 2019)

You are now ready to sketch out your strategic and operational plan, which will have the following structure:



OPPO tool 'Strategic and operational planning for improving farmers' income and livelihoods'

The manual can be downloaded [here](#).

The worksheet can be downloaded [here](#).

8 Building facilitators' and farmers' capacity for change – lessons learned

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter we want to zoom into the Innov4AgPacific capacity building and blended learning approach, its impact and the lessons learned while scaling OPPO in the Pacific Region. The capacity development initiative was conducted in close collaboration with WCDI experts, who spearheaded the face-to-face training and online technical backstopping, and PIFON, the regional umbrella farmers' organisation.

The 4-year project Innov4AgPacific (2016-2020), co-funded by CTA and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), has promoted innovation for agricultural development in the Pacific. The full project title "Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems in the Pacific" or short 'Innov4AgPacific' shows the focus on value chains, food systems and nutrition. The design of the project was based on the conviction that knowledge, joint learning, collaboration, trust and partnerships are key to successful innovation for agri-food system transformation.

The goal was to strengthen the capacity of the Pacific Island governments, farmer and private sector organizations, and sub-regional institutions to develop strategies and programmes, as well as mobilize financing, that can enable poor rural people to increase their access to nutritious and healthy food. The project focused on seven countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

More information can be found at: <https://www.innov4agpacific.net/>

8.2 Scaling OPPO

The Innov4AgPacific project managers saw OPPO as an OPPOrtunity to optimise farmers own plans and resources.

With a strong emphasis on practical ways of strengthening the participation of Pacific farmers' organisations in value chain (VC) development, the Innov4AgPacific Project facilitated knowledge and skills development through face-to-face international training and experiential learning, which set the stage for a follow-up Blended Learning Design, which is summarized in the table below:

Box 1: Outline of Innov4AgPacific Blended Learning Design: Strategic Steps and Gains for Value Chain Capacity Development			
Steps	Action	Modality	Period
Step 1	Selection of suitable participants with support of regional farmers' organisation (PIFON) and Ministries of Agriculture in PICs.	On-line	June 2018
Step 2	Farmer leaders/experts prepare pre-course assignments (data gathering, personal motivation etc.) assigned by WCDI prior to commencement of international face-to-face training.	On-line	Aug-Sept 2018
Step 3	Active participation in the 3-week international course in the Netherlands, including start of business case development.	Face-to-Face	Sept-Oct 2018
Step 4	Application of new knowledge and tools, refinement of business cases and conducting trial training workshops in home countries (technical backstopping by WCDI, CTA and PIFON). Usage of online discussion group of Dgroups to share experiences among learners.	On-line	Nov. 2018 – April 2019
Step 5	Cross-learning workshop among farmer leaders/key experts and further refinement of business cases and approach to outscaling OPPO training. Co-facilitation of regional OPPO Workshop (training of 60 other farmers and Pacific VC actors).	Face-to-Face	April-May 2019
Step 6	Regional endorsement of OPPO and recognition of farmer leaders/key experts as Pacific OPPO facilitators/champions for upscaling in-country OPPO training.		
Step 7	Support to 6 online webinars to scale-out the OPPO approach regionally and piloting of selected business cases.	On-line	July-Dec. 2019

8.3 Training of seven Pacific experts to become OPPO champions

The first step was the participation of seven Pacific farmer leaders and agricultural and agribusiness experts in the 3-week international course 'Optimising the Performance of Producers' Organisations (OPPO)' offered by the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI) part of Wageningen University and Research (WUR). Seven candidates were selected (from Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga) who participated in the course in the Netherlands (September / October 2018).

The course sessions focused on the participants' cases and on 'Farmers and Farmer Organisations' (first week); the 'Positioning on Value Chains and in Market systems' (second 'Towards Farmer-Inclusive Agribusiness Development'. The Pacific experts were exposed to practical approaches and tools for designing farmer-inclusive commodity value chains and improving agribusiness performance.

The aim of the OPPO capacity development programme was to motivate and enable participants to become OPPO champions: "game changers in their organisations and countries and proactively make a difference for thousands of family farms". As highlighted in Kolb's learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) learning happens through progressing in all four stages, with an emphasis on active experimentation (McLeod, 2013).

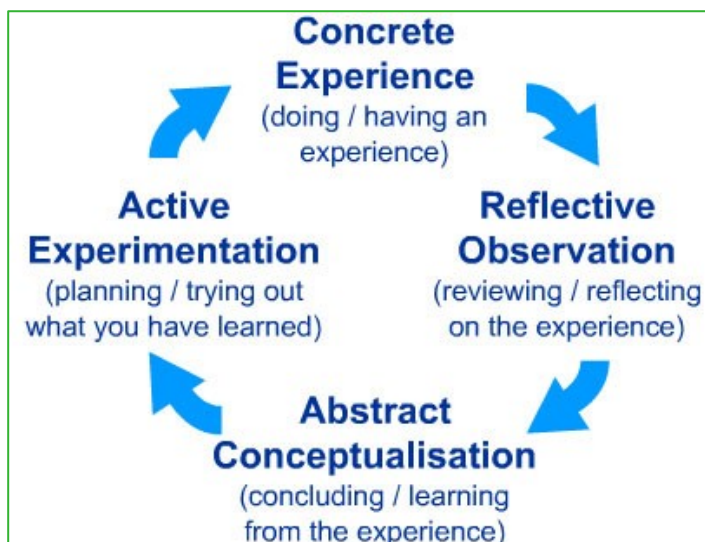


Figure 1 Kolb's experiential learning cycle

The seven Pacific OPPO champions were exposed to key concepts such as farmer entrepreneurship, value chain development, collective action and market engagement in the Netherlands (Box 1). They participated in lectures, discussions and brainstorming sessions, analysed farmer business cases, and visited and interacted with Dutch farmers and other value chain actors from several organisations, including farmers' cooperatives, processing enterprises and major banks. They learned how to apply the OPPO tools to: profile farmers and assess their resource endowment; improve governance, management and performance of farmers' organisations; undertake value chain analysis and stakeholder mapping; and formulate strategic orientations, based on identified farmers' challenges, opportunities and options for practical collective action.



Figure 2 Pacific OPPO course participants discussing during one of the WCDI sessions



Figure 3 Pacific OPPO champions during the 3-week course in Wageningen, The Netherlands

After completion and upon return to their home countries, the Pacific OPPO champions received Innov4AgPacific financial grants through PIFON and technical backstopping from WCDI and CTA teams, to intensively apply several of the OPPO tools including those that are featured in this manual. They used the learning opportunity to develop their business cases based on their organisational and national context as well as their capacity to train others. In so doing, they analysed and mapped seven priority value chains, evaluated the performance of their respective organisations and piloted strategies for upgrading the priority VCs and enhancing organisational performance.

8.4 Scaling in the Pacific

After the training in the Netherlands and further in-country work applying the tools in their local context (with backstopping support from the WCDI and Innov4AgPacific teams), a one-week cross-learning workshop was organised in April / May 2019 in Nadi, Fiji. During this workshop, the Pacific OPPO champions shared lessons learned, finalised VC maps and business cases and prepared training plans. They worked in collaboration with WCDI, PIFON and CTA teams.

This cross-learning workshop was preparation for the conduct of the 2-day regional Pacific OPPO workshop, which was held immediately after. The aim of the 2-day regional OPPO workshop was to present the OPPO approach and share the tools. The tools were showcased with the work of the Pacific OPPO champions. The workshop was co-facilitated by the OPPO champions. This contributed to the further development of their training and facilitation skills.

The OPPO champions featured their business cases, priority value chain (VC) maps and analysis of business relations and strategic options that were identified to improve the positioning of producers and their organisations' agri-business performance. 50 producers including young farmers, and representatives from ministries, SMEs, community-based organisations from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, The Cook Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu were trained. The OPPO approach and tools were endorsed by the wider Pacific stakeholders.

<https://www.cta.int/en/event/organised-producers-as-partners-in-pacific-agribusiness-and-value-chain-development-sid001bd16a9-ba97-488b-867c-011c10974d7f>



Figure 4 Participants of the Pacific OPPO, 6-7 May 2019, Nadi Fiji

"The training workshop held in May was the highlight for me because I got to revisit the OPPO tools and to fully understand the concepts behind the tools. I also had the chance to relook at my own business case and adjust some of the previous assessments I've made when applying the tools to my case. I've also learnt to pitch my case to investors. This is a new skill for me as I do not feel confident to do public speaking. I've learnt to be confident in presenting the OPPO tools to a wider audience from this experience." – Maryjane Hou Kaikari, OPPO champion, Certification Officer, Solomon Islands Virgin Coconut Oil Association

The workshop preparations and individual discussion in the application of the tools helped the OPPO champions to gain deeper understanding of the OPPO tools. This could not have been achieved with the 3 weeks OPPO course alone.

The blended trajectory enabled the OPPO champions to fine tune their understanding and ability to equip other Pacific producers and value chain actors with the knowledge and skills to apply the OPPO approach and practical tools, to improve organisational performance, upgrade local value chains and enhance agribusiness development at national level.

Box 2: Continuation of national OPPO trainings

Between April 2019 and March 2020, the OPPO champions trained 1,750 other Pacific farmers and VC actors – nationally and regionally – and pitched their business cases to potential financiers in an effort to mobilise funding to improve processes and expand market opportunities for the benefit of their members.

The figure to the right is an example of a national OPPO training on the Governance, Management and Performance (GMP) Tool: Local Newspaper Article in Fiji on the training of the national farmers' association 'Fiji Crop and Livestock Council' led by CEO Jiu Daunivalu, one of the Pacific OPPO champions.

Commodity associations benefit from strategic planning workshop

LEADING representatives of the 14 Farmers Organisations (FOs) were trained on how to plan and develop realistic goals to achieve their Vision.

FCLC prioritises a 'bottom up and participatory approach', in developing realistic goals for the farmers organisations, specific to their demographics, commodity marketability, budgets and resources. The training also helps FOs to assess their performance in terms of services to their members/ farmers regularly, looking at Governance, Management and Performance, using the GMP Tool as part of the value chain analysis and market development adopted by FCLC.



Strategic Planning Workshops, such as this, act as a catalyst to improve productivity, income and livelihoods.

8.5 Achievements

The main achievements are the following:

- 7 farmer leaders/Key OPPO experts trained and recognised as Pacific OPPO champions:
 1. Together they trained 1,750 Pacific farmers and key VC actors as of March 2020
 2. They achieved regionally recognised facilitator status for value chain training
 3. They have established new farmer associations and opened new market opportunities for their organisations
- 7 Pacific priority VCs mapped, 7 stakeholder maps created and 4 business cases developed;
- 3 Business cases further piloted through the Innov4APacific project:
 1. Best Practices in Value Chain Finance - Fiji Crop and Livestock Council (FCLC) - Increasing Sustainable Market Linkages for Fiji's Farmers
 2. Prototype for Change & Scaling Solomon Islands Virgin Coconut Oil Producer Association (SIVCOPA) – SOLO NIU - Increasing Incomes through Value Addition
 3. Scaling the OPPO Approach and Strengthening Abaiang Vegetable Growers' Association in the Republic of Kiribati
- OPPO approach has been endorsed by the regional farmers organisation PIFON reaching over 80,000 members across 9 Pacific Island Countries
- OPPO approach recognised by government ministries e.g. the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development (MELAD), Kiribati;
- Kiribati Abaiang Farmers' Association constitution drafted to be formally registered; design of and equipment ordered for cooling house to reduce postharvest losses.

Solomon Islands

As part of her business case 'Solo Niu! - SIVCOPA organizing farmers and producing virgin coconut oil for domestic and international markets and improving livelihoods' Maryjane has developed a new farmer-inclusive business model. After a price drop of VCO in the international market, the association is now securing new outlets in the local market. "Our association consists of 81 Direct Micro Expelling (DME) processing units in all nine Provinces of the Solomon Islands and 1,311 coconut suppliers [farmers]. DME allows rural produces to extract pure VCO. Our vision is to improve village livelihoods. We have been producing VCO for over 10 years; now, we want to increase our incomes by producing a range of value-added VCO products for domestic markets and use other parts of the nut that are otherwise being wasted in the oil-making process.", so Maryjane. Read more about her business case [here](#).



Figure 5 New added value products such as tuna in coconut oil are being developed by SIVCOPA



Figure 6 Maryjane Hou Kaikari helped her association to source Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) oil from more producers from other islands

Fiji Nature's Way - Cooperative owned heat treatment facility for Fijian eggplant and fruits to improve farmers' access to high value markets

"Nature's Way Cooperative had its board meeting. Two tools, that I learned during the course and applied to the case of Nature's Way were input to this meeting: the assessment of Governance, Management and Performance (GMP tool) with realistic views from our members, and Value chain mapping. At first, there was a lot of resistance and critics on the assessment that Nature's Way was not a value chain actor. Throughout the meeting, there was the sense that by becoming a value chain actor, our situation would be flipped all the way around. However, after my presentation of the GMP assessment and some solutions that were identified through Value Chain Analysis, I now can confidently say that our board has accepted our request proposal for Nature's Way Cooperative to become a real actor in the value chain. After functioning for 23 years, this will be our first time as cooperative seeing these options." – Timote Waqainabete, Fiji



Figure 7 Timote Waqainabete consulting with vendors at the local market

What to consider when designing blended learning approaches - From learning cycles to behaviour change

By being able to follow the OPPO alumni learning track beyond the 3-week OPPO course in the Netherlands, and supporting peer-to-peer learning, training skills development and business case implementation, the WCDI and Innov4AgPacific teams were able to understand more deeply how to effectively build the capacity of facilitators, producers and their organisations, for effecting organisational change and design and test winning agribusiness options.

Before highlighting the lessons learned, we want to zoom into the underlying concepts of learning, learning cycle and triggering behaviour change.

Kolbs' learning cycle (see Figure 1) summarizes the continued learning throughout the Innov4AgPacific blended learning design (see box 1). By adding a technical backstopping component whereby, the Pacific OPPO participants were monitored and actively engaged, the entire cycle was completed. They implemented the tools in their local context and planned in-country training sessions (active experimentation and concrete experience) and were then brought back together in the Cross-learning workshop (reflective observation), this triggered deeper understanding and reflection (abstract conceptualisation). Having had the time and technical support to learn by doing and reflect on what they had learned in the Netherlands and applying it to their context deepened their knowledge and enhanced the learning experience. According to Kolb's theory "Only through the reflection process can the experience be truly transformational, as the knowledge students carry into the learning activity is evaluated in terms of their personal experience."

Lessons Learned

Using the OPPO tools, the seven Pacific champions were encouraged to shift their perspective towards farmer-inclusive value chain development. The emphasis was on exploring how farmers can work together with other stakeholders, both from the private and public sector, including traders, processors, banks and government agencies.

All seven champions are unanimous that the OPPO approach and tools have helped them to upgrade prioritized local value chains, through more effective farmer organisation governance, strengthened collaboration and greater trust between value chain actors.

Explaining the concepts in local language and relating the OPPO concepts to local examples helps participants to understand them better. Tailoring the OPPO tools to the national and local context is critical for their successful application to achieve the desired impact.

OPPO alumni need to guide farmers step by step in applying the tools to farmers' own business cases. Concepts are new to farmers and tools need to be contextualised and adapted to accommodate different literacy levels to facilitate the full grasp of the content. New learners need to be closely backstopped for a defined period and as they focus on applying the tools practically. This will help in joint reflection together with their stakeholders and the lead trainer/ technical expert who is providing support if and where needed.

The training others' experience with the OPPO alumni was also a good opportunity to assess how confidently they can present the concepts and tools and should be considered to enhance learning. During the workshop preparations facilitators were able to have individual discussions about the application of the tools which really helped to identify what participants might have misunderstood and provided the opportunity to correct it. Therefore, the process of training others also provided trainers and learners the opportunity to re-consider their existing knowledge and approaches.

Another important point is commitment of the learner. Such initiatives can only be successful if learners are willing to and able to commit and allocate sufficient time and effort during the backstopping process and make the most of the available facilitators to enhance their learning experience. This is a facility which their members or supervisors must support.

It is suggested that a deeper learning and technical backstopping approach is adopted 'beyond the three weeks' course to effectively support the wider adaptation of a localised OPPO approach and to enable OPPO champions to achieve change.

Read more in the case study: [Organised Pacific farmers as partners in inclusive food crops and fisheries value chain development](#) as part of the 'Building Capacity for Change' Innov4AgPacific Lessons Learned and Advocacy Series.

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About the Project

The project “Leveraging the Development of Local Food Crops and Fisheries Value Chains for Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Food Systems in the Pacific Islands with a focus on Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu” was co-funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and was implemented in partnership with the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO). The goal was to strengthen the capacity of the Pacific Island governments, farmer and private sector organisations, and sub-regional institutions to develop strategies and programs – as well as mobilise financing – that can increase poor rural people’s access to nutritious and healthy food. CTA had overall responsibility for the implementation of the project.

www.innov4agpacific.net



About the Partners

PIPSO

The Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization (PIPSO) is the premier private sector representative body in the Pacific Islands region. It was set-up through the mandate of the Forum Economic Ministers in 2005, and legally established in 2007, to be the representative body of the Pacific region's private sector: www.pipso.org.fj

PIFON

The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) is intended to serve as an umbrella organisation for national Farmer Organisations (FOs), to coordinate capacity building, share success stories and the lessons learnt, support regional exchanges of expertise between FOs and their associated private sector and donor agency partners. PIFON's mission is to make Pacific FOs more vibrant, viable and sustainable organisations: www.pacificfarmers.com

Overview Papers, Manuals and Worksheets for OPPO tools

A farmer-inclusive business case as the starting point

Manual Your farmer-inclusive agribusiness development case	Click here
Worksheet Your farmer-inclusive agribusiness development case	Click here

Farmer inclusion starts with farmers

Manual Profiling farmers and farmers' facebook	Click here
Worksheet Profiling farmers and farmers' facebook	Click here

Manual Farmers' resource endowment (Capital pentagon)	Click here
Worksheet Farmers' resource endowment (Capital pentagon)	Click here

Farmers' organisations and collective action

Paper Farmers organising themselves	Click here
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Manual Assessing the governance, management and performance of farmers' organisations (GMP assessment)	Click here
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Worksheet Assessing the governance, management and performance of farmers' organisations (GMP assessment)	Click here
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Excel exercise sheet GMP assessment - example	Click here
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Manual Profiling a farmers' organisation	Click here
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Manual Sub-sector and value chain mapping and analysis for action	Click here
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GUIDE - Optimising the Performance of
Producers and their Organisations (OPPO)
for farmer-inclusive agro-economic
development



Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation supports value creation by strengthening capacities for sustainable development. As the international expertise and capacity building institute of Wageningen University & Research we bring knowledge into action, with the aim to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life. With approximately 30 locations, 6,500 members (5,500 fte) of staff and 12,500 students, Wageningen University & Research is a world leader in its domain. An integral way of working, and cooperation between the exact sciences and the technological and social disciplines are key to its approach.

To explore
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of nature to
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Report WCDI-20-122

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