



Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions

Towards a methodological framework for a rapid assessment of policies for SARD in Mountain Regions

SARD-M Project and SARD-M policy assessments

The Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M) in line with its objective of **"strengthening mountain populations' livelihoods with improved policies for sustainable agriculture and rural development"**, is developing and implementing a methodological framework for a rapid assessment of policies for SARD in mountain regions.

The overall purpose is to provide an **understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of various policies related to SARD in mountain regions.**

In light of the specific qualities or specificities that characterize mountain areas, the assessments try to bring about a better understanding of how the SARD framework is applicable to mountain regions and examine the types of **policies and policy packages, institutions and processes** that are important to achieve SARD in mountain areas, with attention being paid to **how the comparative advantages of mountains can be harnessed** to promote development in a sustainable manner.

Expected output

The assessments aim to have common exit points that can facilitate **comparison across regions:**

- **identification of problematic areas and priority issues** that are facing a region;
- **evaluation of the overall strengths and weaknesses** of SARD-M policies, making sure that the policies examined provide a balanced coverage of social, economic and environmental pillars;
- **general recommendations** of things that need to be improved in the policies, the processes and the institutions involved in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies;
- **proposals for concrete action-oriented follow-up activities** that meets the demand existing in the assessed region.

Targets

Middle-level practitioners and trainers involved in SARD-M policy making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, from:

- **governments**, at national and decentralised levels (i.e. ministries of agriculture, environment, rural development, finances...);
- **civil society organisations**, including local authorities.

Approach

The purpose of the methodological framework is to offer some **basic guidelines and references** that can assist in the assessments of SARD-M policies.

Given that SARD requires an integration of policies across sectors, the aim of the assessments is not to conduct an in-depth analysis of policies in a specific sector, but to try to provide more of a **global overview** and **cross-sectoral understanding** of the strengths and weaknesses of policies for SARD. The assessments are to be conducted within a **short period of time** and meant to be an exercise of reflection that provides **main elements** for a diagnostic of the current strengths and weaknesses of SARD-M policies.

As the success and failures of policies rely not only on the contents of the policies themselves, but also on the context of how they are developed and implemented, the SARD-M policy assessments place a **particular emphasis on examining the processes and institutions** that are involved in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies.

Some tools for a participatory process:

As the assessments are to be more of a qualitative study, **literature reviews and interviews** of key informants, from both **government and civil society** in diverse sectors related to SARD, conducted in an **iterative** manner, are the main tools utilised for the assessments.

The holding of **multi-stakeholder workshops at decentralised and/or national levels** is an extremely useful tool to gather information and opinions on how well policies are working on the ground and to provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the processes involved in the formulation implementation and evaluation of policies for SARD-M and how well the various institutions involved in these activities interact with one another.

Main steps:

1. Selection of an entry point for SARD-M policy assessments

Entry points will preferably address **problematic or priority issues** facing a given region and be selected **in consultation with stakeholders**.

2. Situation of SARD-M policies within the country's policy framework (i.e. background information and national sustainable development strategies).

While it is important to examine policies related to a chosen entry point, it is also necessary to examine other policies related to SARD that directly or indirectly affect the entry point.

3. Approaching the assessment of the impacts of policies on SARD in the country's mountain areas.

What are the objectives of the policies under study and do they address the issues facing the country at the national, regional and local levels taking into account the specificities of and linkages between lowlands and uplands? What kind of positive or negative impacts do the policies being studied have on SARD? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions at the national, regional, and local levels responsible for formulating and implementing SARD-M policies? Do the policies address mountain specificities during the formulation, implementation and evaluation processes?

4. Impacts of the existing formulation and implementation processes on policies for SARD in mountain region (i.e. political, participatory and technical processes, financial mobilization).

5. Summary of findings, recommendations and proposals for follow-up activities (e.g. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis - SWOT).

Some references

The development of this framework has drawn heavily from the work conducted by:

- **FAO** in policy issues related to SARD (i.e. Guidelines for the integration of sustainable agriculture and rural development into agricultural policies. FAO agricultural policy and economic development series 4. written by Hardaker, J. Brian, Rome: FAO. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w7541E/w7541e00.htm>);
- **OECD** Development Assistance Committee (i.e. OECD DAC. – 2001 - The DAC Guidelines: Strategies for Sustainable Development. OECD: Paris. http://www.oecd.org/document/40/0,2340,en_2649_201185_2670312_1_1_1_1,00.html);
- **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)** in establishing guidelines for the development of national strategies for sustainable development (i.e. UNDESA – 2002 - Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in the New Millennium. Background Paper No. 13 (DESA/DSD/PC2/BP13) <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/backgrounddocs/nsdsreport.pdf>).

For more information

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