

Section 3. How to get landcare started

Landcare starts with you!

Whether you are an extension officer, a community organiser, a farmer facilitator or a local government unit (LGU) official, landcare starts with you understanding what it is about (see Section 1) and determining that it can work for you (see Section 2).

In this section we take you through a series of steps to get landcare started. The steps follow an approximate time line, although in some cases some steps may happen concurrently. You can follow the time line and read through each step serially or jump to the step that currently interests you.

The steps are in the sequence that we have found to be most successful. But there may be times when you need to vary the sequence or indeed the process. So don't see it as a rigid recipe, but as a starting point.

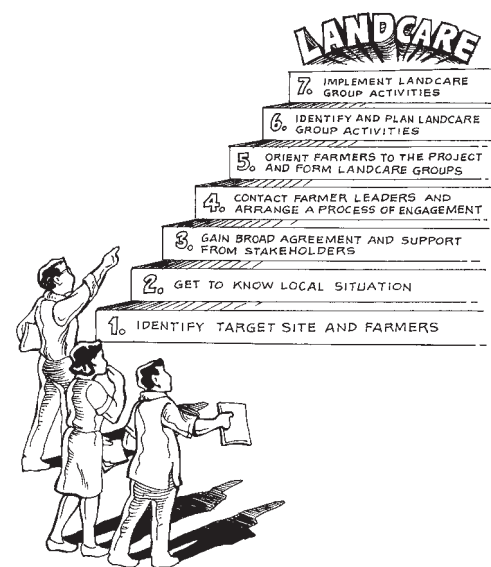
If you are an extension officer, a community organiser or a farmer facilitator, you are probably thinking about or are already using a landcare approach in your project. We wish you good luck as you follow these steps!

If you are an official from an LGU or a non-government organisation, and you are keen to try the landcare approach, before embarking on the 7-step process, you will first want to find a landcare facilitator. You could appoint a new staff member (if resources permit) or assign one of your existing staff. Or it may be that one of your partner organisations has the resources and capacity to assign someone to the role.

While landcare starts with you, it involves everyone. As you proceed, remember the importance of the three-way partnership of farmers, LGUs and technical facilitators—all three need to be involved for landcare to succeed in the long term.

The seven steps to getting landcare started

1. Identify the target site and farmers.
2. Get to know the local situation.
3. Gain broad agreement and support from stakeholders.
4. Contact farmer leaders and arrange a process for engaging farmers.
5. Orientate farmers to the program and form landcare groups.
6. Identify and plan landcare group activities.
7. Implement landcare group activities.



Getting landcare started is a 7-step process.

Step 1

Identify the target site and farmers

This step may not be necessary if your target farmers have already been identified. This will be the case where, for example, you are an LGU agricultural technician or a farmer facilitator with an assigned farmer base, or a community organiser from a non-government agency with a set development target.

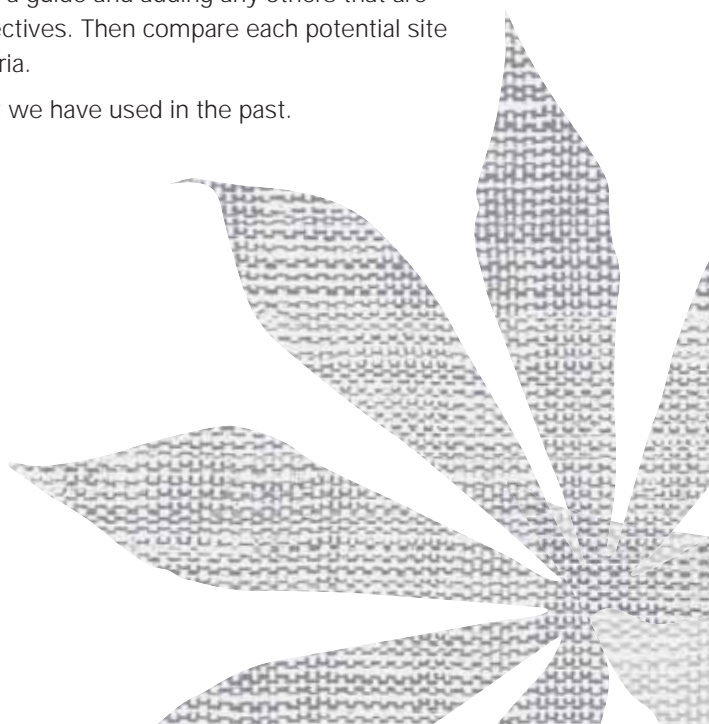
If you have a number of different sites or farmer groups to choose between, it is important to first identify which site or group offers the best potential for success.

Research shows that landcare is likely to be more successful when the following conditions are present:

- A common issue or problem related to natural resource management or rural livelihoods is affecting the majority of the farmers in the area.
- The farmers are focused on farming and are relatively free of other rural development pressures.
- The political environment is stable and local government is able to provide consistent support.
- A committed and competent agency is able to provide technical assistance and facilitation services.
- There is a level of interest among farmers and cohesive farmer groups already exist or are easy to form.
- The landcare facilitator is providing the farmers with well constructed training and communication services.

To identify your target site and farmer group, list the appropriate criteria, using the above conditions as a guide and adding any others that are relevant to your agency's objectives. Then compare each potential site or farmer group with the criteria.

Table 1 lists some criteria that we have used in the past.



Identify the target site and farmers

Step 1

Table 1. Sample checklist for selecting sites and farmer groups

| Criteria | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| The LGU is likely to be supportive. | | |
| Other potentially valuable technical partners are available. | | |
| The site/group is in a high priority area (e.g. because of land degradation, poverty, lack of services). | | |
| There is an important farmer-based natural resource management or rural livelihoods issue(s) that landcare can potentially address. | | |
| The issue(s) is recognised and accepted by most of the community. | | |
| The farmers are likely to be open to change. | | |
| Appropriate technologies are available to meet the needs. | | |
| Farmer social groupings exist or are easy to organise. | | |
| [Any other issues that may need to be considered, e.g. stability, peace and order] | | |



Select the site or the farmer group that best meets the criteria.

It's important to get the LGU involved!

In one or two cases, landcare has been successful without active LGU support because of the existence of a strong non-government implementing agency. But without active LGU participation, landcare's chances of long-term success are significantly reduced.

Remember that the LGU has a mandate to lift the living standards of the people and protect the environment, so their ownership of the landcare approach is obviously important, particularly for long-term success.

Step 1

Identify the target site and farmers

Bohol province integrates landcare approach with local government units

One of the objectives of the Philippines–Australia Landcare Project is to grow and sustain landcare in the province of Bohol. The province's first site was in San Isidro and the project is successfully scaling up with sites in the municipalities of Pilar and Alicia. Integrating the landcare approach into the programs of the local government units (LGUs) has been a key strategy.

'It is important that you know who to contact and learn about the existing programs where landcare could fit', says Rojo Balane, Visayas Regional Landcare Coordinator with the Landcare Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. (LFPI). 'This will serve as a guide on how one could start landcare.'

Rojo learned that the Alicia LGU had appointed *barangay* farmer technicians (called *barangay* agricultural workers, or BAWs) who could help him start landcare activities in the *barangays*. Their role is critical because they provide technical assistance to their fellow farmers—something not available from the municipal agricultural technicians.

Rojo collaborates with the LGU and trains the BAWs in the technologies, the landcare approach and the concepts that they need in their new role of promoting landcare in their respective *barangays*.

'Before landcare, farmers were dependent on what the LGU gave them. They were not used to being involved in planning and developing the programs', explains Rojo.

'The LGUs now understand what landcare is and they integrate it into their programs where relevant. They see landcare as a potential tool to address other issues and concerns and they see the benefit of partnering with the landcare project. LGUs also have resources that can be tapped by landcare to assist the LGUs in their programs of providing farmers with appropriate technologies.'



Rojo Balane (far left), Visayas Regional Landcare Coordinator with LFPI, with *barangay* agricultural workers in Alicia

Get to know the local situation

Step 2

Once you have identified the site or farmer group, the next step is to develop a good knowledge of the situation in which the farmers are operating. To do this, you should read whatever information you can find and talk with people who have an interest (a stake) in the site or farmer group.

It is sometimes easy for a landcare facilitator to downplay the importance of this step and either skip it completely or give it only token attention. Perhaps you believe you know the situation well enough already, or time is short. We consider this step as one of the most important, and we strongly recommend that you complete it. It doesn't have to take much time—one week should be all that it takes if the stakeholders are available. And no matter how well you think you know the local issues, there are always useful things that you can learn from re-listening, re-scoping and rethinking. The time and effort you invest will be worth it.

Gathering as much information as you can find

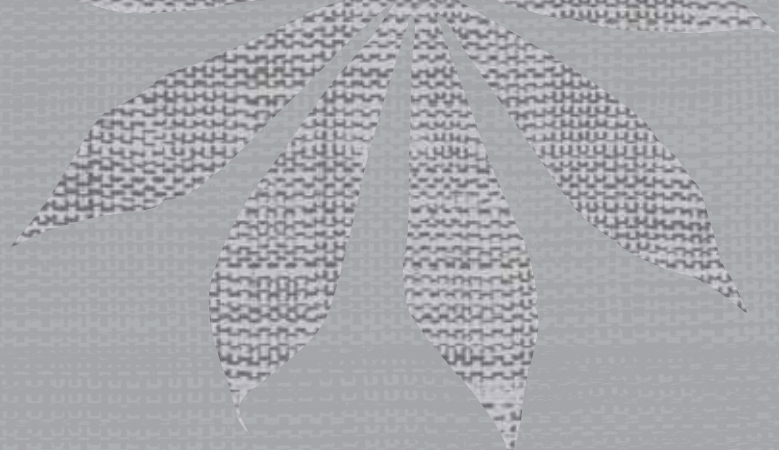
Gather and read as much information about the site or group as possible. Look at both primary sources (information about the site or group itself), and secondary sources (information of general relevance to the site or group, such as demographic and socioeconomic data, and existing programs and policies).

Look for information from libraries, LGU offices and the internet. Good places to find relevant information are local development plans, natural resource management plans, watershed management plans and land use plans.

Start a file of relevant information, and start a special fact file of important issues that you think may be useful when the landcare program gets underway.



It's important to talk with local people about what they need from landcare.



Step 2

Get to know the local situation

Finding out about what is already going on

by Rojo Balane

When starting landcare in your local community, be aware of past and current projects in the area. Past projects tell you about the experiences of the people and the effectiveness of different strategies that have been employed for different cultures and traditions. Current programs, on the other hand, are opportunities for you to tap into and help establish landcare more easily and at less cost. These programs may have been started by LGUs, non-government organisations, schools or the local church.

Where there are existing programs related to landcare in the area, it is more appropriate and practical to partner with them. Integrating landcare into ongoing programs is far more effective than starting landcare as a stand-alone program, where it may only duplicate and compete with other programs.

Look carefully into existing programs in your region, province or municipality. Get to know their goals and expected results. Learn about their strategies and identify where partnerships with landcare may be appropriate. There may also be opportunities for landcare to improve these programs. Remember that landcare is flexible enough to address most issues, even those of related programs targeting, for example, health and nutrition.

Get to know the agencies that are implementing these programs. Information about the nature of these agencies will help you see how landcare can fit in and be accepted by your potential partners. Knowing the key people involved should help you to build good relationships. Identify a champion—an insider who can advocate for landcare within the organisation.

Consider networks and alliances as opportunities to promote landcare. The important thing is that landcare should address a significant issue, or issues, that are recognised, understood and relevant to the stakeholders..



Pilar farmer Justiniano Celeres (right) talks to Rojo Balane, Visayas Regional Landcare Coordinator with LFPI.

Talking to stakeholders

Talk to relevant people who have an interest (a stake) in the site or the farmer group, so that you can:

- expand your knowledge about the target site or group
- indicate your interest in a potential landcare program
- seek information about the possibility of collaboration and partnership in a potential landcare program
- identify any relevant complementary projects or policies already in place.

Talk to people from the LGU and people from any national government agencies, non-government organisations and service providers involved in the site or with the farmer group.

If possible, talk to one or two representative farmers, such as farmer leaders or prominent farmers, to learn about their perspectives and interest. Again, remember that listening is the key—some potentially good programs have failed to get off the ground because the landcare facilitator was more interested in talking than listening.

Farmers' early perceptions are important and often colour their attitudes from there on. Be careful not to raise their expectations; use the discussions to gain their perspectives, not to make brash promises that you may not be able to keep.

In all your discussions, listening should be your focus—you are there primarily to acquire information that will be helpful in developing a landcare program. In the process, find out the names of any other people, agencies and projects that have a stake in the site or group, or that are already working, or planning to work, with the site or group. You can follow these up later as part of initial scoping discussions.

Be clear that the discussions are merely conceptual, and that the program is still only a *potential* program—it is easy to raise expectations. You can not commit to the program until the scoping is complete and the need and partnership issues assessed.

Add the outcomes of all your discussions to your information and fact files.





Step 2

Get to know the local situation

Starting with the backyard vegetable garden at Malisbong

More than 100 farmers attended the first landcare training session in Malisbong, where they learned about planting a backyard vegetable garden.

Eldon Ruiz, a regional landcare coordinator with LFPI, presented slides showing what landcare had achieved in Ned, arousing the interest of the largely Muslim group of farmers.

Malisbong is a poor coastal community in Sultan Kudarat in south-western Mindanao. It is remote and has both upland and lowland areas. It is largely dependent on fishing, but is plagued by peace and order issues and its people are desperate to move out of poverty.

'After just 4 months of landcare, people are harvesting the vegetables they planted in their backyards and are bartering vegetables for fish', says Eldon.

Junaid Angkanan, president of the local People's Organisation, believes that landcare provides a mechanism for his organisation to link with government agencies and the wider community and sustain development in the region.

'We are very happy that our site was selected for landcare as this addresses our number one issue of livelihoods', he says. 'Landcare has highlighted to us the importance of networking and alliance building. And we have learned a lot about new technologies.

'Landcare has taught us how to plant vegetables, and how to make compost, fertiliser and home-made pesticides.'

While the backyard vegetable production is important for local consumption, farmers are keen to get into commercial production and take their organically grown produce to the Davao City markets.

'We need landcare assistance for this commercial expansion', says Junaid. 'We need more seeds and we need fruit trees.'

Some of the Malisbong farmers have visited upland landcare sites in Lantapan, and others are hoping to visit the lowland sites growing rice in Agusan del Sur.

'We would all like to visit the landcare sites in Agusan', says Manting Salong, a member of the local farmers organisation. 'We have 78 rice farmers with 350 hectares. We are now starting to grow organic rice with no insecticide and using organic fertilisers, but we need more training in how to create organic fertiliser and compost.'

Eldon believes Malisbong has a very good chance of becoming a hub for organic farming: 'The fertility of the soil is very high and largely underused.' He and his colleagues from LFPI try to visit Malisbong twice a month to provide support and training.

'It's learning by doing,' says Manting. 'After learning, I go to the field and do it. Landcare is very practical.'

The Malisbong farmers are keen to share their knowledge with other farmers from nearby communities once they have established landcare in their own community.

'We can become a model *barangay* where we can transfer our knowledge to other *barangays*', says Manting.

Malisbong farmers are proud of their quick success in diversifying their farms with vegetables and fruit.

Gain broad agreement and support from stakeholders

Step 3

You now have an understanding of the farmers' situation and you have gained positive indications of support and collaboration from people you have talked with.

In this step, you formally present the landcare program proposal to all stakeholders for their consideration, with a view to gaining their agreement and support. This is also where you educate the stakeholders about the landcare process.

Identifying the stakeholders

First you identify the important stakeholders—those who you believe need to know about the program, those who can commit to a program partnership, and those who can provide support. You can include stakeholders with whom you have previously spoken as part of Step 2 if you found them to be genuinely relevant.

Then, for each stakeholder, identify the key representative(s) who you believe need to be informed about the program.

Table 2 lists potential stakeholders and their representatives.

Institutional mapping can be useful in helping to identify potential landcare partners. Venn diagrams are a commonly used institutional mapping tool.



Step 3 Gain broad agreement and support from stakeholders

| Stakeholder agency | Possible representatives |
|--|--|
| Farmer groups or cooperatives | Farmer leaders |
| <i>Barangay</i> LGU | <i>Barangay</i> captain Councillors |
| Municipal LGU | Mayor Municipal agricultural officer Municipal environment and natural resources officer Agricultural technicians |
| Provincial LGU (for large projects covering more than one municipality) | Governor Provincial agricultural officer Provincial environment and natural resources officer |
| National government agencies (e.g. Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agrarian Reform) | Chiefs of offices Local project officers |
| Civil Society Organisations, religious groups, non-government organisations, and People's Organisations | Organisation heads Local project officers |
| Research organisations (e.g. World Agroforestry Centre, universities) | Organisation heads Local research officers |
| Private sector | Field or regional representatives |

Table 2. Potential stakeholder agencies and representatives

Arranging a presentation forum for stakeholder representatives

There are two ways in which you can present the program proposal to the stakeholder representatives:

- Arrange one program presentation forum for all representatives. This has the advantage of obtaining useful cross-agency perspectives which, ideally, will emerge during the discussion. It also makes it easier for you to assess consensus on importance issues. On the other hand, it is logistically more difficult to arrange, particularly where there are many agencies involved and they come from a wide geographic spread.
- Arrange a series of small individual presentations to each of the stakeholders at their respective offices. This is obviously easier to arrange but takes more time and you cannot get the consensus that is possible with a single forum.

Gain broad agreement and support from stakeholders

Step 3

Preparing your presentation

Your presentation should consist of a well prepared PowerPoint™ slideshow, backed by a one- or two-page program outline for representatives to take away with them.

Use your fact file of issues from the initial scoping (Step 1) to develop a situation summary at the beginning of the presentation—stakeholders always appreciate someone who has done their homework and is well prepared.

Use the rest of the presentation to outline what you are proposing to do.

Presenting your proposal

- During the presentation, look for feedback, particularly suggestions on how the program might be improved. Assess people's general agreement with the proposal and look for indications of support (including personnel, funding, policy and logistics).
- When representatives indicate their support, find out who you should liaise with to follow up and what you need to do to secure the support. They may, for example, need a written submission, and they may prefer to have a memorandum of agreement drawn up.
- Clearly articulate that you are not presenting a program, but an approach to facilitating a solution to an important issue. This should focus the attention of the audience on the landcare approach, rather than on the technologies that might be implemented.
- Make it clear that landcare is not a process for dole-outs—it is a process for building farmers' ownership of issues and solutions, which may then provide a more efficient and effective process for any community funding allocations.
- Watch for false hopes and over-optimistic expectations. It is important to be relatively conservative in predicting what might happen, but quite clear as to what you are proposing to achieve. Remember the old adage: 'It is better to under-promise and over-deliver, than over-promise and under-deliver'. Use landcare case studies from other similar situations to present a pragmatic view of what might happen. And be careful to temper people's expectations that landcare can solve all problems.
- Clearly indicate the intended time frame of the proposed program and the exit plan. Long-term commitment from LGUs for landcare activities may require them to look beyond the normal tenures of existing staff and the term of office of local officials.



Gather your stakeholders together to present your landcare proposal.

Step 3

Gain broad agreement and support from stakeholders



Lyndon Arbes (second from right), Northern Mindanao Landcare Coordinator with LFPI, presents a landcare proposal to LGU staff in Lantapan, Bukidnon. Present your landcare program to partners as a solution to important and shared issues rather than a program in its own right.

- Make the boundaries of the program clear. For example, are you intending to work at just one site or with one farmer group, or are you intending the site or group to be a pilot site for a larger and more extensive landcare program?
- Make it very clear that any benefits from the program are to be shared by the partners; they will not belong to any one agency. Emphasise that all partners will be acknowledged during program events and in any program publicity.

The basic funds required for a landcare program

Salary for landcare facilitator (if this is a new position)

Monthly salary not lower than the salary standard, with normal incentives such as paid vacation and sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, holiday allowances, 13th month pay and normal bonuses.

Operating overheads for landcare facilitator

Office equipment and supplies to support documentation, correspondence and communication (access to computer, LCD projector etc); transport allowance or access to vehicle or motorbike; funds for personal development and training; funds for hosting meetings with farmers, partners, community groups and support institutions as part of scoping and program start-up; funds for internal reporting.

Operating budget for landcare facilitator

Funds for farmer activities (meetings, workshops, cross-visits); communication materials for farmers (brochures, leaflets, flip charts, training manuals); material inputs (e.g. seeds, seedlings); funds for communicating with and reporting to partners and support institutions.

Gain broad agreement and support from stakeholders

Step 3

Partnering with Indigenous peoples to conserve native trees

by Nelson Tomonglay

Native trees such as *sagimsiman* provide food, shade and building materials for Indigenous peoples, so we need to conserve them.

This is exactly what is happening, thanks to a program facilitated by LFPI which is working with Indigenous landcare groups in Claveria in northern Mindanao.

The project, which started in 2005, is funded by the United Nations Development Programme and the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation. It supports technical training, meetings and planning with groups to establish nurseries and plant thousands of hectares of native trees. The project is also promoting and supporting the planting of *abaca* under the trees.

‘This participatory activity is very important for the local people’, says Maria Aurora (‘Au’) Laotoco, Executive Director of LFPI. ‘*Abaca* provides an alternative source of income to corn, sweet potato, *gabi* and other cash crops.

‘This extra livelihood opportunity is important to Indigenous people when farmers find it hard to provide food to meet their daily needs.’

LFPI links with the Department of Trade and Industry to provide skills training. It also links with product users and the business sector to market *abaca* fibre.

‘We facilitate linkages with markets, product users and processors’, says Au.

‘Over the past 3 years working with Indigenous communities, we’ve learned the importance of partnerships. We’ve also learned to be careful in understanding upland communities and their need to manage the natural resources they depend on. They have a lot of existing knowledge about things like *abaca* fibre production.

‘I am happy and hopeful that our sincere partnership and involvement with Indigenous people, linking them with funding agencies and the business sector at both national and local levels, provides great assistance to our Indigenous brethren while conserving and protecting indigenous trees.’



Datu Manayo, Leader of the Mat-i Higaonon Tribal Council in Claveria, Misamis Oriental, proudly shows the integration of *abaca* with native trees. Participatory activities with Indigenous groups are helping to conserve native trees as well as build sustainable sources of income from crops such as *abaca*.



Step 3 Gain broad agreement and support from stakeholders

Local government unit supports farmers to implement landcare

The Pilar municipal government in eastern Bohol is training around 200 farmers to become landcare technicians in a bid to implement landcare across the municipality and halt the erosion that is filling up the large Malinao Dam.

The program, called PILAR DAM (Productivity Improvement through Landcare and Agricultural Resources Development And Management), recognises the important role farmers play in landcare.

'If farmers do not know about it or do not understand it, they will not cooperate', says Engineer Joseph Anania, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator. Joseph was convinced of the importance of the role of farmers after a visit to landcare sites in Claveria.

For every 25 households in the municipality, the PILAR DAM program is training a farmer technician to meet their landcare needs. With more than 4,800 households, they need about 200 farmer technicians. Joseph calls them *barangay* farmer technicians, or BAFTECHs.

The farmer technicians are being trained and they receive a small honorarium of P50 a month from the municipal government and another P50 a month from their local *barangay* council.

'We provide BAFTECHs with some garden tools and initial vegetable seeds', says Joseph. 'Farmer technicians are expected to put in their own backyard nursery and distribute the seeds they grow to the other farmers and householders in their group. We do not limit this program just to farmers. All households need to establish a vegetable garden or an agroforestry system on their land.'

'The farmer technicians are supported by six agricultural technologists and one agricultural officer. They are required to meet monthly with the 24 householders in their group to share experiences and discuss new technologies.'

'We have not had a single negative reaction from farmers', says Joseph. 'Nobody has said it can't be done.'

Joseph convinced the Mayor of Pilar of the benefits of the scheme by explaining the importance of farming to the community.

'Ninety per cent of our households are farmers. We have *barangay* health workers but had no extension workers for the farmers. We brought the concept to the municipal council and no one was against the idea. This year (2007-08) we have appropriated about half a million pesos for landcare-related activities. And the current administration is planning to sustain our activities, especially as we have already provided concrete results in our pilot areas.'

Top: The Pilar Local Government Unit in Bohol is training 200 farmer technicians to support other farmers in their villages in adopting landcare. Here, Joseph Anania, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, speaks to farmer technicians at an orientation program.

Opposite: Claveria farmer trainer Expedito Vistar shows farmers from Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental, how to use the A-frame to lay out contours.



Step 4

Contact farmer leaders and arrange a process for engaging farmers

Once the program has been given broad support from stakeholders and the partnership has been established, it is time to get down to working with the farmers.

The first step is to go back to the farmer leaders you talked with in Steps 2 and 3, to negotiate and plan how you are going to work with them and their fellow farmers.

Remember to keep accurate notes on all of the discussions you have, so that you can build up the following steps with confidence. Always carry your fact file of issues with you, and record all new key issues. A good practice is to spend 10 minutes or so after each discussion, on your own, reflecting on what was said and noting any issues for future reference.

Here is a list of questions that you need to discuss with the farmer leaders.

Are you going to work with just one pilot group of farmers or a number of groups?

The number of landcare groups needs to be manageable within the facilitation resources available. One option is to select the number of groups that you can manage to facilitate yourself. Another option is to identify, with the help of the farmer leaders, a number of farmers who could act as facilitators ('farmer facilitators'), each looking after a landcare group. Your role would then be to train the farmer facilitators as a group and guide them in facilitating their individual groups.

Are you going to work with the farmers directly or use farmer facilitators?

The farmers chosen to be farmer facilitators need to be compatible with and acceptable to their fellow farmers. They need to have both the ability to learn new facilitation and technical skills, and effectively interact with their farmer groups to pass on these skills.

Are there existing farmer groups that you can work with or do you need to form new landcare groups?

If existing farmer groups are functioning well, use these for the landcare project. This saves extra work and has the advantage of building on existing functional social networks. The landcare process is flexible and adaptable, so it can easily work with existing groups. You should form new groups only where there are no existing groups or where the farmer leaders believe existing groups are too dysfunctional. Let them make the final decision.



How many farmer groups will there be?

If you need to form new groups, the ideal size is 8–20 farmers per group. A big group can be hard to organise, geographically and logistically, and farmers will find it harder to learn. There is also the potential for more conflict. If groups are already in place and have more than 30 farmers, we recommend that you split them into smaller subgroups of up to 20 farmers.

How will you structure the landcare groups?

For groups to be functional, they should:

- share a common interest and purpose so that they are likely to be constructive in moving ahead
- be located close to each other geographically so that they can interact regularly without spending too much time travelling to attend meetings
- share a similar culture and outlook so that they are relatively cohesive as a group
- be comfortable with each other so that they work well together as a team.

Do you need guidelines for group operations?

Guidelines can be beneficial in setting the boundaries and goalposts for the group, but it is also important to keep landcare groups relatively informal. If you feel from the discussions that guidelines are needed, you will need to develop them and have them accepted by the group.

How will you get started with the farmers?

The farmers will need some program orientation and if you, the landcare facilitator, are relatively unknown to the farmers, you will need to be introduced to them. Orientation and introduction can be done at a meeting and presentation to all farmers at a central location, a series of small *sitio*-based meetings and presentations, or an individual walk around the farms with the farmer leaders. If there are farmer facilitators, the orientation and introduction could be channelled through them to the farmers. As well as discussing the process of this initial orientation, you should also look for feedback from the farmer leaders on other key partner representatives that they believe should be present during the orientation (for example, LGU officials, LGU staff, non-government organisation staff).



Spend time with farmer leaders in their communities to discuss how they want landcare to run.

Step 5

Orientate farmers to the program and form landcare groups



Invite farmers and other partners to a community meeting to learn about and discuss the proposed landcare program.

By now you will have reached agreement with the farmer leaders on the number and structure of landcare groups, the use of farmer facilitators, and the process for first meeting the farmers. The next step is to meet the farmers, brief them on the program and the concept of landcare groups, and then form the landcare groups if suitable groups do not already exist.

Orientating the farmers to the program

- Work closely with the farmer leaders on the orientation. Farmers tend to look up to their leaders, so it is important that the farmer leaders are seen to be actively involved and supporting the program. In fact, the farmer leaders should be the key players and should do most of the talking. Get them to introduce you as the landcare facilitator and to speak about the relevance of the program from their own perspective.
- If the farmer leaders have suggested that partner organisations be present during the orientation (for example, LGU officials, LGU staff, non-government organisation staff), make sure they are invited to attend and introduce them to the farmers. Invite them to comment on the program and endorse the farmers' involvement.
- Keep your presentation to the farmers short and simple. Focus on explaining the landcare approach and what it means for the farmers. Remember to acknowledge the farmers, the farmer leaders and the program partners.
- Look for feedback on the program from the farmers and arrange in advance to have someone record it for you. This will free you up to maintain eye contact with the farmers while listening intently. At this early stage, where early impressions count, farmers will look more favourably on a facilitator who appears to be actively listening to their issues rather than taking notes. Check beforehand that the farmers will be comfortable with an assistant attending the meeting.
- Talk to the farmers about the structure of the landcare groups, as recommended by the farmer leaders (existing groups and/or new landcare groups to be formed under the program). Emphasise the importance of landcare groups in getting the farmers together to exchange information and to learn. Ask for their input on the groups and how they think they might be improved. Later, record the feedback in your fact file.

Orientate farmers to the program and form landcare groups

Step 5

Why the landcare group concept is important

- It is a forum where farmers can exchange ideas and information.
- It provides a forum for farmers to collectively filter and test new technologies.
- It provides a mechanism for farmers to reach group consensus on important community issues, which brings greater cohesiveness.
- It provides a strong support and learning network; farmer-to-farmer sharing and learning is a powerful driver for change.
- It is a visible and bipartisan link with the LGU (and other groups) and an efficient and transparent mechanism for distributing resources to farmers (e.g. material inputs, funds).



A landcare group meets at Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental.

Forming the landcare groups

After the orientation meeting(s), summarise the farmers' feedback on the landcare groups, and meet again with the farmer leaders to revise the groups (if there are existing groups) or to give them the go ahead to form the new groups.

Work with the farmer leaders to schedule a planning meeting for each group.

You may be able to generate farmers' interest in attending the planning meeting by making them aware of the potential for training and for cross-visits to landcare farms in other areas.

The farmer leaders may like to arrange for groups to elect office-bearers prior to the planning meeting.

Step 6

Identify and plan landcare group activities

Now that the farmer groups have been formed, it's time to hold the first planning meeting with each group to identify landcare activities that meet their needs.

Holding planning meetings with the farmer groups

The purpose of the meeting

The purpose of the planning meeting is to get the farmers to identify and agree on their key needs, prioritise these needs, discuss and identify some appropriate solutions, and then plan the first activities in pursuit of these solutions. The meeting should also involve some discussion from the farmers about how they want their group to operate.

Organising the meeting

Get the farmers to organise the meeting so that they start to take ownership of the process. Facilitate the organisation of the meeting only as much as is required, and try not to intervene unless the farmers appear to be having trouble organising the event and are happy for you to help out.

Possible venues for the meetings include the *barangay* hall, a *sitio* meeting hut or a farmer's house—the only requirements are that it is large enough to accommodate the group and it is protected from the sun and rain.

Remember too that when we talk about 'farmers', we are referring to 'farming families', so the landcare groups include any men and women who wish to take part. To make it easier for women with young children to attend, think about operating a children's crèche for the duration of the meeting.

As for the orientation meeting, arrange if possible for someone else (an assistant) to record the proceedings of the meeting. And again, check beforehand that the farmers will be comfortable with the assistant being at the meeting.

Identify and plan landcare group activities

Step 6

Running the meeting

First up, you should establish some ground rules for the meeting; for example, attendees should show respect for others' opinions, allow people to have their say, and be constructive.

Next, for the benefit of those who may have missed the orientation meeting, give a brief overview of the program and the value of landcare groups.

Then give a quick outline of what will happen at the meeting, which will include:

1. identifying the farmers' needs
2. prioritising the farmers' needs
3. identifying solutions to the high-priority needs
4. planning what action they will take
5. deciding how the group will operate.

Now, work through each agenda item in the above sequence.

1. Identifying the farmers' needs

There are a number of techniques you can use to help the farmers identify their needs—brainstorming, cause-and-effect analysis, problem tree analysis, farmer testimonies and resource mapping are some examples. You can usually find out about these techniques in extension manuals. The main thing is to select a process that is fairly simple and that the farmers are comfortable with.

2. Prioritising the farmers' needs

To prioritise the farmers' needs, simply allocate each farmer a limited number of votes that they then place against the needs of their choice. Some discussion may be necessary to achieve general consensus on the group's priorities.

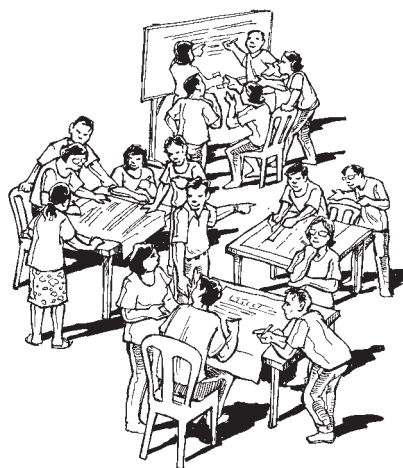
3. Identifying solutions to the high-priority needs

Both you and the farmers should share your ideas on how best to resolve their priority needs. This is where some basic knowledge of suitable and appropriate technologies is valuable. You may want to do some preliminary research for this purpose. But be careful not to strongly advocate any particular solution or reflect your personal biases; share information as just another contribution to the discussion. In some cases, the high-priority needs may require research and investigation of potential solutions, and agreement with the farmers to do so becomes the outcome of the meeting.



Step 6

Identify and plan landcare group activities



The farmer group planning meeting is an opportunity to work together to identify the farmers' needs, solutions and priorities.

4. Planning activities

Develop an action plan before the meeting ends. You might want to use a Gantt chart for this purpose. Planning activities at the meeting is important because it:

- increases the farmers' ownership of the activities
- identifies who is responsible for the next step
- clarifies how resources will be allocated.

The action plan does not need to be large or long term. Start with small goals and tasks. The main thing is to get the group to identify (and own) two or three tasks in the immediate future. Scheduling when the group will meet next (for a discussion meeting, farm walk, field day, demonstration etc.) should be one of these tasks. Because some tasks will involve you as the landcare facilitator, it is important for you to negotiate at the meeting what you can and cannot do, so that the group is clear about what they can expect from you. From the farmers' perspective, there is nothing worse than the landcare facilitator not delivering on their actions.

5. Deciding how the group will operate

During the meeting, during refreshments or after the meeting over lunch, you need to start the discussion on how the farmers would like to see their group operate from here on. Here are some questions you will want answered:

- How often do they want to meet and conduct activities?
- How will they communicate with each other as a group?
- How will you communicate with them?
- What days/times/venues are most appropriate for getting together?
- Are new members welcome and, if so, how do they become members?
- Do they want to nominate a leader or chairperson to be the main contact?
- How would they like to measure the progress and overall success of the group?

Identify and plan landcare group activities

Step 6

Examples of landcare group activities

Landcare group activities have two components: *content* and *process*.

The content component is the technology or subject of the activity. The technology used in group activities will vary widely depending on the needs of the group. The main technologies used in landcare are listed in Section 1.

The process is the way in which the activity is run. It will vary depending on the learning needs of the group. Remember that different farmers will have different learning methods and learning curves, and it is important that you use a range of processes to cater for this.

The processes that we have found to be particularly successful for landcare are:

- cross-visits
- on-farm training days
- learning sites.

Cross-visits

A cross-visit is where a group of farmers visits successful landcare farmers and landcare sites. It is based on the principle 'to see is to believe'. Rather than farmers hearing about what has been achieved on another farm, they get to see it for themselves. And because farmers learn best from seeing the successes of other farmers, cross-visits increase farmer-to-farmer interaction and learning which, in turn, increases adoption. Ongoing direct farmer-to-farmer relationships are often established, and can result in farmers becoming more self-sufficient over time.

Your role as the landcare facilitator is to facilitate the cross-visits and support the farmer-to-farmer learning process. This is described in more detail in Step 7.



Farmers from Malisbong, Sultan Kudarat, join farmers from other sites at the Northern Mindanao Integrated Agriculture Research Centre in Bukidnon during a cross-visit to landcare sites in Northern Mindanao. Farmers who are new to landcare benefit from visiting established landcare sites. Seeing is believing!

Step 6

Identify and plan landcare group activities

Cross-visits inspire farmers and government officials

Any doubts that Kapatagan farmers in southern Mindanao might have had about the benefits of landcare were quickly erased after they visited the Lantapan landcare sites in the north of the island.

Kapatagan farmer Leo Castillo says they learnt a lot that they could put into practice. He is keen to follow up with further visits to other areas.

‘I think everyone in my *sitio* would like to go on such a visit’, Leo says. ‘The verbal communication with other farmers is so useful.’

Leo’s comments reflect what thousands of farmers have experienced with cross-visits over the years. Hearing firsthand from practising farmers about what they have achieved through landcare, and seeing the results with their own eyes, has proven to inspire farmers time and again.

Engineer Joseph Anania, the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator from Pilar in eastern Bohol, used a visit to landcare sites in Claveria in northern Mindanao to convince municipal government officials and *barangay* captains of the benefits of landcare.

‘From our visit to Claveria, we learned that landcare not only addresses environmental concerns, but also the economic concerns of farmers’, Joseph says. ‘We also learned how important it was for farmers, not just municipal officials, to understand how to implement landcare, which is why we then set up a program to support farmers to do just this.’

Bohol Landcare Coordinator Rojo Balane believes that this visit to Claveria was instrumental in the Pilar municipal government investing in landcare.

‘We brought the mayor, the vice-mayor and all the members of the municipal council to Claveria to let them experience and interact with the Claveria mayor, government officials and local farmers’, says Rojo.



Farmers from Pilar in Bohol visit a landcare site in Claveria, Misamis Oriental, in northern Mindanao.

Identify and plan landcare group activities

Step 6

On-farm training days

On-farm training days run by successful farmers use the 'learning by doing' principle. Rather than a landcare facilitator or some other 'expert' showing or telling farmers about techniques, the farmers themselves get to show and tell.

The farmer demonstrates the technique or technology first and then all the other farmers have a go at doing it themselves. The training can be arranged as a series of sessions over one day or over a number of days.

Your role as the landcare facilitator is to facilitate the training days, support the farmer-to-farmer learning process and provide technical input as required. This is described in more detail in Step 7.

Learning sites

A model or demonstration farm run by an innovative farmer with good landcare practices can be used as a learning site—a venue for sharing knowledge with other members of the farmer group. The farm needs to be conveniently located so that other farmers can get there without too much difficulty. Much of the on-farm training can be run on the farm and the farmers get to see a working system to which they themselves can aspire. The owner may be given some incentive for providing the venue.

Your role as the landcare facilitator is to support the model farmer with technical inputs and specialised training, and facilitate the farmer-to-farmer training that is conducted on the model farm. This is described in more detail in Step 7.

What makes a successful landcare group?

- The group should have a strong sense of ownership, with the farmers making the main decisions.
- Group activities must be relevant to the issues that the farmers see as important.
- At least some activities must relate to improving farmer incomes, not just to conservation farming.
- Group leaders need to be respected by the farmers; preferably, the farmer leader should be a leader in adopting innovative farm practices on their own farm.
- The landcare facilitator has realistic expectations and recognises that every farmer has a different learning style and learning curve.
- The group identifies their measures of success and members are involved in the process of monitoring their performance.

Step 7

Implement landcare group activities

Using the action plans from the initial planning meeting, you can now go ahead and facilitate the implementation of the landcare group activities that the farmers selected.

Here are some tips and guidelines for:

- conducting a farmer cross-visit
- delivering on-farm training
- establishing a learning site
- implementing livelihood and income-generating activities
- running social activities
- communicating with farmers in the field.

Conducting a farmer cross-visit

Your farmers can visit other farmers in their own *barangay*, municipality or province, or farmers in other provinces. The important thing is to make sure that the site and the farmers at the destination share common ground with your farmer group.

- Identify some farms that your group could potentially visit, and then let the group decide which one (or ones) they would prefer to visit.
- A cross-visit can be expensive, particularly if travel to another province is required. So, it needs to be well planned and organised with clear dates, times and logistics.
- Don't be tempted to visit too many farmers. It is better to visit one or two good farmers and have plenty of time for interaction, than have fleeting visits to half-a-dozen farmers. Farmers like to spend time with other farmers, both informally and formally. So, in between the formal talks and demonstrations, it's important to allow time for informal questions and farmer-to-farmer interaction.
- Have a clear program and brief the visitors well before the trip. Make sure they know who they are visiting and what they are likely to see so that they can prepare accordingly. And make sure they are aware of what is expected of them in terms of behaviour, cultural sensitivity and courtesy.
- Keep the size of the visiting group manageable—20 to 25 farmers is an ideal number.

Implement landcare group activities

Step 7

- Carefully plan the logistics for managing the group. It is more efficient if they travel together as a unit, so hire a jeepney or some other form of mass transport. Carry a megaphone or portable public address unit to make it easier for them to hear the host farmer. Create a small cross-visit guide book for each farmer in the group so that they have the basic logistical information at their fingertips and can add their own notes.
- At the farm site, introduce the host farmer, give a brief overview of the farm and its innovations, and then hand over to the host farmer. Do not over-facilitate the interaction between the visiting farmers and the host. Intervene if the discussion is getting bogged down on one subject, but only if the attention of the farmers is starting to wander.
- Keep background chatter to a minimum while the host farmer is talking. They deserve common courtesy, and the visiting farmers need to be given the fullest opportunity to hear what their host has to say.
- Always evaluate a cross-visit so that improvements can be made to future cross-visits. This can be as simple as asking some of the farmers for their feedback at the end of the cross-visit, or you might want to do a more thorough pre- and post-visit analysis of what farmers were seeking, what they found and what they then put into practice. You can only improve future cross-visits by carefully analysing the content, the process and the impacts.



Farmer cross-visits are useful for inspiring new groups but need to be carefully planned. Increase the potential for farmer-to-farmer dialogue by getting members of an existing farmer trainer group at the host site to take part.



Nelson Tomonglay, LFPI Northern Mindanao Landcare Facilitator (far right), helps Claveria farmer trainers host a cross-visit of farmers and LGU officials from Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental.

Step 7

Implement landcare group activities

Replanting forests to secure water and livelihoods in Agusan del Sur

With deforestation increasing erosion and run-off, the Bayugan Water District in Agusan del Sur was concerned about the quantity and quality of its future water supply.

‘We began to consider the options of bringing water in or rebuilding our forests’, says Arnulfo Torres, the president of the water district at the time. ‘We decided to plant trees and we got seedlings from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the government.’

CRS introduced Arnulfo to landcare and before long they invited the Bayugan farmers to visit Lantapan and Claveria to see landcare as practised.

‘When the farmers came home, they were very interested. They were able to see the benefits of using landcare technologies and that’s when landcare started in this area’, says Arnulfo.

The farmers’ landcare activities earned them an extra P3 million from the Philippines–Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) to help their efforts to improve their livelihoods.

‘While we were rebuilding the forest, the farmers needed to look to alternatives for their livelihoods’, says Arnulfo. ‘Our reforestation includes fruit trees, and the PACAP money is helping farmers earn income from vegetables and flowers.’

The farmers now use contour ploughing to minimise soil erosion and they make and sell their own chemicals and fertilisers—practices

brought to the region through landcare training. They have formed a landcare group with more than 30 members who meet monthly.

Arnulfo believes landcare brings a new ethic to Philippine farming practices. ‘With present practices of farming, you slash, burn, plant, harvest, then transfer to another area and do it again. With landcare, we see something new. Landcare is the care of the land and the care of the lives of the people.’

He is also hopeful that one day farmers and landcare groups will be self-sufficient. But he says that in the early days of landcare they still need support.

‘My main concern is we need to keep educating people to spread landcare. The farmers not yet involved need to be able to see what is happening with landcare. They don’t know the alternatives to cutting down trees and, unless they stop, everything will die.’



Arnulfo Torres, former president of the Bayugan Water District in Agusan del Sur, believes cross-visits are important for showing farmers the benefits of landcare technologies.

Delivering on-farm training

- Training should be based on the results of an analysis of farmers' training needs. Do this analysis as part of the first planning meeting with the farmers.
- Choose the farm that is most appropriate for the technology that is to be demonstrated and practised. Get the farmers involved in making the decision.
- A good training day will include:
 - a brief overview of the technology to be demonstrated and practised, and the reason why the technology is important and relevant to the farmers
 - a practical demonstration of the technology by the host farmer, and their testimonial as to why the technology is important
 - hands-on practice by each farmer attending
 - a final demonstration by the host farmer to clarify any issues and to field questions by the farmers on things they noticed during their hands-on practice
 - a group analysis of how the farmers intend to apply what they have learned, which can be used as part of the evaluation of the training day.
- Try to get one of the partner agencies to provide refreshments and lunch. Farmers appreciate the hospitality as well as the social interaction that occurs over a meal.
- Try to choose one topic for each training day rather than a 'basket' of topics.
- Always evaluate a training day so that improvements can be made to future training days. This can be as simple as asking some of the farmers for their feedback at the end of the day, or you might want to do a more thorough pre- and post-training day analysis of what farmers were seeking, what they found and what they then put into practice. You can only improve future training days by carefully analysing the content, the process and the impacts.



Farmer trainer Leo Zambrano from Lantapan, Bukidnon, demonstrates nursery production techniques to landcare group members.

Step 7

Implement landcare group activities



Zacarias Polinaria provides his farm in the San Isidro municipality of Bohol as a learning site for other farmers.

Establishing a learning site

- Choose a farm that is representative of farms in the area, and that farmers can relate to on a practical and economic basis. Heavily subsidised farms or those of well-off farmers are not generally appropriate. Choose a farm where the farmer has done the changes largely on their own.
- Provide special support to the owners of learning sites to recognise their important role and to maintain a healthy relationship. Give them first preference on any higher-level training opportunities, make sure they are first to receive a share of any material inputs, and ask them for ongoing specialist feedback on the development of the landcare program. Always acknowledge their role during demonstrations and farmer training sessions and publicise their role to LGU officials and partner agencies.

Implementing livelihood and income-generating activities

- Keep a balance between activities targeted at conservation farming and those targeted at improving economic livelihoods. When farmers can see that all activities are part of a larger long-term strategy to improve their future, they will participate more readily in all activities.
- Where appropriate, look at starting some income-generating activities for the group. Be aware that formal policies may be needed for managing income and distributing benefits.



Implement landcare group activities

Step 7

Diversify, diversify, diversify!

'I spent many sleepless nights worrying about the seeds I had sown and the fertilisers I had applied being washed away. I used to grow corn; and when there was an oversupply, I either sold my product at a very low price or I didn't sell it at all. Diversifying my crops to include vegetables, and using soil and water conservation practices like contour farming, has been the best decision of my life. I get a daily income at competitive prices, plus I preserve the soil for the next generation.'

Orlando T. Berdin, member of Ned Landcare Association, South Cotabato

'Being a member of landcare has really helped me and my husband to improve our main source of living, which is farming. Adopting a diversified system of farming has increased our income and strengthened our relationship as husband and wife, because we work together in planting diverse vegetable crops on our farm. It has also developed our sales skills since we now know how to sell our produce. Landcare will remain in our hearts and we will continue to practise and share it with others.'

Daisy Barret, Secretary of Ned Landcare Association, South Cotabato

'Incorporating vegetables in the alleys of my contour farm supports the education for my 10 children. Also, they rarely get sick and are very healthy, thanks to the vegetables we grow and which have become part of our daily diet.'

John Villanueva, President of Ned Landcare Association, South Cotabato



John Villanueva (right) visits the farm of a Ned Landcare group member.

Step 7

Implement landcare group activities



School children ham it up with landcare facilitators during the Ned Landcare Association Christmas Party.

Implementing social activities

As well as planning activities to improve livelihoods, the farmers should plan activities to improve social relationships within the group and the local community.

Be inventive! Examples of social activities are:

- an annual landcare festival to honour and celebrate successes
- a competition to find the best landcare adopter
- an annual competition to elect a Mr and Mrs Landcare
- a contest for a landcare song or slogan.

Social activities help to increase the community's acceptance of landcare and build the profile of landcare within the broader community.

Communicating with farmers in the field

- Good quality information, extension and communication materials can assist farmer learning. Use them to complement cross-visits and on-farm training sessions rather than as stand-alone items.
- Laminated information flipcharts are useful for on-farm training as they can visually summarise and reinforce key points, are easy to erect in the field and are weather-proof.
- Make sure flipcharts, slides and any other presentation materials used are highly visual with mostly pictures, diagrams and cartoons, and relatively few words.
- Use local dialects and keep the format simple.



Pre-prepared flipcharts can be useful for reinforcing key points during field activities.

Summary – How to get landcare started

The key points to take away from this section are as follows:

1. Identify a suitable target site and farmer group. It's best if the farmers share a common problem; are focused on farming; are in a politically stable area, supported by a committed and competent agency; are already connected; and have access to training and facilitation resources.
2. Get to know the history and socioeconomic nature of the local area by talking to as many farmers and others as possible.
3. Gain agreement and support from government and non-government stakeholders for your landcare proposals and plans.
4. Contact farmer leaders to arrange a process for engaging farmers in landcare activities and groups.
5. Orientate farmers to the landcare program and form landcare groups; be guided by the advice of the farmer leaders.
6. Identify and plan landcare group activities based on the farmers' needs; consider cross-visits, on-farm training days and learning sites.
7. Implement agreed landcare group activities—and don't forget to keep a balance between activities targeted at conservation and those at improving livelihoods.



