Working Paper NSH1

EU Project "*MANGROVE: Mangrove ecosystems, communities and conflict: developing knowledge-based approaches to reconcile multiple demands*"

Capacity Building

on

Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis & Participatory Rural Appraisal

Hanoi, December 2006

STREAM

Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management

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PREAMBLE

The European Union "*Sixth Framework Program for Research and Technological Development*" has funded a three-year project (2005-2008) to investigate and develop knowledge-based approaches for the co-management of mangroves in Southeast Asia.

The project involves seven[1] partner organisations from across five countries, including;

European partners
- University of Essex from the United Kingdom - who will co-ordinate the project.
- Wageningen University from the Netherlands.

Asian partners
- Mulawarman University from Indonesia.
- Kasetsart University from Thailand.
- Vietnam National University (VNU).
- The Network of Aquaculture Centers Asia-Pacific (NACA), Support to Aquatic Resources Management (STREAM) initiative.

The "**MANGROVE**" project commenced in November 2005, with an inception workshop held at the NACA Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand, it was agreed that project activities would be implemented in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, the work on the ground in Vietnam will commence in early December 2006. The project partners agreed on Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh province, as an appropriate project site for activities in Vietnam. Since this inception workshop, VNU has added Quang Ninh and Ca Mau to the project as sites for undertaking a Situation Analyses (SA). Further activities will begin on the ground in Indonesia and Thailand in 2007.

The overall purpose of this project is to:
Improve understanding of the multiple uses of mangrove ecosystems in employment generation, asset creation, food provision and sustaining the provision of societal support functions.

Objectives of the project are
- Develop action plans to reconcile multiple demands placed on mangroves and adjacent coastal zones in Southeast Asia.
- Communicate findings about effective approaches for developing action plans to agencies responsible for coastal zone management.
- Conduct a multidisciplinary situation analysis of mangrove ecosystem resources, functions and management in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.
- Develop a participatory monitoring and evaluation system to assess the impacts on mangrove ecosystems.
- Pilot actions plans, and assess their impacts on ecosystems, livelihoods and institutions using a participatory monitoring and evaluation system.
- Identify high-potential strategies for promoting policy change, and
- Develop appropriate policy initiatives.

[1] The 7th partner is currently completing accession.

CHAPTER I: General concepts of Livelihoods and Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis

In this chapter:

- Concepts of livelihoods and sustainable livelihoods.
- Diagram and components of DFID-developed "Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)".
- A suggested extension of SLF.

The practical application of livelihoods approaches is still relatively new in development work and guidance is much sought by field teams. The concept aims to build a comprehensive picture of how people within communities live, rather than approaching development planning from a sectoral perspective such as agriculture, forestry or fisheries. Livelihoods approaches provide ways for people in communities, as well as their external supporters, to share understanding and develop approaches to get out of poverty that are adapted to local social and natural conditions and to try to make beneficial changes now and for future generations. We will discuss the concepts of livelihoods and sustainable livelihoods analyses with these objectives in mind.

1. Sustainable Livelihoods

a. Livelihoods

A livelihood comprises capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required as a means of living.

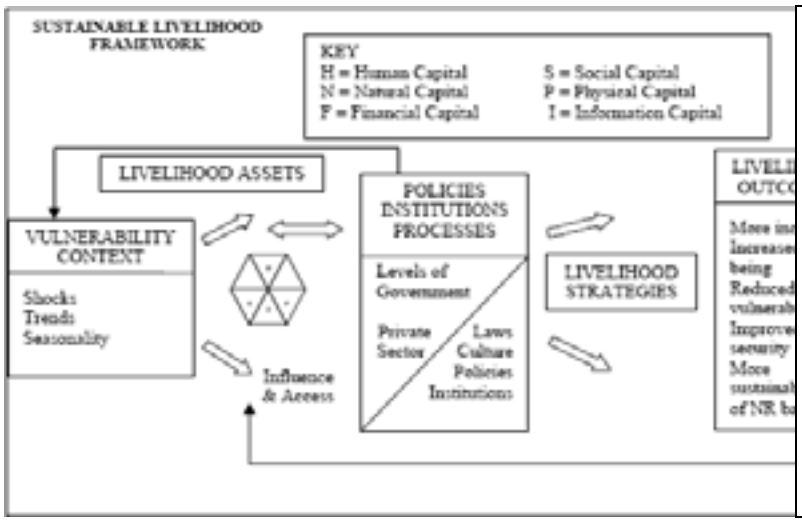
b. Sustainable livelihoods

For a livelihood to be sustainable, it has to address people's capacities to generate and maintain their means of living. It must be able to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks. It should not exploit or prejudice the environment or other livelihoods, present or future – indeed it should enhance their well-being and that of future generations (Chambers and Conway 1992). Sustainable Livelihoods, in such sense, follows the principles of being: *People-centered, Responsive, Participatory, Building on people's strengths (assets) and addressing vulnerabilities, Holistic, Multi-level, and Conducted in partnership, Sustainable,* and *Dynamic.*

2. Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis (SLA)

a. Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

Sustainable livelihoods analysis put simply is about getting to know people's livelihoods and finding ways to make them sustainable. To help to do this, we use the tool called "Sustainable Livelihoods Frameworks" (SLF). One such SLF developed by the UK Department for International Cooperation (DFID, 2001) presents the main factors affecting people's livelihoods, and typical relationships among those as follows:



⇨ The pentagon in the SL framework in closer view:

The framework is not just an analytical tool. It is intended to provide the basis for action towards *sustainable livelihoods*. Thinking about 'objectives' can be descriptively interesting, thinking about outcomes focuses attention on achievements, the development of indicators and progress in poverty elimination. In the next section, we will look at the components of a SLF.

b. Components of SLF

- **Vulnerability Context**

The **Vulnerability context** frames the external environment in which people's livelihoods and the wider availability of assets are fundamentally affected, both positively and negatively, by **trends, shocks** and **seasonality** – over which people have limited or no control (see table below).

Trends	**Shocks**	**Seasonality**
•Population trends •Resource trends (including conflict) •National/international economic trends •Trends in governance (including politics) •Technological trends	•Human health shocks •Natural shocks •Economic shocks •Conflict •Crop/livestock health shocks	•Of prices •Of production •Of health •Of employment opportunities

- **Livelihoods assets**

Assets are sometimes considered in groups.

Natural capital: Natural capital is the term sometimes used for the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived.

Examples of natural capital: Mangroves, forest, land, water, fauna and flora, etc.

Note: Within the sustainable livelihoods framework, the relationship between natural capital and the *Vulnerability Context* is particularly close. Many of the shocks that devastate the livelihoods of poor people are themselves natural processes that destroy natural capital (e.g. fires that destroy forests, floods, typhoons and earthquakes that destroy agricultural land) and seasonality is largely due to changes in the value or productivity of natural capital over the year.

Human capital: This is perhaps the most important factor. Human capital represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. At a household level human capital is a factor of the amount and quality of labour available; this varies according to household size, skill levels, leadership potential, health status, etc.

Examples of human capital: Kinship, education, professional knowledge, language skills, credit management skill, entrepreneurship.

Financial capital This is the medium of exchange critical to the successful utilisation of the other factors/assets. Financial capital denotes the financial resources (mostly cash and equivalent) that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. There are two main sources of financial capital, **available stocks** and **regular inflows of money**.

Examples of financial capital:

- Available stocks: savings, bank deposits, livestock, credit, loans.
- Regular inflows of money: pensions, or other transfers from the state, and remittances.

Physical capital refers to man made assets and other forms of physical or hard capital making up the built environment. Physical capital comprises the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods. **Infrastructure** is commonly a public good that is used *without direct payment*, consisting of changes to the physical environment that help people to meet their basic needs and to be more productive. **Producer goods** are the tools and equipment that people use to function more productively. Producer goods may be owned on an individual or group basis or accessed through rental or 'fee for service' markets, the latter being common with more sophisticated equipment.

Examples of physical capital:

- Infrastructure: public roads and bridges, power supply, water supply, irrigation system, information provision (newspaper, computer, TV, radio and other reading/listening materials).
- Producer goods: private-owned trucks/aerators/generators, sampans.

Social capital means the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. These are developed through networks and connectedness, membership of more formalised groups; and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchanges.

Examples of social capital: Membership of mass organisations or professional clubs, community prestige (usually obtained through voting), village cultural interactions.

- **Policies, institutions and processes**

The ways in which people use assets in their livelihoods is influences by many things. In a revision of an early SLF, DFID put these together under the heading of policies, institutions and processes. These represent the intentional or unintentional ways in which human behavior is influenced. Sometimes these are imposed by outsiders through laws or policies, maybe a government policy designed to steer behavior, like discouraging pollution or encouraging shared or better resource use. Sometimes people engage with policy making, join and influence institutions and agree processes themselves.

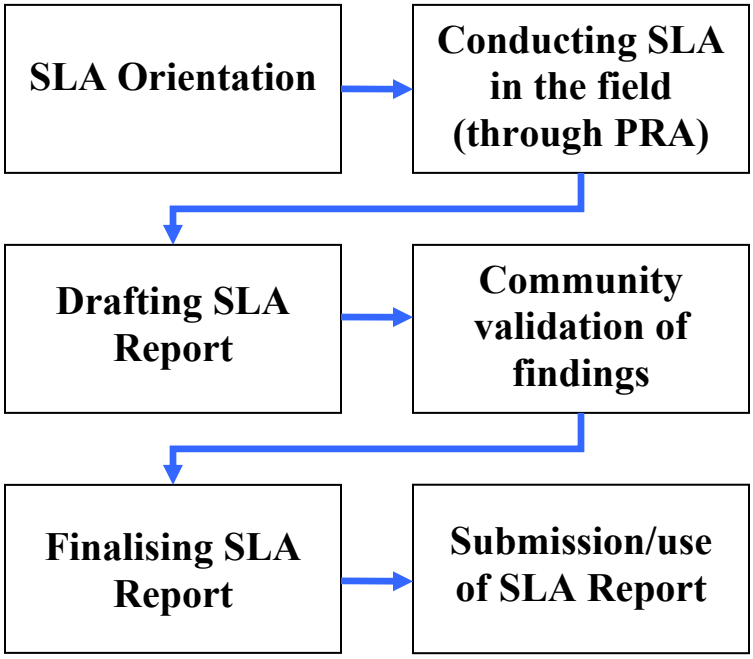
- **Livelihoods strategies and outcomes**

Livelihoods strategies are long-term action plans sometimes of a community to make a living. This denotes the range and combination of activities and choices that people make/undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals.

Livelihoods outcomes are better changes in livelihoods of people, that result from *livelihoods strategies,* these are specific to people but might include more income, increased well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, and more sustainable use of the natural resource base.

3. How should we analyse people's livelihoods

In the previous paragraphs, we already discussed the principles and components of a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis is a process using a SLF and field techniques to understand a livelihoods picture (Participatory Rural Appraisal, will be mentioned later). From our experiences, Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis (SLA) is often carried out with the following key stages:



a. SLA orientation through goal-setting

Normally the orientation is dependent by the specific purpose of a group of people. As "SLA" is designed to look at a multi-sectoral picture, rather than one or two narrow area(s), it does not limit the analysis to technical aspect only. Instead a broader setting that is more appropriate to a comprehensive approach is considered.

Example of SLA goal: Understanding livelihoods of lagoon/coastal communities, understanding how a mangrove ecosystem can be managed sustainably, understanding how a family income can be developed.

b. SLA in the field, through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques

We said above that a SLF may contain the following components:

a. Assets (capital/resources) and accessibility
b. A vulnerability context (shocks, trends, seasonality)
c. Macro-economic, market, political, legal and institutional influences
d. Livelihoods strategies and outcomes

Further, SLA builds on the success of participatory methods in helping development initiatives to become much more *people-centered* and local-level, that is, to involve people more in the processes that affects their livelihoods, and empower people in dealing with external actors by for example inviting community members to facilitate Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises.

The concept and methods of PRA is provided in the next chapter.

c. Preparation of a draft SLA report

Once data and information have been shared, a report can be prepared to capture this. In chapter III, there is some more about how qualitative data can be analysed and written into a report. Findings and conclusions are very important as results of the analysis process, as they reflect how the data are being interpreted and used. The draft report should be circulated and explained to stakeholder in what ever way is most appropriate for the people involved.

d. Community validation of SLA findings

For community presentation and validation, we can organise a village meeting to try to check the level of agreement of findings, conclusions and examples from the previous stages. Sharing collected information can be through copies of a draft report (summary) circulated among participants or presented in PowerPoint form or which ever form seems most suitable for a stakeholder group. Recommendations from people raised in these sessions should be captured and incorporated so that the report is finalised. Experiences show that the session should not last longer than half a day.

e. Finalisation of SLA report

After the validation, it is now time to complete the SLA report with a better understanding of agreement and differences regarding data and findings. If there are many differences, you may need to restart the process. “Learning by doing” is the key to SLA, but time and money are valuable resources and some suitable compromise is usually agreed. All participatory exercises are in fact very serious meetings in a friendly environment.

f. Submission/use of SLA report

The use of an SLA report is usually driven by some pre-defined objective. In most cases, SLA reports are helpful in providing details for socio-economic baseline surveys of communities or situation analyses and therefore, a basis for future intervention to improve community livelihoods in a more *sustainable* manner.

CHAPTER II: Conducting Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis through application of Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques

In this chapter:

- Relationship between Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis and PRA techniques
- Participatory Rural Appraisal: Concept and Techniques

1. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

a. Concept of PRA

The term PRA first appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s in India and a number of African countries, and soon proved its strength in involving people in communities more in development and planning. So far, PRA has been widely applied in all fields of development, from resource management, agriculture-forestry-fisheries, socio-economic and poverty reduction programs.

PRA was introduced for the first time to Vietnam in 1991 under a Vietnam-Sweden forestry program, and since then various international cooperation schemes/projects have considered PRA as an efficient helper in rural development work.

In considering what PRA is, we need to start with Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). It is difficult to give a precise definition to RRA, and this is a reflection of the fact that RRA is very flexible - it is a tool that can be used in a lot of different situations to achieve very different objectives. People often think RRA "is" what they have used it for. So it is better to avoid "definitions" and just describe the features, which most RRAs seem to have in common.

RRA is essentially an activity carried out by a group of people from different professional fields or disciplines which usually aims to learn about a particular topic, area, situation, group of people or whatever else is of concern to those organising the RRA. It usually involves:

- Collecting information by talking directly to people "on the ground".
- A set of guidelines on how to approach the collection of information.
- Learning from that information and the involvement of local people in its interpretation and presentation.
- A set of tools - these consist of exercises and techniques for collecting information and means of organising that information so that a wide range of people easily understands it.
- Techniques for stimulating interaction with community members and methods for quickly analysing and reporting findings and suggesting appropriate action.

In a broader context, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is not just a tool, which enables development planners to learn about rural conditions and consult with local people so that

they (development planners) can come up with more appropriate and better development plans (this might be thought of as a "Participatory RRA"). Instead, PRA is sometimes regarded as an exercise, which transfers the role of planning and decision-making, traditionally taken by government institutions and development agencies, to the target group or people within communities.

There are five key principles that form the basis of any PRA activity no matter what the objectives or setting:

- PARTICIPATION. PRA relies heavily on participation by people in communities, as the method is designed to enable local people to be involved, not only as sources of information, but as partners in the PRA team in gathering and analysing the information.
- FLEXIBILITY. The combination of techniques that is appropriate in a particular development context will be determined by such variables as the size and skill mix of the PRA team, the time and resources available, and the topic and location of the work.
- TEAMWORK. Generally, a PRA is best conducted by a local team speaking the local languages, with a few outsiders present, a significant representation of men and women, and a mix of sector specialists and social scientists, according to the topic.
- OPTIMAL IGNORANCE. To be efficient in terms of both time and money, PRA work intends to gather just enough information to make the necessary recommendations and decisions.
- SYSTEMATIC. As PRA-generated data is seldom conducive to statistical analysis (given its largely qualitative nature and relatively small sample size), alternative ways have been developed to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. These include sampling based on approximate stratification of the community by geographic location or relative wealth and cross-checking or triangulation, which is using a number of techniques to investigate views on a single topic (including through a final community validation meeting to discuss the findings and assess the level of agreement or disagreement).

b. PRA as a process

PRA activities need to be planned ahead of time and may be flexible though may need to follow a sequence. The sequence can vary and be adjusted, but some PRA activities may naturally precede others. A team should not go in the field without sufficient preparation, as the task is complex and teams sometimes need to split into smaller groups and may be working separately in different locations. The organisation of a PRA might be summarised into four major steps:

1. Preparatory activities
2. Reconnaissance survey
3. Field data collection
4. Preliminary data analysis

- **Preparatory activities**

Site selection
The PRA method gives very good results on a relatively small geographic area and it is less suitable for large or extended areas. In Vietnam, the commune can be considered a very suitable area size to carry out a PRA survey. The **selection criteria** of **which** commune or communes should be selected, and **how many,** depends on the objectives of the PRA. If the PRA is to be used to gather information for a specific project to be implemented in a commune, then one commune might selected.

Team organisation
The number of people needed to organise and carry out a PRA can also vary according to the PRA objectives, time and resource availability. There is not a fixed rule, but at least 5 persons should be included, and up to 8 is manageable. Moreover the team members should have PRA experience and have received sufficient theoretical and practical training. As PRA seeks to gather information ranging and cross cutting many disciplines, and from women and men as well as children and older people the team members should ideally have different expertise and experience and an appropriate gender balance, to cover all the topics. The team might select a **Team Leader** who would take responsibility for driving the overall activities and could co-ordinate tasks with each member for the fieldwork according to their expertise and sometimes rapidly changing senarios.

Collecting secondary data
Secondary data should be collected about the commune and the district to which the commune belongs. The collection of secondary data is crucial to provide background information about the area to be studied. Secondary data can be summarised into tables, diagrams, and brief written notes, which can form the **commune profile** and will be instrumental in further development of the PRA. The responsibility of collecting secondary data can fall to any team member and the team leader will often have the final co-ordinating role.

Setting PRA focus and Coordination scheme
One important thing during the PRA preparation process is to clearly identify the **scope of the PRA** and the **major variables** that the PRA team is interested in understanding and exploring further. This phase will require facilitating the "scoping" of data to be collected in the field. There are some guidance steps to follow:

- Try to identify the major variable and/ or objectives of PRA
- Build a **Coordination Scheme** (see example below)
- Fill in a table while discussing with the team
- Cross check that all attributes of variables are covered and an appropriate tool is chosen and that there is sufficient triangulation.

Example of a Coordination Scheme table

Major variable	Variable attributes	Simple attributes
Natural resources	Water resources	Fisheries
		Aquaculture
		Water vegetables
		Water for irrigation
		Water user rights
	Land resources	Forest land
		Land for housing
		Land for agriculture
		Land user rights
Physical resources		
……		

- **Choosing techniques**

Following the coordination scheme above, it should be easier to choose the right technique to learn about variables and attributes. PRA is carried out using a range of well-proven tools and techniques as well as a growing tool kit of new and developing approaches.

PRA techniques are plentiful and devisable, but as an introduction they fall into 4 major groups:

(1) Matrix type

(2) Mapping type

(3) Temporal type (to do with time)

(4) Interview type (see typical tools in part III)

For Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis, we can use different combinations of the PRA tools on the basis of method values. The table below may give you ideas to decide suitable methods:

PRA methods for SLA (adapted from DFID, 2000)

PRA method	Brief description	Particularly useful for
Historical timelines	Historical profiles of longer-term events or trends	Vulnerability context, policy change
Seasonal calendars	Graphical depiction of seasonal events or trends	Vulnerability context, assets, strategies
Transect walks	Land-use maps based on walking	Natural and social capital

	through particular areas	
Social/resource maps	Maps identifying natural and other resources	Natural capital; access to services and infrastructure
Livelihoods ranking	Ordinal ranking based on pair-wise comparisons, with reasons stated for the choices made	Livelihood strategies, assets, access to services
Wealth ranking	Assigning households to well-being categories	Livelihoods strategies, assets, relations between social groups
Venn diagrams	Diagrammatic representation of key institutional interactions	Social capital, relations between social groups, institutional and policy environment
Problem tree and problem ranking	Analysis of ordinal ranking of obstacles to livelihoods	Access to services, vulnerability context
Gender matrix	Gender-based difference between men and women in various activities	Human capital

- **Reconnaissance survey**

This stage is the first field activity and includes both the generation of a reconnaissance survey and the final selection of survey techniques. Usually it takes 1 or maximum of 2 days for this step.

Firstly the local authorities shall be informed about the trip and an appointment made. When the team is finally there, it may settle all administrative arrangements such as briefing government officials and community organisations on the upcoming PRA, listing the key informants, arrange rooms for the PRA where gathering villagers. Make a rapid visit in the commune's village to "get a feeling" for the social environment and geographical features. It is valuable if a good stratified number of villagers will attend the PRA sessions. The arrangements should be done with the head of different villages and other local authorities. Then, the team provides the agenda of the PRA and agrees upon approaches with the local authorities.

The selection criteria to invite villagers may vary but the following should be taken into account:

- Representatives from all villages in the commune (10-15 people/ village)
- Gender balanced
- People who represent key stakeholder groups
- Better-off, average, poor people
- Various ages; young, adult and elders
- Key informants (Commune officers, village' headmen, elders, teachers, mass organisations, and others) might be interviewed far from the main room with villagers to avoid power influence

During the reconnaissance survey, the team will start to draft maps, major commune features, noting observations, and any other useful and easily gathered information which will be used as guidelines before the actual PRA, for example to revise the question checklist in the semi-structured interview technique and to consider suitable locations for meetings and walks.

Secondly, after the reconnaissance survey the PRA team will review the techniques they want to use for the survey, dropping some ideas and introducing others.

- **Field data collection**

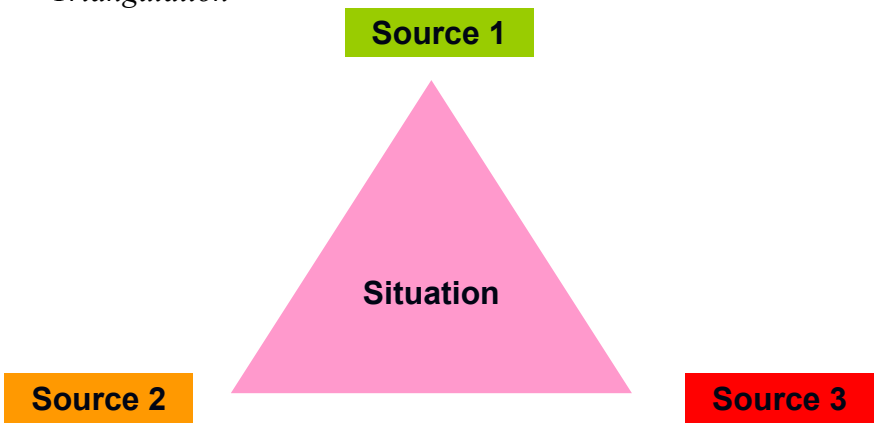
During the actual PRA survey, the team should arrive in the agreed location with time to get the final arrangements organised (final review and assigning of team tasks, prepare paper for recording and other tools/materials that will be used). After introductions and logistics organization with local people each sub-group in the team will start to interact and gather information and data according to their task, remembering to be alert for new information that could alter the scope of the work plan and sharing this rapidly with the team through the team leader/co-ordinator – assigned prior to the meeting. The length of time to carry out a PRA can vary and depends on the responses, the number of people and the number and experience of team members, the main PRA objective and the complexity of local conditions. With a team of 5-6 people with some experience, 3 full days in the field for data gathering and half a day for data validation might be sufficient.

- **Preliminary data analysis**

The preliminary data analysis is a team exercise. At the end of each day in the field, the team leader and the other PRA members meet together and evaluate the work progress, the daily findings and issues they have faced. This discussion will help to "fine-tune" and adjust the series of activities and use of certain PRA techniques on the next day. Other administrative arrangements may also be needed.

An important aspect of this stage is to undertake a crosschecking and *triangulation* exercise to verify the level of agreement implied by the data collected, using also the secondary data previously gathered. In the process, information ideally should be "triangulated" as far as possible in that for each topic or issue, at least three different interview teams talk to three different key respondents or groups of respondents using three different techniques to discuss each topic, see the following Figure.

Triangulation



This is a daily task and often reveals areas that need greater investigation to understand an emerging picture which can be planned into the subsequent program. The crosschecking of information following triangulation can be carried out in the form of semi-structured interviews (see the section of specific PRA tools) with groups or individual stakeholders.

2. PRA techniques: Descriptions and tips

a. Skills requirements for PRA facilitators

The facilitation of Participatory Rural Appraisal is a very complex management task and requires exceptional skill and experience to accomplish well.

Communication skills:

- Be open to people's opinions and interests - speak slowly and clearly
- Be aware that PRA staff are only facilitators to the participation of community people
- Facilitator's questions should be raised in an orderly, open and understandable way
- It is recommended that any hypothetical cases/examples are close to local conditions
- Invoke the concentration of the people, try to avoid (and be sure to record) domination of a few people's ideas
- Be attentive to people's feedback and take note carefully (often this take two working together)
- Take advantage of indigenous knowledge by using flexibly PRA methods and tools
- Be patient with initial hesitation of community people
- Be sensitive to ethnic, religious, traditional, cultural, educational, sex and age characteristics of community; give special consideration to poor, ethnic minorities and women

Meeting organisation skills:

- Time, venue and topic of the meeting should be prepared and informed to participants before it takes place

- There can be no fixed agenda, this should be developed by the facilitator to get closer to the most important emerging focus within a reasonable time (not exceeding 2 hours). This is a highly skilled task!
- Logistic arrangements (room, lunch, break, materials) need to be in place and clear to every participant - inexperienced facilitators often neglect this
- At the meeting, assign key facilitators and rapporteurs.
- Try to ensure that the size of a meeting usually ranges from 5 to 25 persons. However the facilitation skills requirement increases with group size!
- Before the meeting, it is can be useful to get some kind of participant profiles, by interviewing them to quickly fill in a short form this might include their wealth status, education level, gender, ethnic group, religion. These profiles will be attached to the consequence PRA report.

Facilitation skills (during PRA session)

- Make every effort to be clear: Try to finish one agendum before another and present a conclusion of the discussed/agreed/disagreed points
- Encourage all people to raise opinions, especially the ones in secluded corners or shy persons
- Diplomatically tone down the members who tend to monopolise others
- Find ways to harmonise contrast opinions and keep the discussion peaceful and comfortable
- Use audio-visual tools to make the meeting animated
- Start and finish the meeting in a timely way
- Do not ask leading questions and avoid asking several questions simultaneously
- Use indirect questions for sensitive aspects, for example: income, ownership, disability, age, marital status, education.

b. Specific PRA tools

3. PRA techniques of interview type

Interviews are not really "techniques", but they are extremely important methods in PRA to collect first-hand (primary) data and can be used with the other three groups of techniques. They may be split into Semi-Structure Interviews (SSI), and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), although the distinction is not always clear. While the SSI is applicable for all stakeholders in both individual and group conversations, FGD is more suitable for meetings among peer individuals of the same social group.

a. Semi-Structured Interview (SSI)

Objective

A Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) is a conversation which is guided by a checklist of questions and involves the preparation of an interview guide that lists issues to be explored during an interview. This guide serves the interviewer during the conversation and ensures that issues that are to be raised are not forgotten. The order and the actual working of questions are not determined in advance. The objective is to explore the topics identified outside of a rigid format. A checklist should not be used as a

questionnaire. The interviewee may introduce new topics and may provide new information, not on the original list but relevant to it. This is very important and can guide the situation analysis to understand things that were unanticipated.

Moreover, within the list of topics or subject areas, the interviewer is free to pursue certain questions in greater depth, or if gaps in the information can be appreciated during discussion these can be pursued, while keeping the interviews fairly conversational situational and not too long. This technique is flexible because new lines of questioning or inquiry can be opened during the actual interview. The SSI is ideal for **discussing specific topics** or **issues**, **building up case studies** and **collecting historical information**. The information derived from SSIs will be among the most important acquired during the field data gathering if the PRA team member knows in essence **WHAT** to ask, **HOW** to ask and **WHOM** to ask.

Procedures

1. Identify key informants to be interviewed.
2. Set the meeting at a date, time and place most convenient to the key informant.
3. Properly introduce yourself before starting the interview.
4. State clearly the purpose of the interview.
5. Put the key informant at ease before starting the interview (this is an important skill). Ask easy questions first before difficult ones.
6. Be conscious about the time you conduct and spend during the interview to avoid over-using informant's time.
7. Try to obtain information from other members of the same family/group/gathering
8. Do not interpret information in front of the informant.
9. After the SSI interpret and cross-check by triangulation and organise the information in a logical format.

Tip
It is important to use open-ended questions (e.g., questions will often begin with "who", "what", "where" "why", "when", and "how" without giving fixed set of suggestions for answers). It can be fun and informative for a team to practice asking each other questions without answering these but with a moderator calling out 'open' or 'closed'.

b. Focus Group Discussions

Objective
Focus Group Discussions (FGD) can be used in **field data gathering** and **community validation**. They consist of interviews with small, relatively homogeneous groups of people with similar backgrounds and experience. The main purpose is to bring out ideas, insights, and experiences in a social context in which people stimulate one another and consider their own views along with the views of others.

Procedures

1. Set the meeting at a date, time and place most convenient to the group of participants.

2. State clearly the purpose of the meeting.
3. Ask participants to reflect (provide comments) on questions related to different topics.
4. Each issue that arises during the discussion should not be left hanging. Carefully synthesise the discussion and clearly phrase the conclusion for approval.

Examples of topics and key areas that might be explored through FGDs

- **Community attributes** (village and commune level organisations, type and function of the organisations, formal (legally established) or informal, horizontal and vertical affiliation with other organisations, operational rules, authority, community rules & regulation decision and enforcement, main on-going issues within the community)
- **Commune attributes** (housing/settlement patterns, residential and non residential inhabitants (sampan/boats/fish cages), service availability in the community (health, school, communication, infrastructure, banking and credit services), structure of local institutional arrangements, linkages between formal and informal community governance, main on-going issues within communes)
- **Market attributes** (supply type/commodities, pricing, market functions, market rules, stability of demand and supply, market structure) **Demography** (migration, family size and structure, settlement history, school)
- **Tenure status** (property ownership, land ownership, tenure arrangements, property rights in fishing areas, property rights in aquaculture areas)
- **Economic status** (income and asset, boat, engine, agriculture and fishing gear, motorbike)
- **Community culture** (beliefs, superstitions, villagers' practices in relation to mangrove use, fishing, agriculture, aquaculture, recreational activities)
- **Resource use and harvesting conflicts** (conflicts in exploitation of natural resources e.g. Mangrove ecosystems, conflict type and nature, conflict mitigation)
- **Attitude about resources** (perception towards resources in future, about livelihood, about community projects and cooperation among villagers, concern about sustainability of resource use, attitude about risks)
- **Ecological knowledge** (traditional ecological knowledge about environment and resources, way of passing knowledge through generations (perhaps group of elders), compatibility with scientific knowledge (perhaps group of teachers), traditional ecological knowledge in relation to sustainable use and conservation of natural resources - as a useful local debate)

Tips

FGD can generate substantial validated information regarding **specific topics**. Separate sets of key questions or interview schedules should be prepared in advance and can be refined or added to during the meeting with the community or group of participants. In common with SSI, it is best to pose open questions in FGD.

Typically, Focus Group Discussions are conducted several times with different groups so that the evaluator can identify trends in the perceptions and opinions expressed. It may be

used at the end of the fieldwork to crosscheck information during the community validation.

4. PRA techniques of matrix type

a. Problem ranking

Objective
Problem ranking is a tool used to support people to identify and prioritise problems by assessing their relative importance using a set of criteria.

Materials
White-board or A0 paper, clippers/wires, pens, 10x15 cm cards, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures
1. Ask a group of people to brainstorm and list down identified priorities, problems or issues.
2. Encourage people to suggest and explain possible criteria for ranking the problems
   - Percentage of people affected by the problem/impacted by an issue/showing a preference.
   - Severity of impact (how serious are the effects).
   - Frequency of impact (how frequently does the problem occur / issue arise).
   - Encourage participants to suggest the criteria
   - Let the participants analyse each priority/problem/issue according to the criteria they set.
3. Encourage participants to compare priority/problem/issues using a predetermined scale (e.g. 1-10 with 10 the highest value, severity or frequency).
4. Add up the total score for each and place the sum in the second to the last column and determine how it ranks.
5. Discuss the outcome. Is the highest rank unexpected? If two items have the same number of marks, they are considered to be of equal importance.

Example: A problem-ranking table

Problem	**Number of people affected (1-10)**	**Severity of the impact (1-10)**	**Frequency of impact (1-10)**	**Score**	**Rank**
1. Disease	6	8	5	19	2
2. Water contamination	7	5	4	16	1
3. Expensive feed	5	9	7	21	3
4. Freshwater scarcity	8	7	8	23	4
5. Low quality seeds	6	6	4	16	1

Tip
If the number of participants is small, draw the table on large paper sheet, hang on the wall and ask each person to give their score and count the total. For example:

Problem	**Person 1**	**Person 2**	**Person 3**	**Person 4**	**Person 5**	**Person 6**	**Score**	**Rank**
1…	1	2	1	3	1	1	9	**1**
2…	2	1	2	2	2	2	11	**2**
3…	3	4	4	1	3	3	18	**3**
4…	4	3	5	4	5	4	25	**4**
5…	5	5	3	5	4	5	27	**5**

Different stakeholder groups to undertake this exercise and the results later compared. The tool can be used in conjunction with the outcome of any brainstorming, such as the development of a Problem Tree, to prioritize opportunities, constraints or disadvantages for community groups and can help stakeholders to make decisions. However, the tool requires the participation of people who are able to brainstorm and identify the basis of issues and it also requires more time than an interview for discussion.

b. Wealth ranking

Objective
This tool is used to:

- Identify groups with different socio-economic status, not on the basis of scientific or government criteria but on the basis of locally (community) developed criteria.
- Enable us to more accurately select local people with different socio-economic characteristics for more in-depth interviewing.
- Identify and prioritise potential participants in prospective projects.
- Obtain a numerical index allowing crude comparisons to be made among villages in a project area to assist project planning.

- Determine the level of socio-economic homogeneity/heterogeneity in the village, which could have an impact on project planning.
- Investigate further relationships between relative socio-economic status and variables such as occupation (main and supplementary), level of education, family size, family health indicators.

Materials

White-board or A0 paper, clippers/wires, pens, 10x15 cm cards, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures

- Request the group to label different wealth categories of community households (e.g. very poor, poor, medium, rich, and very rich). The categories should be freely decided by the group, and then reflected in a table.

Indicator	**.....**	**Poor families**	**Better off families**	**Rich families**	**.....**

- After they agree on the categories. Request the group to brainstorm indicators for each, such as income/income sources, assets, education, skills, family size, roof type, migration.

Indicator	**Poor families**	**Better off families**	**Rich families**
Man-power			
Assets			
.....			

- Facilitate a discussion on indicators / criteria to make distinctions between categories based on the indicators

Output example: Wealth ranking among shrimp farming households in Phu vang, Thua Thien Hue (2004)

Indicator	**Poor families**	**Better off families**	**Rich families**
Man-power	Plentiful, but lack of knowledge	Plentiful, little knowledgeable	Plentiful, knowledgeable, well-planned
Assets	Shabby house, water-pump	Tile-roofed house, second-hand TV, second-hand motorbike, water-pump	Concreted house, good motorbike, sufficient facilities, fully furnished

Land	Possessing shrimp pond in low-tidal water, with an area ranging between 0.3 -0.4ha	Possessing shrimp pond in either low-tidal or high-tidal water, with medium size; the dykes are not hardened	Possessing shrimp pond with hardened dikes and sufficient facilities
Loans	Overdue loan of 20 – 25 million VND, no mortgage, impossible to borrow more	Overdue loan of not more than 10 million VND, but capable of paying off	Capable of paying off the loans from earnings after each farm cycle
External influences	Heavily dependent on market prices of shrimp seeds and feed, as well as environmental factors	Dependent on market prices of shrimp seeds and feed, as well as environmental factors; however small profits can be earned	Dependent on market prices of shrimp seeds and feed, as well as environmental factors, but quick returns and more profits are often attained
.....	....	...	....

Tips

This tool helps generate information about poverty as seen by community members, however too many indicators for discussion, is very time-consuming. In Vietnam, the poverty categories set by Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) might be applicable for wealth ranking (you may consult People's Committee for the household list of wealth official classification).

During discussions on wealth ranking stakeholder groups should be separate, as there is a tendency that officers who know more about government criteria would distract 'community' perceptions of poverty and wealth. People often have a vast knowledge of living standards in their community as a whole.

Vietnamese people are not accustomed to be ranked into wealth categories in front of others, therefore it is suggested that you avoid using the ranking directly with participants of group PRA sessions. It can also useful to use nominal categories of I, II, III instead of using the words "poor" and "rich".

Facilitation questions for this exercise could be:

- How is the overall living standard of the village/community?
- How many wealth groups should we rank?
- What should be the criteria for wealth ranking?
- Could you please provide more details for each criterion?
- (At the end) Are you satisfied with such ranking?

c. Livelihoods ranking

Objective

Livelihood ranking is a tabular tool that helps identify the importance of livelihoods options by using different indicators. This in turn can assist a community in deciding to mobilize necessary resources in appropriate ways.

Materials

White-board or AO paper, pens, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures

Method 1: Pair wise ranking

- Request the group to suggest livelihoods options for development, and write them all on a large-sheet of paper, for example:

Reallocation of shrimp farming areas
Removal of unplanned shrimp ponds
Widening the sea-mouth
Dredging pond bottoms
Improving river-crossing bridge

- Code those options in the order from 1, 2, 3.... and put them into the headings of rows and columns of a Table, see below:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Total	Rank
Reallocation of shrimp farming areas (1)							
Removal of unplanned shrimp ponds (2)							
Widening the sea-mouth (3)							
Dredging pond bottoms (4)							
Improving bridge (5)							

- Facilitate a discussion on evaluating the importance of each option against one other, select the priority out of the pair and write the option code in the crosscutting cell.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Total	Rank
Reallocation of shrimp farming areas (1)		2	3	4	5		
Removal of unplanned shrimp ponds (2)			2	4	5		
Widening the sea-mouth (3)				3	5		
Dredging pond bottoms (4)					5		
Improving bridge (5)							

- After completion, count the number of times that each code appears in the comparison area, and write that in the "Total" column, then rank them.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Total	Rank
Reallocation of shrimp farming areas (1)		2	3	4	5	0	3
Removal of unplanned shrimp ponds (2)			2	4	5	2	2
Widening the sea-mouth (3)				3	5	2	2
Dredging pond bottoms (4)					5	2	2
Improving bridge (5)						4	1

Method 2

- Request the group to suggest priority options for livelihoods development. For instance, they could be: Fishing, Agriculture, Husbandry, Services, and Forestry.

- Put the livelihoods options as headings in a Table. Request the group to add different criteria such as *labour, intensity, return, cost, time, and risks.* Agree the meanings of terms with the group.

Activity	**Labor**	**Intensity**	**Return**	**Cost**	**Time**	**Risk**	**Total score**	**Rank**
Fishing								
Agriculture								
Husbandry								
Services								
Forestry								

- Ask group members to compare all the options by giving scores on the basis of the criteria (using scale of 4 or 8 score). There can be a tendency to favor the mid-point in scoring so it is good to use even numbers.

Activity	**Labor**	**Intensity**	**Return**	**Cost**	**Time**	**Risk**	**Total score**	**Rank**
Fishing	4	2	3	2	1	1		
Agriculture	2	3	3	4	5	3		
Husbandry	5	4	4	2	4	2		
Services	4	5	1	1	2			
Forestry	1	1	1	3	6			

- Calculate the total scores and rank the options as per scores.

Activity	Labor	Intensity	Return	Cost	Time	Risk	Total score	Rank
Fishing	4	2	3	2	1	1	13	2
Agriculture	2	3	3	4	5	3	20	4
Husbandry	5	4	4	2	4	2	21	5
Services	4	5	1	1	2	0	13	2
Forestry	1	1	1	3	6	0	12	1

The above examples are drawn from work on the *Prioritized development options around O Loan lagoon, Phu Yen (JBIC, 2005)*.

Tips
The use of this tool can seem complex to some people, and it is often time consuming (an entire day) to address all of the issues emerging. Problem Tree analysis is a useful precursor of this tool.

d. Gender analysis

Objective
Awareness of gender issues can lead to improvements of many development interventions. In Vietnam women can make up to 50% of the labor force and may have different interests and functions compared to men. The gender analysis matrix is a tool to gain further understanding about the roles of men/women for example in family and social activities.

Materials
A0 paper, marker pens, ballpoint pens, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures
- Encourage separate groups for men and women.
- If there is more than one facilitator, you can work simultaneously. If there is only one, work with sub-groups next to each other.
- Ideally a female facilitator will work with a women's group.
- Ask group members to list family or social activities and consider comparisons of contributions.

Activity	Women's contribution	Men's contribution
Shrimp farming		
Salt farming		
.....		

- Raise questions for groups to discuss about the level of gender engagement (in percentage) for those activities

Example: Percentage contribution of men and women to family income at Trieu Phong, Quang Tri (2004)

Activity	Women's contribution%	Men's contribution%
Shrimp farming	20-30	70-80
Salt farming	50	50
Rice farming	50	50
Cash-crop	70	30
Pig raising	100	0
Cattle raising	20	10
Small-scale trade	100	0

Tips
Facilitate discussions on gender divisions in livelihoods activities, by raising questions such:

- In production (e.g. mangrove exploitation, lagoon fishing), which activities are done by women? By men? By both? Value - % contributed by men/women? How about off-farm livelihoods?
- In family care taking, what activities are done by women? By men? By both? Time - % consumed by men/women?
- What social activities are under women's charge? Men's charge?

Results of different gender group discussions are likely to be different. As a result, when synthesizing - it is not common to merge the two tables into one. Comparisons can lead to interesting and lively community validations!

5. PRA techniques of mapping type

a. Resource mapping

Objective
The objective is to have an overview of the socio-economic, geographic, infrastructural conditions of a community.

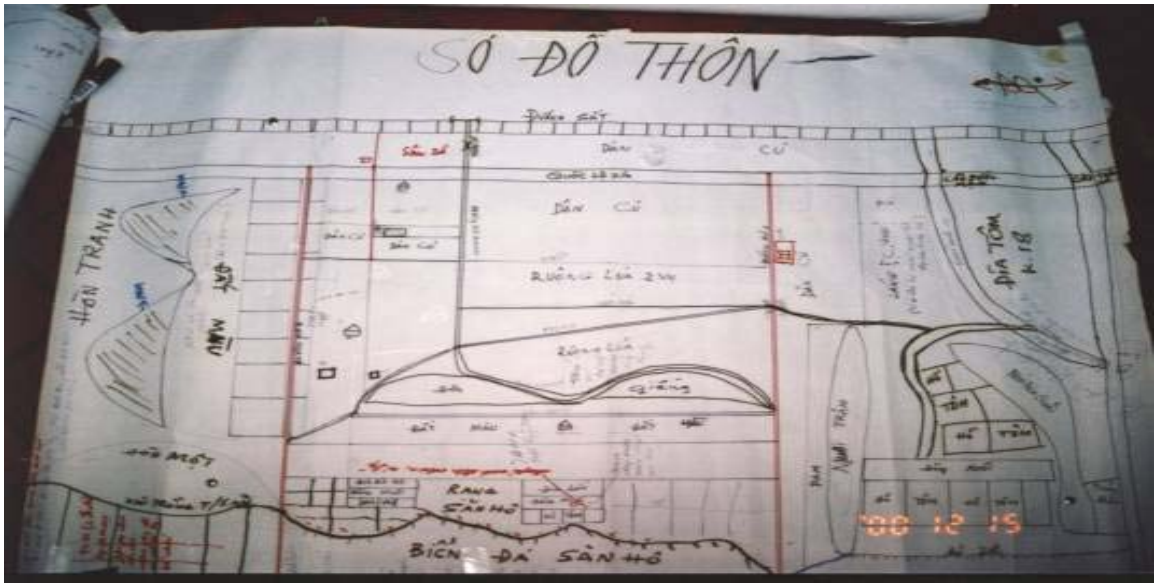
Materials
A0 paper, marker pens, colour paper, tape/glue, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures

- Ask a group (from e.g. same village) to draw a map – it is often interesting and informative to avoid suggesting what to put on such a map, as this choice by local map makers can be very revealing.

- If the first effort is quite sparse the group can be encouraged to discuss and add more natural and social features into the map, make a list of legends and add any necessary explanations.

Example: Village resource map of a community by Tam Giang lagoon



Tip
This tool requires artistic ability for painting, to capture the place well. It is also time-consuming, and demands a spacious area for villagers to see and make comments. Facilitators need to encourage everybody (rather than the painter only) to join. This is a good *early* PRA activity, as a map is a useful reference for other activities and discussions. Also it is information that is well known locally and puts local people in control.

It can be useful to 'interview the map' in a community validation. Facilitation questions could be:

- Where are we standing at the moment? What is on the left, right, behind, in front of us? What's next (past the boundery of the community)?
- Land area of the community? Natural resource locations and residential places? Farming areas? Where are irrigation and infrastructure works? Can you draw the main roads and water ways crossing the region?
- Mangrove area,water surface area: total and proportions for fishing, aquaculture? Where are spawning grounds? Fishing grounds (and fishing gears)? Where are any fishing enclosures? Illegal ones? Where does wood cutting take place?

b. Venn diagram

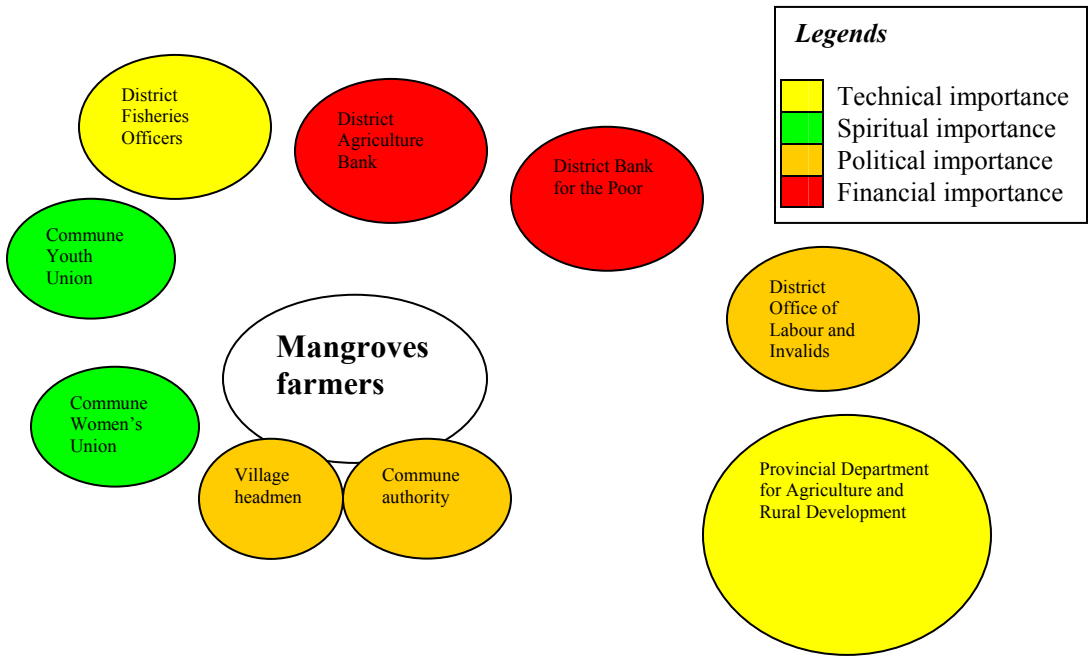
Objectives
To identify the institutions / organizations existing around the community, and define the linkage between those with the community

Materials
A0 paper, colour oval/round cards of different sizes, pens, tape/glue, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures

- Write down a core group of people (a set of mangrove users, usually the target group of project/intervention scheme) on a card and put it in the middle of a paper sheet.
- Ask groups to add all institutions/ individuals related to the core group in the form of a Venn diagram. Closeness of any cards implies closeness of linkages, very close relations and links are indicated by overlapping cards.

Example: Venn diagram of support institutions/organisations to shrimp farmers



Tips
There will not always be group consensus. Reporters should take careful notes of discussions to describe thoroughly all institutions indicated in the diagram, especially different opinions of group members about each organization. Secure the cards if they may be disturbed by wind or animals or traffic. Photograph the diagram as it develops and at the conclusion.

You need to ensure that people explain well the relationship between institutions / individuals and themselves, facilitator can keep raising the question "why" to all links.

c. Transect walk

Objective

This is a tool for collecting information additional to Resource Maps. It can highlight relationships between physical factors and community organization, related problems as well as opportunities in a special context.

Materials

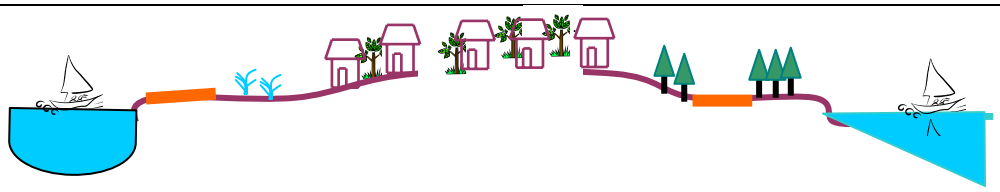
Pens, notebooks, A0 paper

Procedures

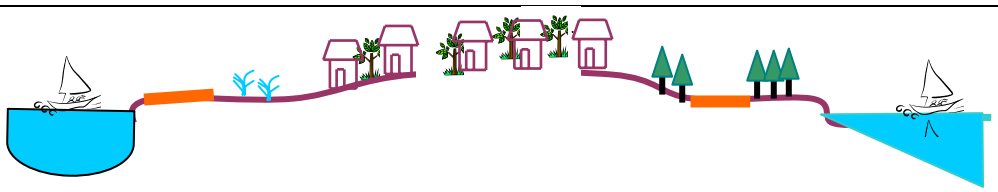
- Request, perhaps using a completed Resource Map, ideas for suitable routes for a Transect Walk. This might be a strait line running across, for example, different land types, land holdings, use patterns, it may follow a natural gradient in order to compare ownership or use patterns against elevation or map a road through the most diversified area. The key now it to use the environment as a prompt: what is that? Why is she doing that? Who owns this? What does this boundary mean?
- The group walking the transect can draft a transect diagram with notes of parts beneath, for example:

River	River bank	Residential area	Lagoon bank	Lagoon water

- Add one more column to the left for more variants:

					
Area	River	River bank	Residential area	Lagoon bank	Lagoon water
Population					
Soil					
Water					
Plants					
Animals					
.....					

- Go along the roadmap and fill as many details as possible into the drafted diagram.

					
Area	River	River bank	Residential area	Lagoon bank	Lagoon water
Population	Boat families	None	Mixed groups of households	None	Boat families
Soil	Sandy	Loam	Basalt	Sandy-loam	Sandy
Water	Freshwater	Little freshwater	Freshwater from drilling-well	Brackish	Brackish
Plants	Weeds	Vegetables, jutes	Fruit trees	Forest	Weeds
Animals	Wild species	Shrimp	Poultry and pigs	Shrimp	Wild species
.....					

- Complete the diagram on a large sheet paper for sharing, validation and further discussion.

Tips
The group can take a new direction from the major roadmap, if they find something remarkable. On the way, the group can visit any families or people. The reporter should carefully take notes of discussed opinions and comments in a field diary.

This tool can be difficult to explain to a group and usually would be discussed using a Resource Map and facilitated by at least two PRA team members working with key informants who have a good local knowledge or a higher position in authority.

d. Problem tree

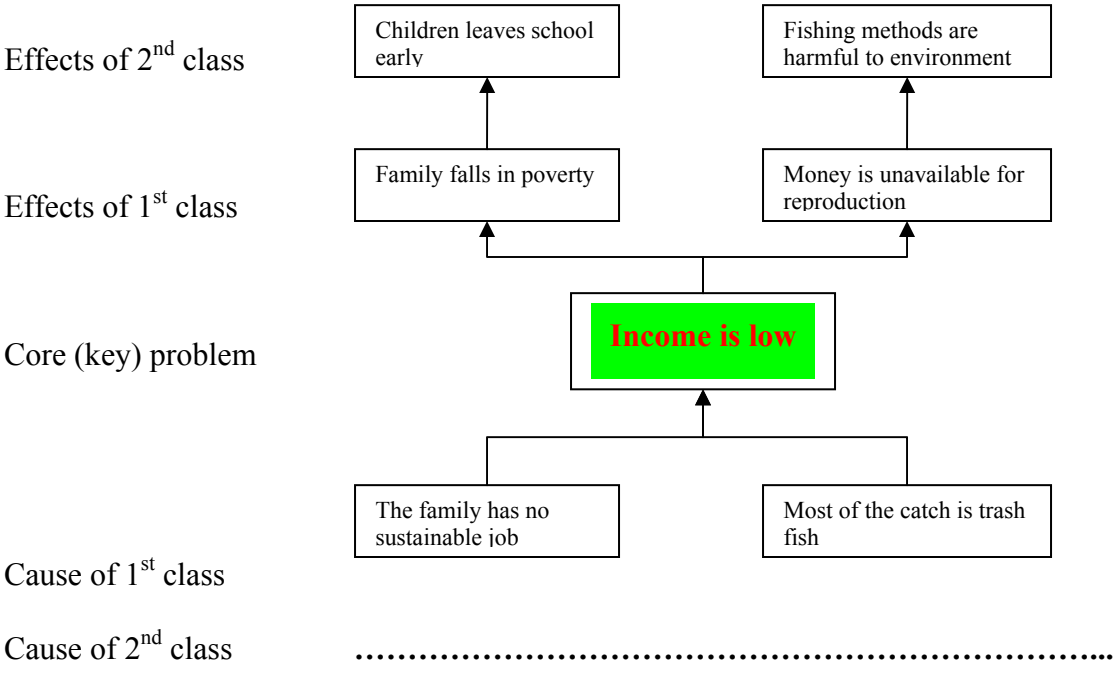
Objective
This is an effective tool for participatory planning, to get an understanding about pressing problems in the community and probe their causes and possible effects.

Materials
A0 paper, 10 x 20 cm cards, marker pens, masking tape, pins/glue, local materials, sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures

- Request the group to discuss pressing issues in the community. For example, they could be low income, degraded environment, natural disasters, resolving multiple resource use in mangroves. List them down and ask the group to pick the issue that they are the most concerned about.
- List the commonly occurring reasons (e.g. the environment is polluted) on a card and fix it to a paper sheet (in the example below the problem is "low income").
- Ask group members to brainstorm the first class of causes, directly leading to such a problem, then eventually go to second class, third class until repetition or occurs and no further causes emerge. For each cause, write it on a card and fix on the paper sheet. Similarly, look for the possible effects of the problem and different classes of these.

Example: low income



Tips

It is necessary to give group members considerable time to think and discuss. When facilitating the discussion, remind the group that none is completely true or completely false, but the majority's opinions should be respected. Further, the problems should be written in full sentence rather than in short hand as "income", "quality", "leaving school". Additionally, causes/effects of the second class can be linked to multiple causes/effects of the first class, so there can be more causes/effects than two classes. If the tree becomes too long, take its proportions to a new sheet for expansion.

This tool is very relevant to Problem Ranking, the difference is that ranking compares different problems, meanwhile the tree analyses one problem.

6. PRA techniques of temporal type

a. Historical timeline

Objective

The tool is used to identify time and preliminary details of historical events that directly affected the livelihoods of community people, by generalising a brief history of the community in general or particular area.

Materials

A0 paper, marker pens, ballpoint pens, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures

- Draw an arrow line from left to right on a large sized piece of paper or the floor.
- Ask members of a group to recall and list key historical events of the village from time to time, and mark those on the timeline. The types of events should be selected by the group as what they see as important will be very interesting information.
- Take notes of the discussed points in a form below.

Time	Event

Examples: A general historical timeline of a village

Time	Event
1945	Independence revolution, farming land was reallocated evenly for all villagers
1954	Forming of agriculture cooperative, rice production goes down (average yield 200 kg/ha, one crop per year)
1986	Reform policy issued, cooperative dispersed, rice production soars (8 tons/ha)
1998	Cooperative re-established

A brief history of shrimp farming in a village

Time	Event
1989	The first household starts digging pond for shrimp farming.
1992	50% of village households are engaged in shrimp culture.
2001	White-spot disease outbreak, causing heavy mortality.
2005	Anti-dumping case is lost to the US, shrimp price falls dramatically

Tips

Historical Timelines can be applied to various fields (e.g. environment, production industries, law/policy, economy, culture). Older people and village headmen (who are capable of memorising events that happened over long periods of time) are very good informants for this tool. In some places, 'village agreement' (*huong uoc*) has existed for centuries and this would help correct milestones on a Historical Timeline. Facilitation questions could be:

For general information about the community:

- Why the village has such a name?
- When was the village established?
- How many households at the establishment?
- How did the people live?
- Have there been any geographical changes since then? etc.
- Have there been any key events which help everyone to remember when something occurred? (It is best not to offer suggestion but such events are commonly local a sad or happy event - a death or birth or marriage, a shock - a fire, eruption and or national - a war, invasion, change of government).
- What is the most significant change?

For information about a specific activity (e.g. shrimp farming, mangrove cutting, oil exploration):

- When did the activity start? How many people were engaged at the time?
- Changes of infrastructure (e.g. buildings, roads, irrigation, power, machinery, deforestation, pollution) related to the activity over time?
- Were there any significant events - diseases? When?
- Any special benefits or adverse problems? When were they?

b. Seasonal calendar

Objective

Seasonal calendars are tools for collection of information relevant to seasonal happenings of natural conditions and associated socio-economic-cultural activities of a community during a one year cycle. Calendars help develop understanding of behavior choice, activity patterns, local market economics and can support annual work plans and the allocate resources in a timely manner.

In connection with SLA, the calendar is very important and can inform understanding of seasonality of vulnerabilities and livelihoods strategies.

Materials

A0 paper, marker pens, ballpoint pens, local materials sand floors, stones, beans, sticks.

Procedures

- Draw a time-table of 12 months (a lunar or solar calendar can be used following traditional methods of a community, relating to agricultural and fisheries activities)

- Encourage a group to discuss what topics might be analyzed across the seasons, and then insert appropriate headings.
- Ask the group to add temporal details of happenings, and then draw lines or other symbols to indicate time and brief descriptions of each row heading. The headings can also be broken into different stages in production cycles (from land preparation, stocking/transplanting, care-taking to harvesting).
- Take notes of the comments that cannot be inserted in the Table.

Example: Rice production calendar

	1	2	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Crops		1st crop							2nd crop			
Crop pest				Leaf hoppers				Stem borrers				
Calamities	Drought						Flood				Drought	
....												

Tips

It is suggested that seasonal calendars are developed for specific topics (e.g. production calendar, fishing calendar, cultural festival calendar, mangrove resource use calendar), interview the group about the calendar and try to capture as much data as you can (e.g. temperature of the hottest month in the year, productivity at harvest). Facilitation questions could be:

- When is the floodwater highest? When is the drought season? What is the temperature in different months? When are there storms?
- For crops: When are the main crops of rice/corn/vegetables? What seedling species? Transplanting/seeding/harvesting time? For how long could the harvest feed the family? Pest incidence?
- For fisheries: When are the fishing/aquaculture seasons? Fish harvest time? Most and least productive periods in the year? Fishing gears in different months? Time of fish disease outbreaks?
- For social activities: Festival seasons? Wedding season? Migration season?
- When is the peak period of off-farm activities? Human diseases? Is there a 'hungry period'.

7. Reporting

Reporting is a skill and takes much practice and education. The focus here is more on the contents rather than how to write it. When writing an SLA-PRA report, try to take into account the following:

- Emphasize the need to cross check data from the PRA and secondary data from other sources for example and be sure all data presented is consistent and the level of general agreement about it can be estimated. This is neither a government census nor the result of a single conversation.

- Whenever presenting data in a PRA report the source should be specified.
- Report the name, gender, age and contact details of colleagues participating in the PRA and which session they were involved in e.g. semi-structured interview, place date topic(s).
- Retain the raw data at village level for future use. Protect as far as possible from rain, insects.
- Involve as many as possible of the PRA team to catch as much information as possible which would otherwise be lost and to compare, contrast triangulate and assess and report the degree of consensus or disagreement.

The following sections could be considered for an SLA-PRA report:

Executive summary
Not everyone has time to read all the report (especially the first time of seeing it). A good summary should share the key points and will encourage more in depth reading. Different people have different information needs think about how to best satisfy these. See for example Policy Briefs (http://www.streaminitiative.org/Library/PolicyBrief/index.html).

List of abbreviations

Introduction
- Methodology and process.
- SLA-PRA settings, time and objectives.
- Preparatory work: Describing perspectives, reconnaissance survey, PRA objective and schedule, personnel involved, pre-PRA arrangements and contacts.
- PRA process in the community: PRA methods, techniques and activities, highlighting objective/subjective advantages and disadvantages during the process and other necessary comments.
- Evaluation of PRA outputs.
- What has been fulfilled, and what not, and the reasons.
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities drawn from PRA outputs.

SLA-PRA outputs and findings
- General context
- History of the community
- Brief natural and socio-economic features:
- Topography
- Climate
- Population, labour force
- Economic sources
- GDP, per capita income
- Political situation
- Social conflicts
- Community livelihoods
- Poverty/wealth ranking criteria
- Government criteria

- Community criteria

Differentiation into categories
Picking up the information from PRA outputs, we start describing perspectives and livelihoods of local people; this could include groups of stakeholders in a production/market chain process, and / or poverty-ranked households. These may be categorized by:

- Wealth (e.g. poor/medium/rich etc.) according to community / according to government criteria (if possible, attach list of these families, especially poor, in the annexes)
- Gender
- Stake holdings and stakeholders
- Livelihoods groups
- Location
- Age

Livelihoods resources and their accessibility

Natural resources
- Land allocations
- Fauna and flora
- Water source

Physical resources
- Housing and living facilities
- Transport means
- Infrastructure

Human resources
- Family size
- Labour force of the family
- Labour age
- Education
- Professional skills and knowledge

Financial resources
- Loans
- Credit institutions
- Regular inflows (pensions, subsidies, etc.)
- (rural) banking sector
- Local lenders

Social resources
- Cultural/religious issues
- Relationships
- Institutional/ organizational engagement

Influences
- Seasonality
- Calamities

- Climate
- External support
- Conflicts

Livelihoods outcomes

- Incomes and savings
- Nutrition and health
- Comfort and relaxation
- Community prestige
- Institutional promotion
- Better plans for resource use

Note: Livelihoods and perspectives of disadvantaged groups, e.g. women, children, invalids, ethnic minorities, should be presented.

Suggestions from community colleagues regarding solutions/plans of action for better livelihoods outcomes

- Solutions/plans for policy-makers.
- Solutions/plans for development institutions.
- Solutions/plans for different groups of people within the community.

Annexes

- Containing all outputs from applications of PRA tools and analysis.
- Other relevant materials.

This format is only a generic guide and specific reports will have their own format. PRA can be a key to investigate and discover many areas, and different formats for its reporting can be developed. Some further guidance materials are available:

1. Theoretical materials: FAO, DFID and World Bank websites (www.fao.org, wbln0018.worldbank.org/eap/.../2002povII-ch2/$File/povII_ch2.pdf)

2. SLA reports: Check the Livelihoods section in Virtual Library of STREAM Initiative, www.streaminitative.org

3. http://www.livelihoods.org/info/info_guidancesheets.html

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DFID (undated) Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets. http://www.livelihoods.org/info/info_guidancesheets.html

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