

**ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND
COMMUNITY WORKS PROJECT II**

**PREPARATION AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE DURING
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PARTICIPATION PILOT PROGRAM
INCLUDING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING AND PARTICIPATORY
MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**Local Development Plan and
Participatory Monitoring
and Evaluation:
Structure and Methodology**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

As part of its commitment to build the capacity of Albanian local government to engage in sustainable and participatory development, the Albanian Development Fund (ADF) has commissioned the Urban Institute and its local partners, in collaboration with ADF staff, to devise a comprehensive structure and methodology for Local Development Planning (LDP) and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME). The key precepts of the LDP and PME framework are that it is participatory in design and implementation, and meaningful, that is, feasible, to all beneficiaries concerned.

In the spring of 2004, the ADF contracted the Urban Institute to prepare and provide technical assistance for a participation pilot program for local development planning and participatory monitoring and evaluation at the commune level. The specific charge is to design “an effective methodology to develop the capacity of communes and villages to use a participatory approach to design and implement Local Development Plans and appropriate monitoring systems.” The methodology shall place special emphasis on community participation in the entire process of the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Local Development Plan. A special feature of the LDP/PME is that it takes advantage of the vast work being conducted on social capital and the extent to which social cohesion, as one facet of social capital, is critical for communities to achieve prosperous economies, sustainable development, and a higher quality of life.

A Pilot Participatory Working Group (PPWG) was established in the summer of 2004 to identify the main parameters and processes of the LDP/PME with the intent of bringing in other stakeholders to provide input and further shape the final LDP structure and methodology. The PPWG consists of representatives of the Urban Institute and its local partner, the Urban Research Institute (Instituti Kerkimeve Urbane), and members of the Albanian Development Fund. As the project takes shape, members of the ADF Board, Ministry of Local Government, commune elected officials and staff, and donors will be invited to join the discussion and further enhance the structure and methodology.

This document represents the culmination of a variety of workshops and discussions conducted by the PPWG over the course of three months. The introduction of the report contains a brief discussion as to how the PPWG conceptualizes the Local Development Plan and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation structure and methodology. It also touches upon the special linkage sought between the LDP and the budget development processes, as well as with social capital principles and practices. Section II sets forth the structure of the Local Development Plan and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation and Section III proposes a methodology for its implementation.

What is a Local Development Plan?

Local development planning is a vital process that allows local governments—and the publics they represent—to take control of and shape their futures. A Local Development Plan provides information on a community’s course of action, a roadmap, if you will, for elected officials, local government staff, and the community-at-large to follow when shaping their desired futures. Local development planning is proactive. It is about

strategic thinking, planning, and anticipating the kinds of things a community needs to do in order to achieve its desired goals.

Effective local development planning entails that a local government understand what “business” it is in, who its customers are, and how well it is meeting their needs and expectations. When done well, local development planning involves input and participation from a broad cross-section of the community and other stakeholders. This guarantees that the local government is harnessing the best resources possible in planning its future, as well as providing an all-important forum for civic participation, ownership and engagement.

In fact, the importance of the community participation component cannot be overestimated. The strategic goals and action steps articulated in the Local Development Plan are not solely the domain of the commune government. The Commune cannot do it all, nor can it address the community’s needs alone. Inherent in the LDP is the notion that the entire community has a stake in and a contribution to make to the achievement of a sustainable commune. The commitment and actions of various community members, groups, and other stakeholders are critical to the successful attainment of the Commune’s vision, goals, and actions that are constitutive of the LDP.

Local development planning also allows local government to better align its services with local council and community priorities, as well as with regional and national priorities. For example, in 2002, the Albanian government prepared the National Social and Economic Development Strategy (NSSED), which sets forth a long-term development strategy for poverty reduction, economic growth, and the enhancement of education and governance, among other issues. Various donors and local organizations have also contributed to the development of regional development plans that expressly aim to align more localized strategies and policies with the NSSED.

Conversely, regional and national institutions, as well as donors, have a great deal to learn and gain from local development plans in the establishment of broader frameworks of policymaking and action. It is anticipated that the LDPs, upon gaining momentum, will ultimately drive the development and content of regional and national planning and policymaking, as well. As part of this project, a mapping of regional and local development planning efforts currently underway in Albania is being prepared; summary findings and recommendations from this research will be included in a final report and incorporated into the final LDP/PME Structure and Methodology as deemed relevant.

A Local Development Plan is only effective when it is rigorously used to plan and design services and projects, allocate resources, identify fiscal gaps and needs, measure the results of local government work, and communicate these results to the community. It is a process and document by which the community can hold leadership accountable for getting things done in a manner that is responsive to their needs and priorities. It ensures a wise and effective utilization of scarce resources to ensure the community is positioned to meet its goals.

Local Development Plans should be championed and conceptually approved by local councils. Although ideally long-term in both vision and actions, LDPs need to retain a high degree of flexibility to ensure continued relevance and responsiveness to the

community's changing needs and priorities. In this way, LDPs should be revisited annually and revised, where desired.

The LDP/PME process developed for Albanian communes follows the time-honored principles and concepts of strategic planning. In adapting this conceptual framework to local needs and reality, the PPWG established a set of principles to guide the development of the structure and methodology.

Guiding Principles of Local Development Planning in Albanian Communes

The Commune Local Development Plan is

- **Strategic** in nature. The LDP looks at the long-term needs of the community and identifies the best strategies to address them; it strategically looks at local assets, too, and the best positioning of those assets in relation to effectively resolving problems of common concern. The process also engenders the culture of *strategic thinking* among all participants, a vital aspect of successful sustainability.
- **Simple.** The LDP/PME methodology and process will be understandable and manageable by the commune for purposes of feasibility, ownership and sustainability.
- **Participatory and Inclusive.** The LDP/PME development process, implementation, and monitoring will involve a broad representation of the Commune, including members of each constitutive village, women, youth, seniors, and other typically disadvantaged populations.
- **Feasible.** The LDP—as a *plan*—will contain concrete, *feasible* action steps and projects. It will aim to strike a balance between actions/projects that can be incorporated into the budget and/or achieved by the community with little financial requirements and actions/projects that might need external support (e.g., donors, grants).
- **Aligned** with regional and national priorities and goals where relevant. Although the starting point for the content of the LDP is the community, special attention shall be paid by the local government how their LDP fits into broader objectives. Obviously, this attention will ensure that LDPs do not contain actions/projects that *contradict* regional or national aims, but rather enhance and support them.
- **A tool to Demonstrate Responsiveness, Accountability and Transparency.** LDPs not only involve the community in their development and, hence, are responsive to the community's needs and preferences, but are used by the community to hold local government accountable for its work.

Linkage to the Annual Budget Development Process

Local development planning is only effective when it is employed as a guide for identifying and allocating resource gaps and possibilities. Too often, local governments create LDPs with great fan fair only to find them gathering dust on a shelf. Budgets are developed reactively, and rolled over from year to year with little change in line item accounts except to account for inflation and other exigent circumstances. In the PPWG's approach, the LDP is conceptualized as *the starting point of the budget development process*, although its content at times will supersede budget constraints, as well.

Special emphasis will be placed on the identification of concrete actions and projects that will be considered by commune staff and council in making budgetary choices. Work being conducted by the Urban Institute as part of a USAID Local Government project has demonstrated great utility in a model designed to build capacity of local governments in assessing community preferences, and presenting these in the form of choices and trade-offs for local government elected officials to consider when developing annual operating and capital budgets. The LDP process will incorporate this model into various parts of the plan, namely, gathering citizen input into what is important to them, identifying revenue streams to support these preferences, and presenting valid choices with regard to what is both responsive to the community and feasible for the local government to address.

However, as will be shown below, the LDP will also include actions and projects that will (1) not necessarily require a fiscal impact and/or (2) fall outside budget constraints and thereby require external assistance. The latter cases should not be seen as “wish lists”, but rather valid explorations for obtaining the necessary funds to support such an endeavor. This issue will be outlined in more detail in later sections of this report.

Community Participation in the Development and Implementation of the LDP

Citizen participation is a key component in building local government capacity. Citizen engagement in civic matters yields more responsive solutions and decisions concerning matters that affect the entire community. Citizens who are involved in the planning stages are more apt to get involved in implementation and monitoring, as well. As a result, trust and understanding of local government processes, community pride, and overall accountability are greatly increased, enhancing the chances of successful local planning and development.

The PPWG’s approach to the Local Development Plan ensures the participation of citizens—from long-term priority setting to implementation and monitoring. Although the entire community will be invited to participate, the process also takes steps toward targeting special groups to ensure participation and inclusion, including women, youth, and seniors, as well as special stakeholders, e.g., local NGOs, businesses, and so on.

Participation is guaranteed through a variety of institutionalized mechanisms in the proposed structure and methodology of the LDP. For example, citizens will be invited to sit on the Local Development Plan Group, an advisory body to be formed to spearhead and provide oversight and guidance to the development of the LDP; LDP Priority Area Subcommittees, smaller groups set up to formulate concrete action plans to achieve goals; a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Group, and village-level Consulting and Monitoring Groups designed to ensure all villages are represented in the design, monitoring, and implementation of the LDP.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)

Monitoring and evaluating (M&E) the effectiveness of an organization’s work is crucial for a number of reasons. For one, it enables the organization to be accountable to its stakeholders that it is achieving, or well on its way to achieving, what the organization

said it was going to do. Regular and continuous outcome monitoring of, say, local government services or a strategic plan, also allows the organization to identify early indications of problems in achieving its goals, thereby allowing for timely intervention and adjustment in the service area in question. In this way, M&E is an invaluable management practice for local government staff to assess how well they are achieving their targets. Consequent evaluation allows for a deeper understanding of how and why intended results were or were not achieved yielding invaluable lessons learned for future program design and implementation efforts.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) emphasizes the added value of involving the community and other stakeholders directly in the monitoring and evaluation activity. Effective PM&E involves the community not only in the monitoring and evaluation process, but in the design of the PM&E system, as well. In this way, the outcomes to be measured have a better chance of reflecting the real needs of the citizenry.

Involving beneficiaries in the development of the PM&E system also helps develop a sense of ownership for the project on a whole (i.e., what is being monitored and evaluated) and for the results of the evaluation. Additionally, the presence of community members on the monitoring team allows for a credible partnership between local government and the citizens it serves. It should be said at the outset that PM&E is not based on an assumption of distrust, but instead aims to enhance the dialogue and partnership among all participants and beneficiaries of the Local Development Plan, as well as further mutual learning and understanding of the most important concept to be gleaned from the PM&E process—results!

PM&E will take place *throughout* the process of developing the Local Development Plan. It is not only important to monitor the outcomes of work toward the goals, but to monitor and evaluate the Local Development Planning *process*, as well. This means that outcome measures will be established for each strategic goal and action step. But it also entails the establishment of criteria and indicators for evaluating the process of the LDP development itself. A PME Group (see below) will be charged with developing criteria and indicators for measuring the process. These criteria might address the following questions, in addition to others to be determined by the group:

- Was the development of the plan inclusive? Did/does it involve members of all villages, women, youth, seniors, ethnic groups, and so on?
- Did the process satisfy the participants' expectations?
- Did the plan affect policy decisions, such as budgetary choices?
- Did the final plan respond to the community's input?
- Did it involve sufficient public information campaigns to encourage participation and dialogue between the local government and community?

In order to accord appropriate credence and importance to PME, the PPWG has proposed the establishment of an autonomous PME Group that will work closely with the LDP Group (see below) and commune staff in developing appropriate measures, data collection techniques, criteria, and the like—and then measuring and reporting on the results on an annual, or, if desired, more frequent basis. Because the PPWG assumes local governments are and wish to be transparent and accountable—and that it is important they send this message—the PME Group includes both commune staff and community members.

Summary

The structure and methodology of Local Development Planning and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation presented below has several components but it has been designed with the intention of providing procedures, steps, and tools that are as simplistic and straightforward as possible. It is also intended that its implementation will be open to adaptation and—of utmost importance—a great deal of flexibility to respond to local requirements, local input, and other modifications as deemed necessary by the participants themselves.

One major challenge of the project is ensuring the planning process is both comprehensive and meaningful yet grounded in reality of what a commune can feasibly achieve. In other words, we do not wish to gather the input of hundreds of villagers, involve countless hours of staff and other stakeholders' time, thereby raising expectations, if in reality it will be unfeasible to do much of anything. It is therefore highly important that the LDP strikes a balance between small projects that require little financial resources, and those that will require external assistance.

This challenge should not amount to “throwing the baby out with the bathwater.” There is much a local government can gain by having its needs “on the table” so it can begin incrementally working toward addressing that need in at least the long-term. Action steps need not entail actual implementation of a water system in the first year of the LDP, but rather may state intent to prepare a pre-feasibility study for a water system in the first year, with funding identification as an action step in the second year, and so on. In the meantime, communication about small steps achieved will go far in keeping the community interested and mobilized to *make it happen*.

- Special attention will also be paid throughout the implementation phase to lessons learned that will make local development planning replicable throughout all communes and municipalities in Albania.

Local Development Plan and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

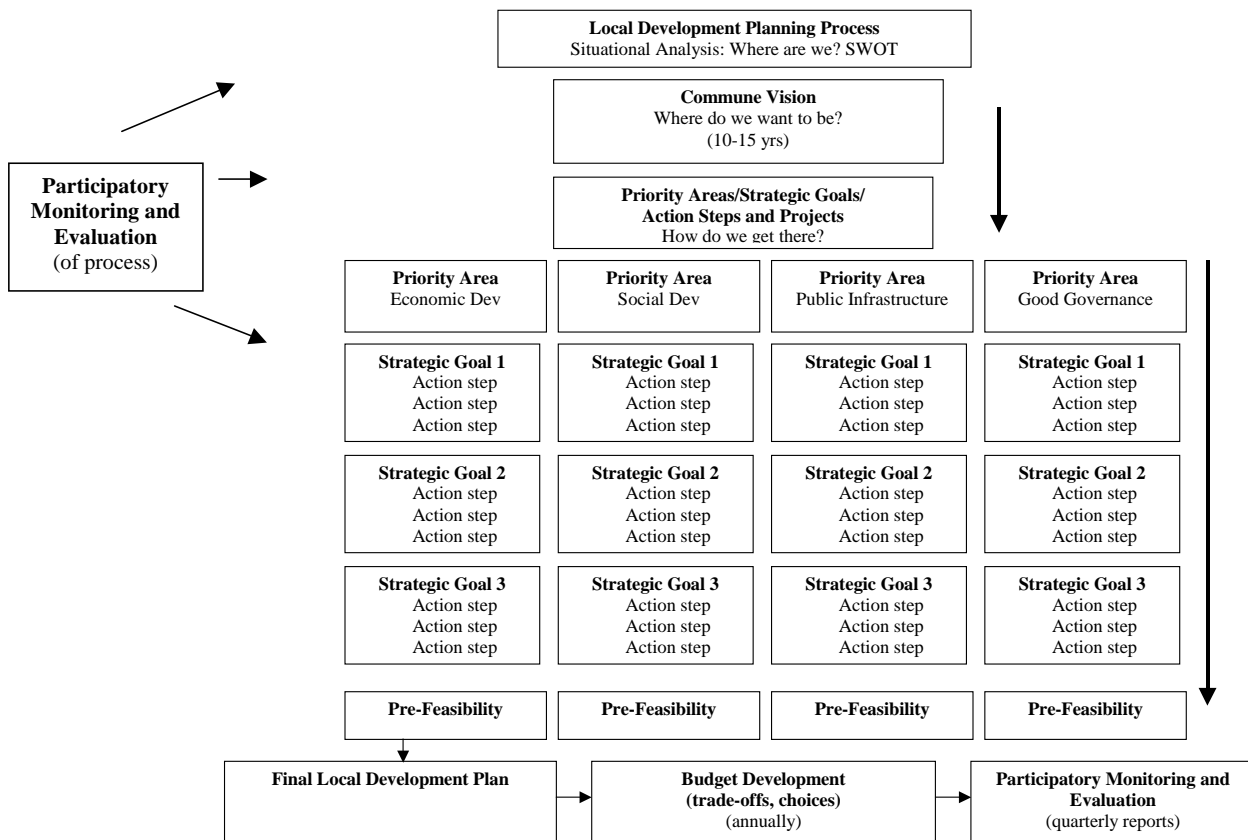
II. STRUCTURE

This report differentiates between the *structure* of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) and the *methodology* by which the LDP/PME is realized.

The Structure of the LDP/PME defines the constituent components and content that enable the local government to understand its current situation in relation to the future, the direction it wishes to head, how it will get there, resources for attaining its vision (both fiscal and community assets), and the way in which it will monitor its successes and failures. The Structure of the Local Development Plan and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is comprised of the following components:

- Situational Analysis
- Commune Vision
- LDP Priority Areas
- Strategic Goals
- Action Steps/Projects
- Pre-feasibility study for action steps
- Budget and preliminary identification of funding sources
- Schedule and accountability assignments
- Measurable outcomes
- Communication/Public Information Plan

Exhibit 1 portrays the relationship between these components.



The process by which these components come to life in a dynamic LDP entails a variety of actors and institutions. The intersection of these actors and components will be detailed below in Section III: LDP and PME Methodology. For now, however, it is sufficient to outline the main stakeholders, beneficiaries and groups involved in the development and implementation of the LDP process:

Main Stakeholders/beneficiaries:

- Elected officials
- Commune staff
- Community (all villagers)
- Other stakeholders: other governmental institutions, both regional and national; associations; NGOs; businesses; donors; students; associations; and so on
- Contracted NGO
- Project sponsors: ADF/World Bank

Advisory Groups:

The LDP/PME process aims to be participatory and inclusive. The PPWG proposes the establishment of the following groups to assist and advise the local government in the development, implementation and monitoring of the LDP/PME:

Local Development Planning Group (LDP Group): This group is responsible for spearheading, providing guidance and advice, and overseeing the development of the LDP. The LDP Group will also be in charge of preparing the final proposed Local Development Plan to be presented to the Commune Council for approval. It will be aided by LDP Priority Area Subcommittees (of the LDP Group) tasked with preparing priority area-specific action plans to achieve goals within those areas.

Composition:

Chair, to be elected by LDP Group

Chief of Commune

2-3 Council members

3-5 Commune staff (e.g., urban planning, finance officer, public service, social service)

3-5 citizens-at-large representing various demographics/professions of population

1 (5-20) representative from each village

Total number of participants: 15-40, depending on # of villages in the commune

LDP Priority Area Subcommittees: These groups are seen as small working group subcommittees of the LDP Group established to synthesize input, study feasibility of, and prepare priority area-specific action plans. Because the work of this group is bound to require technical expertise, the Subcommittees will be encouraged to invite additional members of the community or from outside of the community to aid in the development and feasibility analysis of the priority area-specific action plans. The Subcommittees will present their priority area-specific action plans to the LDP Group for final review and compilation into the proposed Local Development Plan.

Composition:

Chair, member of LDP Group

1-2 commune staff

2-4 citizens-at-large

2-4 selected experts in the field to be invited on an as needed basis

Total number of participants: 6-11

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Group (PME Group): This group is charged with working closely with the LDP Group and subcommittees in establishing criteria for evaluating the LDP process, establish performance measures for strategic goals and action steps, and to assess achievement of outcomes. The PME Group will also be charged with monitoring the LDP's successful implementation and communicating to the council and citizenry successes and failures.

Composition:

Chair

1-2 commune staff

3-5 citizens-at-large

Total number of participants: 5-8

Village Consulting and Monitoring Groups: These groups will be established in each village and are charged with helping facilitate the participation of villagers in the LDP and PME processes. A chair will be elected from the group and will serve as a regular member of the LDP Group.

Composition:

Chair, to be elected by the group and to represent the group as a member of the LDP Group

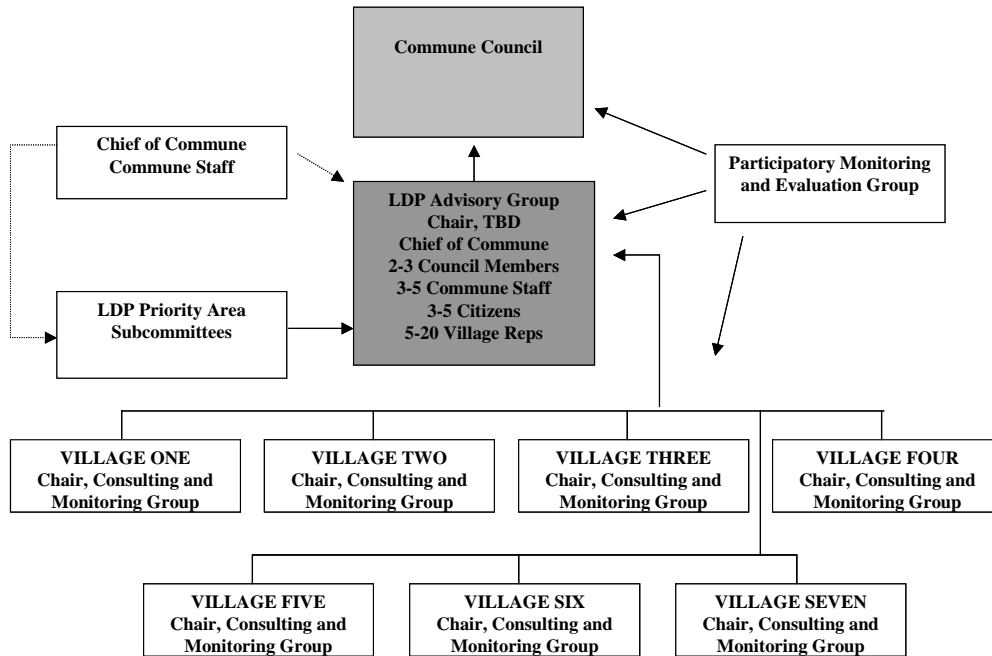
Village Chief

1-2 Village Elders

3-5 villagers, representing various demographics/professions of population, e.g., women, youth, disadvantaged, minority

Total number of participants: 5-8

Exhibit 2 demonstrates the relationships between these actors and the proposed groups.



Situational Analysis

The situational analysis allows the local government to assess its current situation in relation to its future. Situational analyses typically involve data collection by local government staff or others, but may also be highly participatory. For example, citizens can be surveyed, or directly asked, their opinions and satisfaction ratings of current service delivery, the overall state of affairs of their community, and the direction they would like to see it move toward. The situational analysis also provides a good opportunity for local government to assess community assets, such as various indicators of social capital, which promise to provide a more in-depth and nuanced picture of the community's ability to engage in, implement, and sustain the LDP/PME processes.

The proposed Situational Analysis includes:

- **Preliminary data collection.** Data are selected that will provide a broad picture of the Commune's current situation. Data collection will include current indicators, as well as forecasts and trend analysis, where relevant. It is not intended that data collection become an onerous task. Rather, the data ought to serve the distinct purpose of providing a basic picture of the commune with later data collection efforts to be more specifically targeted at priority areas of concern. The proposed data to be collected are as follows:
 - General community characteristics: population and tendencies in population development and movement; population structure; employment data; human resources available
 - Social/Education/Health: social welfare recipients; schools and after-school activity; adult education; level of education and test benchmarking;

- o hospitals and health clinics (relationship between human capital and social capital)
 - o Environment: “hot areas”; available data; current activities focused on environment; public awareness (relationship between natural resource capital and social capital)
 - o Economy: natural resources; businesses; industry; agricultural sector; commercial services; products
 - o Infrastructure and services: water and energy; solid waste collection and disposal; road network and maintenance; sewerage; telecommunication; public transportation services (relationship between physical capital and social capital)
 - o Institutions: organizations; associations; formal and informal networks; social and political environment
- **Household Survey and Social Capital Assessment.** The design and use of the Household Survey and Social Capital Assessment will draw on successful examples demonstrated by the Urban Institute (household Citizen Survey) and the World Bank (SOCAT). The two approaches will be combined into one survey that assesses both citizen satisfaction ratings with local services and the existence/lack of social capital available to promote the successful implementation and sustainability of the LDP. The PPWG is developing a sample questionnaire (containing approximately 45-60 variables) that takes into account these considerations.
 - **SWOC analysis—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges.** The SWOC allows for a more qualitative assessment of the local government’s current situation in relation to its future. The proposed LDP process involves both the Commune Council and Commune staff, as well as the community in making this assessment. The SWOC analysis, coupled with data and survey results, is then synthesized and employed in the determination of the Commune Vision, Strategic Goals, and Action Steps/Projects.

Community Vision Statement

The Commune Vision Statement allows the local government to demonstrate a shared, coherent idea of what it plans to achieve through its local development plan. Vision statements, especially in that they typically paint a picture of where a community wishes to be in 10-15 years out, often appear lofty and seemingly unobtainable at first glance; however, they are an important remedy to the adage, “if you don’t know where you are going, how will you know if you got there.” The vision statement importantly is conceived by the community-at-large and is expected to be referred to by the local government in its urban and development planning and budgeting activities.

LDP Priority Areas

LDP priorities and strategic goals ideally are derived from input and dialogue involving all stakeholders: council, staff, community members and other interested groups. But other models, reminiscent of the way General Plans are developed in the U.S., suggest the efficacy of establishing *a priori* priority areas under which the community can then assert its goal preferences according to the prescribed theme. This approach enables a

balanced plan of action, and ensures that the prescribed critical areas are addressed in each LDP.

In an effort to achieve this balanced plan for local development, the PPWG proposes that the LDPs be structured around four Priority Areas: Economic Development, Social Development, Public Infrastructure and Services, and Good Governance. These are defined as follows:

- **Economic Development:** small and medium-sized business, agronomy, industry, marketplaces, tourism and marketing
- **Social Development:** health, education, social welfare, pension schemes
- **Public Infrastructure and services:** economic development infrastructure, social development infrastructure, and public infrastructure and services (cleaning, water, sewerage, etc.)
- **Good Governance:** responsiveness, inclusiveness, public information, trust, customer service

In devising strategic goals and action steps/projects under each LDP Priority Area, local governments will be encouraged to think about environmental issues and impact, as well.

Strategic Goals

Goal-setting is one of the most crucial stages of the LDP as it sets the stage for the concrete short-term actions and projects the community will incrementally work on in order to attain their vision. Goals challenge the local government to be more responsive to the environment in order to achieve its desired future. They are measurable and the desired outcome should be decided in consensus fashion.

Establishing goals is a strategic process and in this way it is recommended that their number be limited to no more than 3-5 achievable goals for each priority area. In other words, the LDP is not designed to capture the entire spectrum of commune needs and desires. Rather, strategic goals are about anticipating the best (i.e., feasible and practical, yet meaningful) course of action the community can take in effecting change for the betterment of the community.

The PPWG proposes that the LDP set forth 3 Three-Year Strategic Goals with 1, 2, and 3-year action steps designed to realize the goals. This is aligned with budget development whereby local governments are required to adopt an annual budget that contains three-year expenditure and revenue forecasts. The three-year prospectus also allows donors, such as ADF, to incorporate commune needs into their long-term funding plans.

Action Steps/Projects

If the heart of the Local Development Plan is the identification of community priorities and setting goals, then its brainpower is the plan of action conceived to address them. Given serious resource constraints, this action planning promises to be the stickiest point of the process. Action steps and project identification need to strike a delicate balance between what is feasible within a community's current resources and what may be doable should adequate resources be later identified. It is paramount that the

community be encouraged to think large and small. In other words, action steps may run the gamut from identifying small-scale reasonable areas of improvement that can immediately be addressed with little or no fiscal impact, such as “hold quarterly community clean-up campaigns to address litter problem,” to larger infrastructure projects for which the first action step might be to “conduct further study into the feasibility of achieving 80 percent water hook-ups by 2007,” as opposed to a less feasible action of “implement water system for all villagers to have access to clean water supply.”

Pre-feasibility study for action steps/projects

The action steps/projects need to be realistic, feasible, and meaningful. There are many methods by which local governments assess the feasibility of proposed action steps and projects, ranging from application of a simple criterion to a more involved analytic framework. The PPWG recommends that communes keep this process simple and **SMART**, that is, that action steps be **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**greed upon, **r**ealistic, and **t**ime/cost bound. Importantly, local governments need to pay attention to the intended outcome, or result, of the proposed action step, especially as it is related to the intended outcome of the overall strategic goal. This alignment function will ensure individual actions are incremental steps toward achieving overall goals and, ultimately, the commune vision.

Budget and preliminary identification of funding sources

The action steps/projects identified in the LDP shall include enough information as to purpose, cost estimations, resource requirements, and so on, to enable commune staff and elected officials make effective budgetary choices. Some actions will fall outside the budget process and these need to be identified as such with suggested funding sources, including a combination of citizen contribution and/or local government matching funds clearly attributed.

Schedule and accountability assignments

Each action step/project should be assigned to a member of the commune staff who is held accountable for implementation in a timely manner. Should problems surface due to unforeseen circumstances, this person is responsible for notifying the chairs of the LDP Group and the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Group.

Measurable outcomes

There is no reason to do anything, unless we understand the purpose and intent of our action. Performance measures are a critical tool in the identification of the intended result, or impact, of local government work. Although the entire family of measures—input, output, efficiency, and outcome—are invaluable for a local government that wishes to more effectively deliver services and have the best information while developing its budget, the LDP concentrates on outcome measures for understanding the intent of the goals and action steps and monitoring its success in achieving success.

For example, through the citizen survey, we may realize that only 40 percent of citizens surveyed rate the commune as “clean” or “very clean.” We may also hear in the village participation meetings a great deal of dissatisfaction regarding the cleanliness of the

commune. The social capital section of the survey may indicate the presence of local youth club or business association. The following LDP Priority Area--Strategic Goal--Action Step-Outcome measure relationship might appear as follows in Exhibit 4:

Exhibit 4. Example of LDP Structure

LDP Priority Area: Public Infrastructure and Services

Strategic Goal 1: Improve the cleanliness of the Commune

Goal Outcome Measure: % of citizens surveyed who rate the cleanliness of the commune as “good” or “excellent.”

Action Step 1a: Invite local youth club and other organizations to co-sponsor quarterly clean-up days

Output/Intermediate Outcome Measure(s): Meeting held; agreement achieved; # of clean-ups conducted

Action Step 1b: Explore feasibility of contracting out solid waste collection service for once a month pick-ups

Output/Intermediate Outcome Measure(s): Study conducted; % of citizens surveyed who said they would be willing to contribute cash to improve/have garbage collection service.

Action Step 1c: Institute a fine for illegal dumping and a method for meaningful enforcement

Output/Intermediate Outcome Measure(s): Successful adoption of fine; % of fines collected/all fines issued

Communication/Public Information Plan

Good communication between the local government and the citizenry is key to a healthy, participatory democratic political culture. It is paramount that the local government communicates the purpose, process, and participation opportunities throughout the development of the LDP.

Of equal importance is that results of the community’s work on the implementation of the LDP are regularly communicated. Public information will be achieved in a variety of ways throughout the process. For example, leaflets and posters concerning all council and community meetings will be widely disseminated, as will results of the proposed household survey. Informal and formal networks and institutions, ideally identified in the proposed survey and at village meetings can also provide good resources for information dissemination.

Once a draft LDP has been produced, a “You talked, we listened. Did we get it right?” community meeting might be held as an occasion to elicit final input into the LDP. Quarterly progress reports should be held with the Commune Council and widely publicized with an annual report of progress made toward achieving all action steps and performance targets to be produced for the public.

These components form the basis of a simple, meaningful, and feasible Local Development Plan. The next section discusses how these components come to life.

Local Development Plan and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

III. METHODOLOGY

The previous section outlined the fundamental components and actors that make up the proposed structure of the Local Development Plan and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation process. However, there is much activity that goes into the making of each component. The following outlines in linear fashion the methodology by which the plan is developed, with special emphasis placed on assuring broad community participation.

Prelude

The Community Works Project II scope of work entails the hiring of a NGO who will be responsible with facilitating and ensuring implementation of the three-year pilot program in approximately six communes. Therefore the first step will be to ensure the NGO is fully on board and conversant with the final structure and methodology. The six communes will have been selected as part of the first phase of this project.

Step One: Obtaining Local Commitment

The first step in the local development plan is to achieve commitment and buy-in from the local elected officials. It is recommended that the NGO approach the Chief of Commune, who will agendize the proposal at a regular session of the Commune Council. The proposal will explain in detail the purpose and methodology of the project and request that the Council adopt a resolution to create a Local Development Plan with widespread community participation. It will also request the Council to establish a Local Development Plan Group (who will later be tasked with establishing Priority Area Subcommittees), a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Group, and village-level Consulting and Monitoring Groups.

The composition of these groups has been carefully explored. It is especially important that the Commune Council has buy in with the LDP Group as it will be tasked with bringing the final proposed LDP forward to the Council for conceptual approval at a later date in time. In this way, the Council will nominate 2-3 of its own members to serve on the LDP Group. It is equally important that the entire process be seen as a *local government* endeavor; hence, the inclusion of both elected officials and commune staff on the various advisory groups. Nevertheless, the spirit of community participation undergirds the entire structure and process. The selection of community members and their composition will be key to successfully enacting the principle of inclusiveness.

Step Two: Providing Direction

The Chief of Commune will bring together all members of the LDP Group, the PME Group, and village-level Consulting and Monitoring Groups for a two to three day training workshop on LDP/PME and the proposed structure and methodology. The selected NGO will provide this training and an implementation schedule will be established. The purpose of the workshop is to fully orient commune staff and key participants, gain their input, identify the parameters of the situational analysis, discuss the participatory components, and so on.

The commune staff, with assistance from the NGO, will work with the Chairs of the village-level Consulting and Monitoring Groups in disseminating information pamphlets to their local communities. Especially important in this task will be the announcement of the upcoming Village Vision Festivals to which the entire commune population is invited to participate and provide input into the development of the LDP (see below for more details).

Step Three: Getting Started

The LDP Group, PME Group, and village-level Consulting and Monitoring Groups should hold planning meetings to chart out their respective courses of action, timeframes, and roles and responsibilities. During these first meetings, the PME Group will settle on evaluation criteria and indicators for monitoring the *process* of the development of the LDP as it will be important for the monitoring of this activity to begin right away. During the development of the LDP, the PME Group will work closely with the LDP Group and Priority Area Subcommittees to establish performance indicators for the monitoring of success toward achieving the LDP's desired outcomes and other performance measures.

Step Four: Information Gathering

As stated in the previous section, the LDP contains a Situational Analysis, which comprises data collection, survey, and a SWOC analysis as its primary pillars.

Data collection and Household Survey

Local government staff, with the assistance of the NGO, will identify indicators to be collected and tracked, data collection source, and benchmarks, if available. The indicators should serve the purpose of orienting the commune to its general characteristics and trends in order to supplemental other information being gathered for "painting a picture" of the Commune. Should Council opt for *a priori* priority areas to be prescribed, data collection will be more closely targeted to support those areas.

This stage will also launch a household survey that seeks both service satisfaction ratings, and a social capital assessment. The survey instrument will be designed by the PPWG and conducted by the NGO, who will first test the instrument and make any modifications deemed necessary.

SWOC Analysis

The SWOC analysis will be conducted in three parts: as part of a regular session of the Commune Council, thereby gaining critical input from the elected officials, among commune staff, and with the community-at-large. In some cases, the SWOC session with the elected officials and commune staff might be combined. In this case, questions regarding what is/what is not working well within government are probed, enabling useful dialogue between electeds and staff to improve internal workings and communication.

It is highly important to have the Community weigh in on what they perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the commune to be. In order to engage as broad as representation of input as possible, two versions of village participation have been conceived. One issue raised here, however, is the feasibility of having village-specific

meetings given the large number of villages in some communes and the geographic dispersion of the villages. In some cases, for example, communes consist of 15 villages, some of which are as far as two hours away by car from the commune seat of government. The PPWG has proposed clustering villages and/or perhaps busing residents to the village meetings. This detail needs to be further explored in all its pros and cons.

Step Five: Village Participation

An important precept of the LDP is that it involves the input and participation of as many residents as possible—and that this representation is inclusive of members from all commune villages and those societal groups typically excluded from local political participation, including perhaps women, youth, seniors, and ethnic groups.

Two alternatives are being proposed to elicit village input. Both alternatives seek to maximize resident comment, participation, and ownership in development of the LDP.

Alternative One: The Village Vision Festival

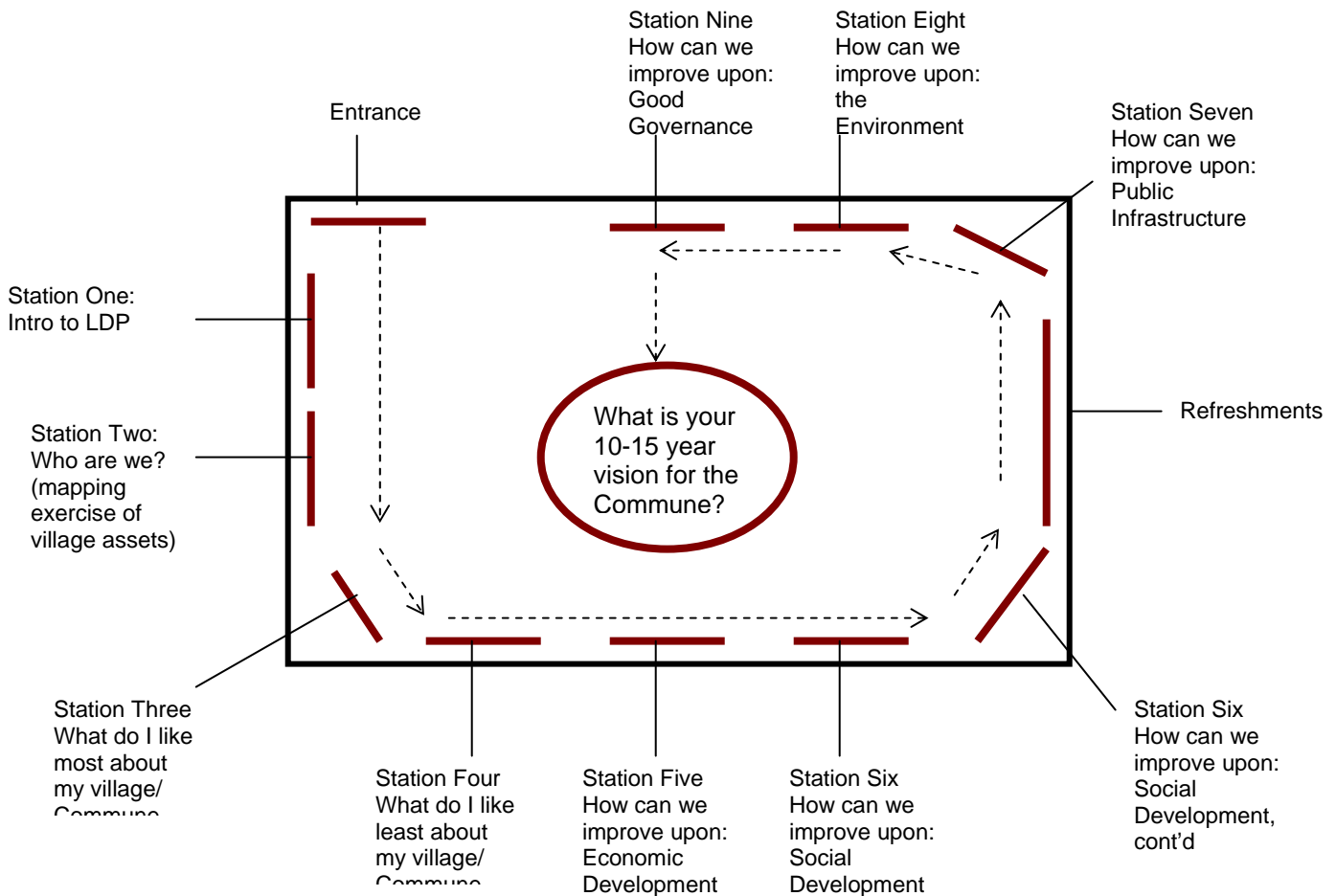
The Village Vision Festival is conceived as an interactive forum for gaining citizen insight and input into the LDP, as well as an opportunity for educating the general public about the LDP in particular, and the workings of local government in general. The Festival is organized by the local commune staff, with assistance provided by the NGO in its organization and facilitation.

The Village Vision Festival requires an indoor space large enough to allow participants to travel to various “stations” to answer focused questions, discuss issues with commune staff and perhaps other experts, and generally “envision” the future of their community.

Each station is furnished with flip charts for recording participants’ comments and ideas, relevant survey data and other statistics to further inform, and is manned by a local government staff member, NGO affiliate, and/or invited subject-matter experts.

The Festival is fun and interactive in nature and framed as a family outing, with music and food serving as background enhancement. Exhibit 5 depicts a proposed organizational set-up of a Village Vision Festival.

Exhibit 5. Proposed Organizational Set-Up of a Village Vision Festival



Station One: Introducton to LDP

Introductory table with pictorial depiction of LDP/PME and NGO staff available to answer questions. One option is to provide a “Festival Map” to each participant who will be encouraged to visit each station that is depicted on the map. At each station, they will receive a stamp. Once the card is filled, they are allowed to enter a raffle drawing to win a modest prize. This ensures that participants will visit each station.

Station Two: Mapping our Assets

Participants will “map” the assets of their villages. A map of the village will be placed on the wall on which participants will indicate the presence of institutions, such as schools, churches, mosques, sports fields, and so on, but also the presence of informal networks. NGO staff, trained in asset-based community development techniques, will be on hand at this station, asking focused questions on various skills, knowledge sets, informal networks, memberships in associations, etc.

Station Three: What do I like most about my Village? The Commune?

Participants will have the opportunity to weigh in the positive attributes and features, that is, the strengths, of their village and of the commune, e.g., I trust my neighbors, or there is healthy soil

Station Four: What do I like least about my Village? The Commune?

Participants “vent” about what they dislike about living in the village and the Commune. E.g., there a lot of garbage on the side of the roads, or the river is polluted.

Station Five: Economic Development:

Participants provide suggestions for improvement and comments on needs/preferences regarding economic development.

Station Six: Social Development:

Participants provide suggestions for improvement and comments on needs/preferences regarding social development issues, including, social services, education, and health.

Station Seven: Public Infrastructure:

Participants provide suggestions for improvement and comments on needs/preferences regarding public infrastructure.

Station Eight: Environment:

Participants provide suggestions for improvement and comments on needs/preferences regarding the environment.

Station Nine: Good Governance:

Participants provide suggestions for improvement and comments on needs/preferences regarding good governance.

Station Ten: Commune Vision/Further Participation

Participants provide vision statements in order to paint a picture of what they would like their commune to look like in 10-15 years. They will also be asked whether they would like to participate more directly in the monitoring and/or implementation of the LDP and, if so, will be considered by the various advisory groups for direct or indirect inclusion.

The content and number of “stations” can be modified and/or simplified, but the main purpose is to create an interactive and memorable atmosphere in which all participants feel comfortable and enthused about participating, as well as receiving some good education about their local government and their role in creating “good governance.”

Alternative Two: The Village LDP Meeting

In the event the Village Vision Festival is deemed unfeasible, a more formal and structured meeting will be called to obtain community input. It should be noted that the same outcome is anticipated by each meeting, although the former might promise to be more memorable!

A sample agenda for Alternative Two: The Village LDP Meeting:

- a. Brief presentation of LDP/PME and, possibly, survey results and data from preliminary situational analysis (20 min)
- b. Strengths of the Village/Commune (large group)
- c. Weaknesses of the Village/Commune (small groups with anonymous reporting out of results to larger group)
- d. Establish 10-year Commune Vision (small group to develop statements with report out to larger group)
- e. Identify action steps/projects that if achieved would significantly enhance the quality of life of the villagers and take them closer to attaining the vision
- f. Begin identifying means by which actions can get implemented, i.e., hold discussion on community capacity to undertake projects outside of budget constraints.

Step Six: Synthesizing Data, Council, Staff, and Community Input into Preliminary Framework.

Under the supervision of the commune staff, the NGO will take an objective first stab at compiling and synthesizing the preliminary data, survey results, and SWOC analyses into a coherent situational analysis, as well as compile the vision, goal and action ideas into a report for review by the Local Development Plan Group.

The Local Development Plan Group will use this Preliminary LDP framework to

1. finalize the situational analysis
2. create a proposed Commune Vision
3. establish three to five Strategic Goals that fall under the Priority Areas
4. compile suggested action steps gleaned through the SWOC analyses and Village Vision Festivals

Step Seven: Participatory LDP Priority Area Subcommittee Work: action planning and pre-feasibility analyses

LDP Priority Area Subcommittees will be established to conduct further work on the concrete action steps/projects as suggested by the council, staff and community. The LDP Priority Area Subcommittees are comprised of selected local government staff with a special expertise in the area in question, general community members, and experts as invited. Given the resources of a particular commune, outside experts might be invited on an as needed basis from regional institutions, NGOs, or other bodies.

For example, for the priority area Social Development, the subcommittee might consist of local government staff responsible for this area, local school principals and/or teachers, chair of the local parent association, and a local doctor/nurse. For consultation purposes, the Social Development Subcommittee may invite qark-level experts, as well.

The LDP Priority Area Subcommittees will be aided by the NGO (and ADF) in conducting pre-feasibility analyses of the action steps and projects to ensure relevance and conformity with the goal, as well as cost estimation and other social asset analysis to ascertain potential resource allocation choices.

The intent is to achieve a balance among the following categories of action steps/projects:

- those achievable by the community with little or no fiscal impact
- those achievable with financial contribution by the community
- those achievable within budget constraints by the local government
- those to be proposed to external donor organizations
- and/or those achievable by a combination thereof.

The LDP Priority Area Subcommittees will also consult with the PME Group to establish meaningful performance measures for the strategic goals and action steps.

Step Eight: “You talked, we listened. Did we get it right?” Community Meeting and Commune Council Conceptual Approval of the LDP

The LDP Priority Area Subcommittees present their specific action plans to the LDP Group, who is tasked with preparing the final draft document for submission to the Commune Council for conceptual approval. Prior to submission to the Commune Council, however, it is ideal to return to the community to ensure that the final draft Plan indeed meets their expectation. This may be done in the form of a community meeting with formal presentations of the final document. The advantage of this approach is that it allows the LDP Group to obtain the continuous buy-in and commitment on the part of the community, especially important for the successful implementation of the plan. Since much of the resource identification will entail community participation and perhaps financial contribution, this is an ideal time to gauge that commitment and identify community champions of the cause.

This meeting would also be an ideal time for the PME Group to present an evaluation of the *process* of the LDP—to what extent the process has been inclusive, and so on, to lend the LDP credibility and legitimacy. Of course, their work does not end here.

Should an additional community meeting not be feasible, the LDP could be presented at a Commune Council meeting with all Village Chiefs present (and voluntarily by other community members), or all Chairs of the village-level Consulting and Monitoring Groups, who will be tasked with disseminating the outcome to their communities.

Step Nine: Integration with Budget Development Process and Resource Identification

The intent of the Local Development Plan is to allow communities to shape and control their destinies. It therefore cannot be separated from the budget development process, as this is the site where very scarce resources get allocated, desirably, in response to community needs and preferences. In the development of the budget, the commune staff ought to be able to present concrete choices and trade-offs to the elected officials on how they may best spend the citizens’ tax dollar. Given the data collected and input gathered, the LDP presents a convincing picture of what some of those choices ought to be.

For those items that fall out of the budget process due to limited resources, efforts must be taken to identify other funding options, and should these prove to unobtainable, the Commune Council ought to consider revising the LDP.

Step Ten: LDP Implementation and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

The LDP will contain a detailed action plan that assigns responsibilities to various local government actors. It is their responsibility to ensure implementation takes place according to scheduled timeframes and to surface any unanticipated problems or issues that may emerge as implementation gets underway. The PME Group is tasked with monitoring, preferably, on a quarterly basis at least, the progress made toward achieving the measurable outcomes. It is important to note that monitoring is done regularly—it is not a one-off task—and allows the LDP Group, elected officials, and commune staff to make necessary adjustments in a timely fashion. Progress made or not made should then be reported to the community through a variety of means—local media, Commune Council meetings, mailer, posters in community centers, and so on.

A number of tools are recommended for the regular tracking, measuring and reporting of outcome and other performance information. Exhibit 6 demonstrates a simple scorecard approach that is designed to be easily understood by the community-at-large and indicates progress made toward achievement of action steps. If used on a continuous basis, for example, monthly or quarterly, the scorecard acts as an early warning system for identifying potential pitfalls or problems. Conversely, early success might indicate that more can be done in that area or resources reallocated to an area that is particularly struggling. The Scorecard’s simplistic design also allows easy access by the community who may not be as adept at reading numbers and percentages but who nevertheless want to see that things are getting done.

Exhibit 7 presents a useful performance measurement tracking matrix that encourages the users to set future targets, as well. Both templates can be used in a complementary fashion. Most importantly, the information gleaned needs to be reported to the community in as many forums as possible.

Exhibit 6. Sample Scorecard Template




Strategic Goal: Improve the Cleanliness of the Commune Action Steps	On Track to Success !	Needs some work!	Help!	Notes
Invite local youth club/others to co-sponsor clean-up days				Meetings held, but no dates set for first clean-up
Explore feasibility of contracting out solid waste collection service for once/month pickups in all villages				Survey results showed lack of willingness to pay—seek other funding opportunities or conduct public awareness campaign to raise interest
Institute a fine for illegal dumping and a method for enforcement				Fine has been adopted by council—2 cases successfully enforced!

Exhibit 7. Sample Performance Monitoring Matrix

LDP Priority Area: Public Infrastructure and Services					
Strategic Goal: Improve the Cleanliness of the Commune					
Action Step	Performance Measure	2004 Actual	2005 Target	2006 Target	Data Gathering Method
<i>Strategic Goal Outcome</i>	% of citizens surveyed who rate the cleanliness of the commune as "good" or "excellent"	30%	35%	50%	Citizen Survey
Invite local youth club/others to co-sponsor clean-up days	# of clean-up days conducted	0	2	4	Organization/Commune records
Explore feasibility of contracting out solid waste collection service for once/month pickups in all villages	Study conducted and adopted by Council	NA	Yes	NA	Commune records
	% of citizens surveyed who said they would be willing to contribute cash to improve/have garbage service	35%	45%	55%	Citizen Survey
Institute a fine for illegal dumping and a method for enforcement	% of citizens surveyed who rate illegal dumping as a "very serious problem"	70%	60%	45%	Citizen survey
	Illegal dumping ordinance prepared and adopted by Commune Council	NA	Prepared	Adopted	Commune records
	% of fines collected/all fines issued	NA	NA	65%	Commune records

Suggested Work Plan and Timeframe for LDP Development Process

When	What	What	Who
Fist Pilot: One commune			
Month One	Commitment	NGO meets with Commune Council to introduce the LDP/PME and obtain expression of interest.	NGO
Month One	Direction	Commune Council adopts resolution of creating a Local Development Plan with Community Participation. Council directs Chief of Commune and commune staff to spearhead the process.	
Month One-Two		Commune Council establishes LDP Group and PME Groups and directs Village Chiefs to establish Village-level Consulting and Monitoring Groups	
Month Two		Two-day Workshop with NGO, ADF, commune staff and village chiefs to apprise of LDP process and obtain input	
Month Two		One-day Training Workshop (combined with above ?) with members of LDP and PME Groups	
Month Two	Information dissemination	Commune staff develops informational pamphlets and provides to Village chiefs for dissemination	NGO to assist
Month Two-Three	Information gathering	Commune staff, NGO begin data collection for situational analysis	
Month Three-Four	Information gathering/ Participation	Commune staff, NGO finalize design of household survey/social capital assessment; NGO conducts survey	
Month Three	Information gathering/ Participation	SWOC analysis conducted with Commune Council and commune staff	
Month Four	Information gathering/ Participation	Village Vision Festivals	
Month Four-Five	Checkpoint meeting	Checkpoint meeting to be held with LDP Group, NGO, Specialist, and ADF to assess feasibility and progress of pilot program	
Month Four-Five	Synthesizing info	Commune staff, NGO to synthesize all inputs (data, survey, SWOC, and village input) into basic framework	
Month Five-Six	Synthesizing info	Local Development Plan Group to use basic framework to finalize situational analysis, propose a Commune Vision, establish Strategic Goals and propose initial action steps as derived from community input	
Month Five-Six	Synthesizing info	LDP Priority Area Subcommittees to synthesize all input regarding action steps/projects; conduct pre-feasibility studies; and submit priority-area action plans to LDP Group	

Month Six	Compilation	LDP Group to compile situation analysis, commune vision, and strategic goal action plans into a draft LDP	
Month Six	Presentation of LDP	"You talked, we listened. Did we get it right?" Community meeting to unveil draft LDP to community	
Month Six	Participation/Monitoring	PME Group to review monitoring and evaluation of process	
Month Six	Presentation of LDP	LDP Group to present draft LDP to Commune Council	
Month Six-Seven	Budget Development	Commune Council conceptually approves LDP and directs staff to prepare budget around its goals and action steps/projects	
Month Seven-Eight	Publication	LDP Publication prepared with widespread dissemination	
Month Eight	Budget Development	Budget development and other resource identification	
Month Eight-Nine	Review/Lessons Learned	Specialist to prepare one-year checkpoint report and lessons learned to date	
Month Seven-Ongoing	Implementation	Implementation	
Month One-Ongoing		Ongoing monitoring with quarterly reports on progress made	

