Capacity Building

A step-by-step guide to developing your strategy

The Message: Capacity building supports sustained *in situ* CWR conservation

Regions rich in biodiversity, including genetic diversity of CWR, also tend to have the lowest levels of skilled specialists. Hence, capacity building must be a major component of the process of planning and implementing CWR *in situ* conservation.

This module provides guidance to improve individuals' and organizations' capacities to carry out activities relating to CWR *in situ* conservation. It explores options for capacity building within a project-driven context, rather than as part of a national programme or strategy.

Capacity building is about better equipping individuals and organizations with the abilities and resources to solve problems.

Levels of Capacity Development[1]

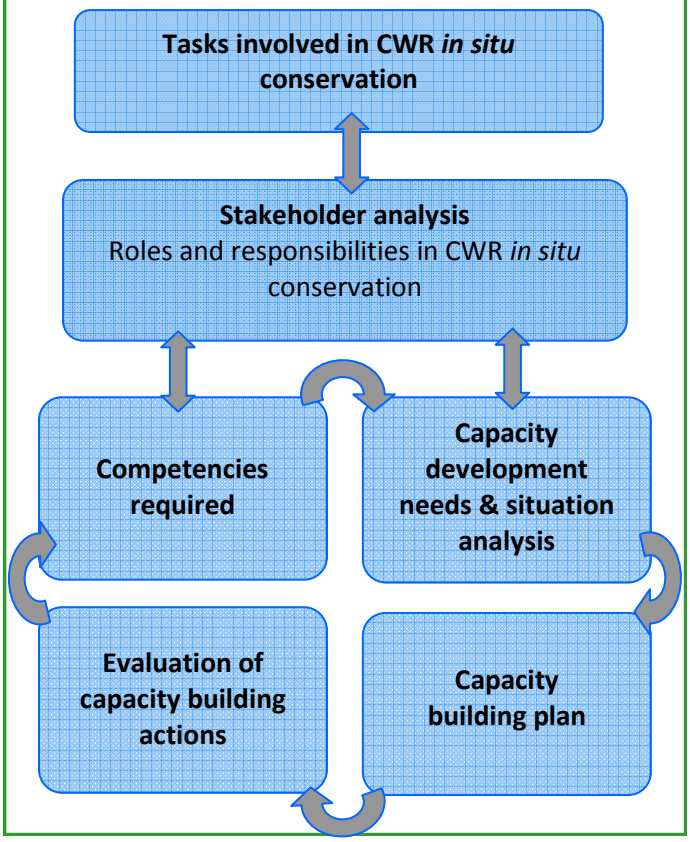
- **Macro level:** National institutions and organizations
- **Meso Level:** Organizations and project teams
- **Micro Level:** Project staff and individuals.

Though this module does not focus on the macro level, this should not imply that the need for such capacity development is not necessary. Individual and institutional capacity goes together. For example, an individuals' ability to apply his or her knowledge and skills at work depends on an institution's programmes and leadership, provision of resources and access to outside networks.

Conservation practitioners operate in an environment largely beyond their control and often characterized by competing organizations. We must look beyond individual skills to the ability of organizations to achieve CWR *in situ* conservation goals.[2]

1 - Horton D., Alexaki A., Bennett-Lartey S., et al. (2003) *Evaluating capacity development: experiences from research and development organizations around the world.* ISNAR, IDRC, ACP-EU, CTA.
2 - Hough, J. (2006) 'Developing capacity', in Lockwood, M., Worboys, G. and Kothari, A. (eds) *Managing Protected Areas: A Global Guide,* Ch 7, pp 164-192, Earthscan, London.

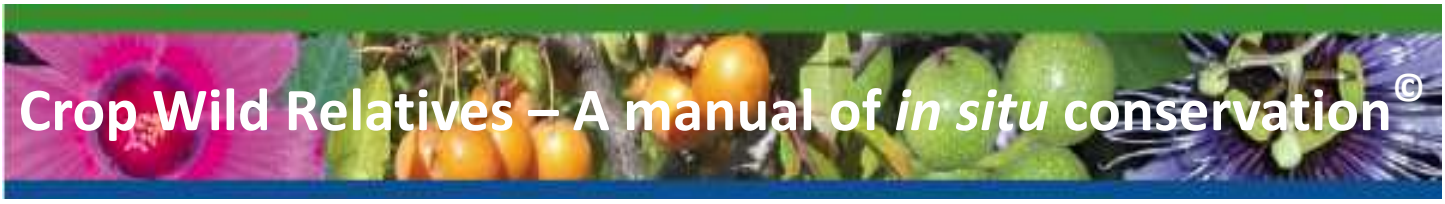
Developing a capacity building strategy



KEY DEFINITIONS

Capacity building
The process of building competencies in individuals, groups or organizations which contribute to sustained, improved performance. It is about developing new knowledge, skills and attitudes which lead to better practices in CWR *in situ* conservation planning and implementation and support sustainable, effective solutions.

Competencies
Refer to skills and knowledge in a certain area or subject. Competencies can be technical, process-oriented or related to project management.



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CREATING YOUR STRATEGY: A Six-Step Process

STEP ONE: Reviewing the tasks involved in CWR *in situ* conservation

Start developing your plan by reviewing the tasks involved and the competencies required to perform them.

Key tasks include:

- Selection of priority/target species;
- Establishing an information baseline;
- Selection of areas for CWR conservation;
- Identification of stakeholders and establishment of partnerships;
- Preparation of national action plans and strategies;
- Preparation of management plans and monitoring strategies;
- Review of policy and legal frameworks;
- Communication, public awareness and outreach;
- Preparation of budgets and work plans;
- Project management and implementation;
- Monitoring, evaluation, reporting.

STEP THREE: What is needed? Establishing the competencies required

- ***Process-oriented competencies:***
  Partnership building; Facilitation; Stakeholder analysis; Leadership; Participatory approaches and community development; Conflict, negotiation and advocacy skills.
- ***Project management competencies:***
  Project development and management; Project monitoring and evaluation; Budget preparation and financial management; Resource mobilization; Communications, public awareness and outreach.
- ***Technical competencies:***
  Red listing; Ecogeographical surveys; Conservation status and threat assessment; Geographic information systems; Preparing national CWR action plans and strategies; Preparing species management plans; Monitoring and surveillance; Data gathering, analysis and management; Report and proposal writing; Scientific and technical writing; Capacity strengthening strategies and methods; and Training of trainers.

STEP TWO: Capacity building for whom? Stakeholder analysis

Remember that developing community-based capacity is important for enhancing CWR *in situ* conservation. There are a diverse range of individuals, groups and organizations that will require some level of capacity building in order to make a successful contribution to CWR conservation.

Stakeholders might include:

- Political leaders and senior policy makers;
- Biodiversity and agriculture decision makers;
- Heads of relevant organizations and institutes;
- National and local planners;
- Scientists and researchers;
- Protected area managers;
- Project management staff;
- University lecturers and postgraduate students;
- Communications and public awareness specialists;
- Extension and outreach specialists;
- Information analysts and managers; and
- Community leaders and groups.

Setting Stakeholder Priorities

Insiders and Outsiders

A simple method to aid priority-setting is to group stakeholders as **insiders,** those will be directly involved in the project team and play a role in *in situ* conservation, and **outsiders**, those who may provide an enabling environment which is critical for success and impact.

Using a 'stakeholder matrix'

The matrix describes stakeholders' importance and influence relating to the project. Positioning each stakeholder in the grid can reveal important power relations or conflicts of interest.

	Low Influence	High Influence
High Importance		
Low Importance		

Source - Rudebjer P., Taylor P. and Del Castillo R.A. (eds) (2001) *A Guide to Learning Agroforestry - a framework for developing agroforestry curricula in Southeast Asia*. Training and Education Report no. 51. Bogor: ICRAF.

STEP FOUR: Assessing capacity building needs and conducting a situation analysis

Assessing the gap between 'what is' and 'what should be' is known as a **capacity building needs assessment**. A needs assessment should be done at the start of a programme or project.

A **broader situation analysis** complements the direct needs assessment. The situation analysis may cover new research results, relevant policies and processes, and other external factors that may trigger or influence capacity needs.

Feedback from consultations and study results can be presented in a workshop involving all stakeholders for review, prioritization and endorsement. **Needs must be prioritized through consultation and in an open and transparent manner.**

Make sure your objectives are: **SMART**
Specific;
Measurable;
Achievable;
Relevant; and
Time-bound.

STEP SIX : Monitoring and evaluating the capacity building plan

Methods, criteria and indicators for evaluation need to be formulated early in the process. Decide on what information should be collected and analyzed and who should carry this out. Your evaluation should assess the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained by the learner, the content of the capacity building and the learning processes, in general. Monitoring and evaluation will show if your approach is working , if it needs to be modified, and whether resources are being spent wisely.

Both internal evaluation (by those involved in the intervention) and external evaluation (undertaken by independent evaluators) should be planned. Participatory approaches to evaluation should also be considered.

STEP FIVE: Developing a capacity building plan or strategy

A capacity development plan will take different shapes depending on the level of intervention (local, project, national, etc.), but it should generally include:

- **Aims**: the broad purpose of the capacity building actions.
- **Learning objectives or outcomes.**
- **Contents:** topics to be covered to bridge the competence gaps identified.
- **Implementation plan** which includes the selection of tools and methods for capacity building; time allocation; identification of trainers, facilitators, mentors, external resource persons; resources required; logistic considerations.
- **Evaluation** of training.

Tools for assessing capacity needs

- Brainstorming
- Case study analysis
- Concept mapping
- Consensus-building discussions
- Delphi process
- Direct observation
- Document reviews
- Expert panels
- Focus groups
- Force field analysis
- Gap analysis
- Informant interviews
- Job analysis
- Logical framework analysis
- Nominal group techniques
- Organizational audits
- Participatory appraisals
- Prioritization matrix
- Problem tree/root cause analysis
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Site visits
- Stakeholder analysis
- Staff audits
- SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis
- Systems analysis
- Terms of reference
- Tests
- Workshops

Tools may be used at various levels for assessing capacities of organizations and individuals, as well as different groups in the wider society.

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CAPACITY BUILDING TOOLS AND METHODS

Formal education: Individuals obtain formal qualifications in subjects of relevant specialization at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Short-term courses: Short courses (one to a few weeks) can be used for developing knowledge and skills while ensuring individuals are not away from their work for a long time, reducing negative impacts on national implementation.

Training workshops: These are a common way of providing short-term capacity building for large groups, but may be costly. Advantages are that content is focused, practical, relevant examples are used and participants can share and learn from each others' experiences.

Internships, mentoring and study exchanges: Young or junior staff can undergo long-term placements working with more experienced professionals within their organization or at another one.

Fellowships: These allow individuals to undertake an extended period of research in an area related to CWR conservation. Many directories and websites exist with research fellowship and scholarship opportunities.

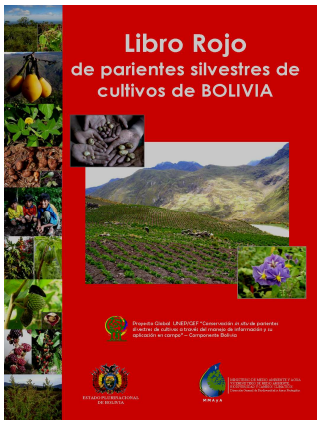
Paraprofessional training: This offers individuals the opportunity to gain formal conservation skills through participating in workshops, training courses and seminars.

The Vavilov-Frankel Fellowship

Vavilov was one of the pioneers of CWR conservation. In his honour, and that of another important scientist, Sir Otto Frankel, Bioversity International created this fellowship which enables outstanding young scientists to conduct PGR research internationally.

Fellowships have been awarded to 33 scientists from 22 countries. Topics of relevance to CWR have included: morphological and systematic characterization of diversity of wild potato; Simple Sequence Repeat (SSR) evaluation of population genetic structure of common wild rice for *in situ* conservation in China; analysis of genetic diversity of wild and cultivated Iranian pistachio using molecular markers; and many others.

CASE STUDY: BOLIVIA



At the start of the UNEP/GEF CWR Project, few experts in Bolivia had experience in implementing the IUCN Red List categories. IUCN, as an international project partner, was well placed to address this capacity gap. Bolivia made a direct request for assistance from IUCN to train national researchers in the process of assessing the status of threatened species. Researchers were then trained through two workshops. The first aimed to familiarize them with the terminology, methodology and concepts of IUCN Red Listing and the application of the criteria for species assessments; 65 researchers from national partner institutions and herbaria were trained. The second workshop provided the opportunity for 25 researchers to review categories given to the assessed species and the contents of technical sheets. Fourteen researchers went on to apply the categories of IUCN and became the authors of technical sheets contained in the Red Book of CWR Plants, the first of its kind in Bolivia.

Source - Beatriz Zapata Ferrufino, UNEP/GEF CWR Project, National Coordinator Bolivia

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **World Agroforestry Centre**; www.worldagroforestry.org/downloads/publications/PDFS/b12460.pdf
- **Center for Forests and People**; www.recoftc.org/site/index.php?id=432
- **Institutional Learning and Change Initiative**; www.cgiar-ilac.org/
- Horton et al. (2003) **Evaluating Capacity Development: Experiences from Research and Development Organizations around the World**. ISNAR/CTA/IDRC; www.idrc.ca/en/ev-31556-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html#begining
- **Bioversity International**; www.bioversityinternational.org/scientific_information/information_sources/educational_opportunities.html