Step 7 Achieving lasting change

Step 7 helps you ensure that your CEDRA Assessment leads to real and useful change. It helps you learn from your CEDRA Assessment, implement your Action Plan and ensure your current and future projects are adapted to achieve the outcomes you intend. It also helps you to become a learning organisation – learning from everything you do, retaining that learning and taking it forward into all new projects.

IN STEP 7 YOU WILL

- Plan how to keep your CEDRA Assessment up to date and ensure it is used to inform project designs and strategic plans.
- Decide what local environmental change would be most helpful and feasible to record.
- Plan to develop local environmental records.

7.1 Learning from and updating CEDRA Assessments

Learning should be captured throughout the process of carrying out your CEDRA Assessment and Action Plan. We all need to learn from our successes and failures. It is important to capture and share this learning to help yourself and others build on good practice or avoid repeating your mistakes.

You should plan how you are going to encourage learning from the start of CEDRA. Begin by drawing up a list of questions you want to ask all contributors to the CEDRA Assessment – colleagues, communities and stakeholders. These questions could include:

- What has or hasn’t worked well in this process? Where? Why?
- What would have made this process work better?
- What were the conditions like before we started this process?
- What has changed since we began this process?
- What problems have we faced? How have we overcome them? Could we have avoided them?
- What assumptions have we made? Were any of them wrong?
- Did we identify the correct risks? Could we have managed them better?

True learning is difficult. It requires you to challenge yourself to ensure that you are being open-minded and to value self-criticism as an opportunity to learn, not as a chance to blame. Lessons will be learnt only if you plan regular times within the CEDRA process to reflect and discuss, and then plan appropriate timeslots and methods to communicate your learning effectively to others.
7.1.1 Regularly updating your CEDRA Assessment

Climate change and environmental degradation are advancing so quickly that you cannot afford to let your CEDRA Assessment sit on a shelf once it is complete. You should refer to it regularly – whenever you design a new project, start working with a new community, or update your organisational strategy or annual plan. You should update your Assessment annually – which will require a lot less effort than doing it in the first place. Keep in regular communication with your network of stakeholders so you can support and continue to learn from each other as new sources of information (media, scientific, community findings) come to light.

You should prepare a clear plan which identifies when you will update your CEDRA Assessment and who will collect and update scientific and community information. This plan should ensure you integrate relevant findings into the needs assessments of all new projects.

Exercise 12

Taking CEDRA forward into future planning

Make a plan for how you will keep your CEDRA Assessment up to date and how you will use it to inform your project designs and strategic plans. Think too about how to keep up to date with any new scientific data or stakeholder or community perceptions. Plan how relevant findings can be integrated into the needs assessments of all new projects, as well as be fed into existing projects.

7.2 Local environmental record-keeping

Local environmental record-keeping can give rise to new information that is very useful to collect to inform CEDRA and future projects. It can help with your planning and will provide evidence of both environmental change and the need for your adaptations. It will also inform future assessments and help communities understand changes happening in the environment around them. Given this, it is very helpful to consider opportunities for starting local environmental record-keeping at an early stage in the CEDRA process. You could encourage local schools to keep these records or identify community groups which might do so, such as farmers’ or fishermen’s associations.

Examples of useful environmental records include:
- daily or weekly temperature charts
- rainfall records
- animal and bird migration
- crop yields or failures
- severity and extent of local disasters such as floods, drought and landslides.

Tearfund has many examples of community groups keeping very accurate local records (eg children’s immunisation and educational records). Their accuracy and commitment to the task depend very much on whether or not they are convinced that records serve a useful purpose. You can use resources from ROOTS 9: Reducing risk of disaster in our communities (see Appendix A) to help communities understand the issues and decide their own responses.
Records charting environmental change can be very useful for communities. They can provide helpful information for their own local activities such as farming or water resource management, and to inform discussions about local authority activities in the community. Tools such as rain gauges can be used to empower communities to collect their own climate data and make the link between communities and meteorology institutions locally. Such records also provide evidence to support project designs and donor proposals as they demonstrate the need for and likely effectiveness of the project.

Exercise 13
Starting local record-keeping

Discuss with your colleagues, network or communities which local environmental changes would be most helpful and feasible to record. Think about who may be able to keep these records. Ask yourself: can you integrate record-keeping into your normal project activities, or ask local government, national universities, or local schools or community groups to keep the records?

Plan to start keeping records from now on, ideally before you start a project. This is called creating a baseline against which you can review future observed changes. Plan how these local records can be integrated into the needs assessments of all new projects, as well as be fed into the project cycles of existing projects.

7.3 Monitoring and evaluating adaptive resilient development projects

You also need to plan for effective monitoring and evaluation of your adaptation (adaptive resilient development) projects, to ensure communities survive the impacts of climate and environmental change. To do this, you need to select an appropriate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) scheme or framework that will enable you to check if your CEDRA Assessment helped you select the appropriate adaptation projects, and whether or not they were effective. There are many useful resources available on M&E, including:

- If your primary purpose is to learn, you could use a process such as the Most Significant Change technique http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf, a participatory monitoring and evaluation tool which collects stories of significant change.

- If you are most concerned with accountability to donors and communities to show you are using funds well and are working closely with communities to understand their needs and priorities, consider using the ALNAP guide on evaluation for accountability: http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/eha_2006.pdf

- Many donors want you to demonstrate value for money. Tearfund’s publication Investing in communities: the benefits and costs of building resilience for food security in Malawi gives good guidance on how to take a Cost-Benefit Analysis approach: http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/Research/Investing%20in%20Communities%20web.pdf

- Increasingly, donors want you to show that your projects are achieving the intended change or impact. ‘Impact pathways’ show visually how project activities lead to ‘outputs’ which together achieve ‘outcomes’, resulting in an overall ‘impact’. See: http://boru.pbworks.com/w/page/13774903/FrontPage
If you are monitoring and evaluating in insecure environments, such as areas of conflict or rapid political or economic change, go to: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/governance/building-peaceful-states-I.pdf

Tearfund’s ROOTS guides on advocacy and on project cycle management may also help you: www.tearfund.org/tilz

7.3.1 Outputs, outcomes and impact

Whichever M&E framework you choose, it is important that projects have realistic, achievable outputs and outcomes. Outputs can be described as the activities that a project will deliver – for example, seeds distributed to 50 households. Outcomes are broader and can be described as the benefits or change an organisation is able to bring about as a direct result of its activities – for example, increased food security for 50 households. It’s also important to have appropriate indicators to demonstrate that projects have achieved their goals (see below).

To measure outputs, outcomes and impact, you need to record what the situation was like before you started your project – in other words, establish a baseline. A baseline records what the environment was like before your CEDRA Assessment and before you adapted your projects. It enables you to produce a ‘before and after’ assessment of change over time. Useful guidance is provided here: http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ko/mekb_module_10.pdf To establish a baseline we need to define appropriate indicators that measure whether or not our activities led to outcomes we have achieved.

Exercise 14
Monitoring and evaluating projects

As with any project you carry out, plan how to evaluate your inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes for each adaptation you undertake in response to CEDRA. Think about what you want to and can measure. Plan to measure these things now, ideally before you start a project (so creating a baseline), and then annually. Consider how, when and by whom climate and environmental impacts on the project will be measured.

7.4 Learning from evaluation

Reflecting on the value of the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes of the changes made in response to CEDRA is an important part of your regular review. Usually this happens at the evaluation stage of the project cycle. ‘Adaptation options’ listed in column G of Part 2 of the CEDRA Assessment and ‘New projects’ listed in Part 3 should be built in to the project cycle plan and into Action Plans. This means that all your projects will undergo regular M&E.

Evaluation will help to show the difference that your projects have made. This will also provide an opportunity for organisational learning and will encourage staff that progress is being made.

All evaluations should help to answer the following questions:

- Have we achieved all our intended benefits?
- What are the unintended outcomes and outputs (positive and negative)? What do they tell us?
- Have there been any negative outcomes?
What were the critical issues and the lessons learnt?

How could we do it better next time?

However, evaluations can be easier said than done. The following problems are common and need to be avoided through careful planning:

- Baseline data is not collected
- Communities are not consulted
- Indirect impacts of the project are not assessed.

It may be difficult to evaluate your adaptation project if, for example, it is preparing people for the risk of a landslide which has not happened (yet) or if, for instance, temperature rises are so gradual that it is hard to tell after two years what difference your project has made. This should not stop you evaluating, or make you conclude that the action was unjustified. Instead, your evaluation should consider:

- Are the risks still anticipated?
- Have any climate or environmental impacts been felt? How did the project or programme cope? Are new adaptive resilient development actions required?
- How easy was the project to carry out and how does this compare to our expectations?
- Were the costs as expected?
- Were there any negative impacts on the environment? Do these negative impacts outweigh the actual or potential benefits of the project?

Tearfund and our partners have found action learning to be the strongest way to achieve effective adaptation to climate and environmental change. This means looking at what others have done, asking detailed questions about the possible strengths and weaknesses, reflecting on how to build on existing approaches, and then just having a go.

Pilot your adapted existing or new adaptation (adaptive resilient development) projects as soon as you can now – which means trying them out locally on a small scale first, to learn what works well and what you can improve. As you become confident about your project and the way it is responding to impacts, invite other agencies, stakeholders and communities to visit and comment on it – so you can learn from them. Make sure you capture this learning and share it with your colleagues and network of stakeholders so that this learning is not lost. It may take a little more time to raise funds or support for adaptive resilient development projects but their benefits in the longer term should prove this process to be very worthwhile.