

Community Biodiversity Management (CBM) is a community-driven participatory approach to empowering local farmer groups to organize themselves and develop strategies that support the on-farm management of agricultural biodiversity.

Research Question: Will the CBM process help the community realize the importance of conservation and the sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity?

General Framework and Desired Outputs

Activity 1: Develop strong local institutions

Output 1: Empowered communities

Activity 2: Implement good practices

Output 2: Enhanced livelihoods

Activity 3: Enhance agricultural knowledge

Output 3: Improved use of agricultural biodiversity

Note: These three activities should be mutually supported to promote long-term sustainability of the CBM.

Essential Tools and Their Uses

1. *Four Cell Analysis:* measure the abundance and distribution of crop varieties within a farming community
2. *Custodian Farmers:* consolidate the roles and rights of farmers and create connections with local community members and organizations
3. *Community Seed Catalogues:* document and disseminate local crop knowledge
4. *Diversity & Food Fairs:* display local diversity and sensitize the community to the importance of agricultural biodiversity

Note: While multiple tools are used in the CBM process, the above four are central to its values and proper implementation.

Steps in the CBM Implementation

Step 1: Selecting the site and community

- Select the site for CBM from centres of diversity in the region.
- Important characteristics to consider: ecosystem diversity, intraspecific diversity of target crops, history of crop cultivation or gathering, level of genetic erosion, presence of specific crop adaptations, community interest

Step 2: Understanding the local context

- Schedule and host multiple, staggered activities designed to create an understanding of the specific needs of any future local interventions.
- Activities to include: participatory rural appraisal, diversity assessment, baseline survey, documentation of traditional knowledge
- Tools to use alongside the above activities: four cell analyses, Venn diagrams, timelines, focus group discussions, questionnaires

Step 3: Formalizing working modality

- Create collaborative partnerships with members of the community by building upon existing local organizations.
- Develop strong leadership structures within these organizations that will provide guidance to farmers and enforce cooperation from the community.

Step 4: Building community awareness

- Use diversity and food fairs to sensitize the community to the importance and value of agricultural biodiversity.
- Engage youth, women and policymakers at different levels in the process

Step 5: Capacity building

- Identify and work with local leaders to increase community confidence, efficiency, and social mobilization capacity.
- Hold training events with multiple community groups to teach good farming practices, decision making, structural organization and other related topics. Make sure to fit the training to the specific needs of the community based organization, especially when discussing farming practices.

Step 6: Consolidating the community role

- Encourage the use of a bottom-up decision making process to enable local groups to operate separately from the implementing organization.
- Promote the simultaneous planning of conservation and development.
- For conservation, suggest practical actions, like: diversity blocks, nurseries and seed banks.
- Facilitate interventions that help understand and support the communities specific need for development and conservation advancements.

Step 7: Establishing a CBM fund

- Set up a fund for community empowerment. Allow the community to make financial decisions independently with the money in this fund.
- Help create a local framework for the use of funds, especially in reference to providing individual loans and reproducing seed.
- Suggest the following reasons to mobilize funds: assisting resource poor farmers, sustaining local institutions, paying for conservation practices, benefit sharing of genetic resources

Step 8: Reviewing the community action plans

- Support local leaders in a review of the progress made throughout the CBM process and correct community action plans.
- Create a platform for social learning, and adjust plans if necessary

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