

Promote collaboration in European ARD
to strengthen Agricultural Research for the world's poor



Deliverable 3.3

Development of the European platform in support of transnational activities in ARD

“... Jointly plan, monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of joint and transnational activities and programmes”

A contribution of ZADI / ISICAD
February 2007

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I. Background

This paper was written to propose the structure of an information platform facilitating the launch of joint and transnational research activities. This platform is meant to support the workflow to plan, organise and monitor envisaged joint or transnational research activities in ARD. The extract from the ERA-ARD project proposal (box below) describes the frame of this activity.

This paper is thought to be the basis for discussion and addresses ERA-ARD network members, Programme Managers and Experts. The proposed concept gives an introduction to a set of steps, which shall lead to the creation of consortia of programme managers and in a further phase to the creation of consortia of scientists.

In the following paragraphs, we will describe the different steps of the workflow, the actors involved and the activities to be conducted. As the proposed platform will be designed to facilitate and structure communication, the activities primarily require an information output. The structure of this information output was set up in tables. Parts of the tables were filled out with *examples*, which of course reflect some of the ideas of the writers, but are also meant to visualise and illustrate our ideas.

The proposed workflow corresponds to a programme-management-cycle. It is proposed that the activities will be initiated and organised by a board, referred to as board or ARD-board.

At the end of each paragraph you will find a box and you will be asked for: “*Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept*”. *We would be very please to receive you comments.*

Thank you very much.

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Extract from the ERA-ARD Proposal:

Task 3.2: Design of common or compatible methodologies for ARD planning, monitoring

Task:

Each Consortium member

will identify a national specialist in research planning, monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment. These experts will form a Task Force which will work under the supervision of the Swiss Task Manager. This Task Force will physically meet twice (a launching and a closing meeting) in Switzerland and, in between, will work through electronic consultations. As the result of their work, a set of tools which can be used by all or most of the partners will be elaborated.

The preliminary report of the Task Force will be presented by the Swiss Task Manager to the Steering Committee for discussion and endorsement. After a consensus is reached on a common set of tools, the Task Force will prepare practical guidelines for wider distribution.

To support and facilitate the activities of the Task Force and a sustainable use of its results, the **German partner** will develop an **additional module** on EARD-InfoSys+ that will allow decentralised information management by the participants to *jointly plan, monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of joint and transnational activities and programmes*.

(Task Manager: CH)

II. Introduction

The following concept for a platform to support European mechanisms for transnational activities in ARD is based on the results of the different tasks and discussions. The concept is the result of an iterative process and includes feed-back from several discussions:

- Presentation of Version 1 at the ERA-ARD meeting / Zurich September 2006
- Verification of the revised concept at the BMELV / Berlin January 2007
- Verification of the revised concept at FARA / Accra January 2007
- Presentation and verification of the revised concept at Task 3.1 1st Expert meeting / Vienna January 2007.
- Special ERA-ARD meeting in Maribor to further develop the model as an input to task 3.1, 3.2.
- Intensive E-discussions with AU, SI, CH, F and DK and with Programme managers in DE to review the model prior to the ERA-ARD MTM / Florence March 2007

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III. The steps of the coordinating mechanisms

Actors to be involved are:

ARD-BOARD
EXPERTS
PROGRAMME MANAGERS
INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS (NORTH AND SOUTH)

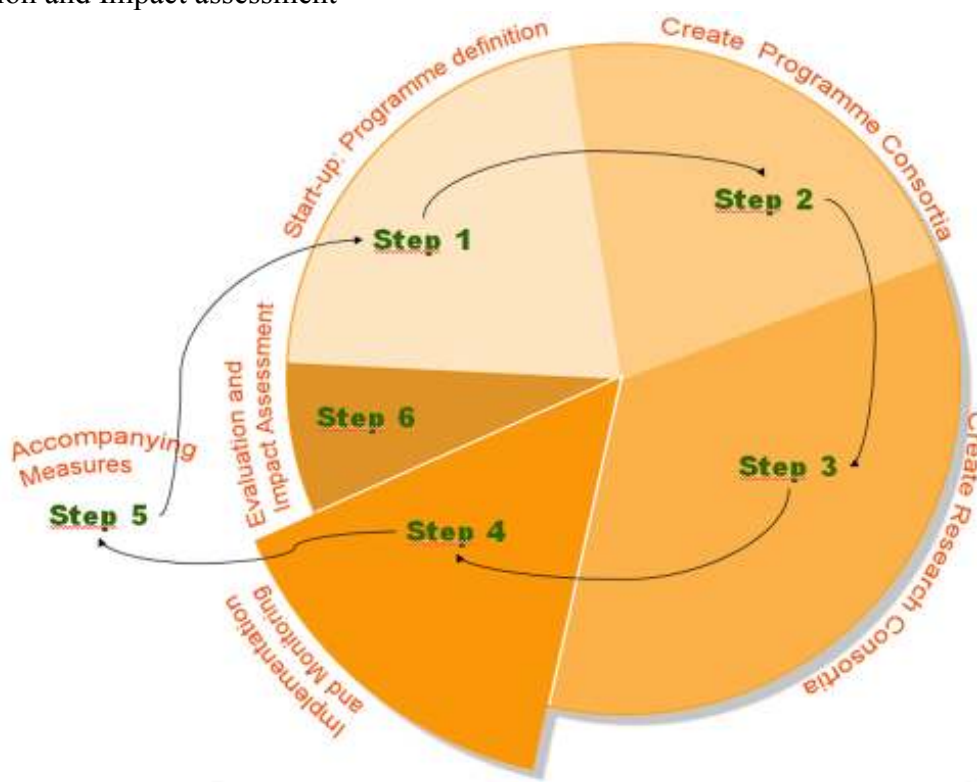
The coordinating mechanisms are subdivided into two very distinct sets of activities:

Set 1: Preparatory activities

- Nomination of Board
- Publication of guiding principles
- Formulation of the ERA-ARD log frame for MDG

Set 2 Programme cycle management activities:

1. Start-up: Programme definition
2. Create Programme Consortia
3. Create Research Consortia
4. Project Implementation and Monitoring
5. Communication of results to stakeholder (e.g. RIU activities)
6. Evaluation and Impact assessment



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IV. Preparatory activities

Nomination of Board

Purpose:

In the frame of the ERA-ARD project the board is composed by the consortium members (SC). For reasons of sustainability a mechanisms should be defined to assure the establishment of a board for the post project era.

Actor:

ERA-ARD board: During the ERA-ARD project this equals the ERA-ARD consortium members / steering committee.

After the ERA-ARD project (>2009): to be discussed

Information output:

List of ERA-ARD consortium / board members

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Not applicable

Date of completion:

April 2005

Publication of guiding principles

Purpose:

Guiding principles should facilitate decision making for critical issues that arise during programme and project cycle management activities.

Actors:

ERA-ARD board with support from task 2.2 and 3.2.

Information output:

The guiding principles should consider the following aspects:

- ARD Definition
- Relevance for MDG
- Partnership principles
- Develop standards and mechanisms for Information Exchange between Partners and with stakeholders
- Relevance for ERA-net objectives
- Priority setting procedures
- Constraints addressed by the survey

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Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Most information is available in the documents provided by task 1.1, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and in especially the guidelines that were published by task 3.2.

Date of completion:

End of March 2007

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

Formulation of the ERA-ARD log frame

Purpose:

Positioning of ERA-ARD and provide a basis for M&E of the EU coordinating mechanisms according to ERA-ARD general objectives.

Actors:

ERA-ARD Board, task 2.3, 2.4 and 3.3

Information output:

Aim	Objectives	Outputs	Activities	Political / Development Indicators	Risks and assumptions
e.g. Contribute to MDGs and increase returns for investment into ARD	e.g. Excellence of EU in ARD	e.g. Less duplication Complementarities between projects Specialisation of research organisations	e.g. Manage Programme cycle management Activity 4 to 16	e.g. Share of EU in scientific publications	
			e.g. Advocacy	e.g. ARD budget	
	e.g. Increase Investments into ARD		e.g. Provide a Information system for joint M&E and impact assessment	e.g. Popularity of the EU platform	

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	e.g. Food security and poverty reduction	e.g. Proven transfer of research results		e.g. Income of farmers	
				e.g. Nutritional status in DC	
				e.g. Life expectancy	

(Please note that the only purpose of the contents of this and the all subsequent table is, to specify the type of Information output in order to facilitate the understanding of the concept. Valid content has to be provided once the concept is finalised and adopted.)

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Two month. Only once.

Date of completion:

End of March 2007.

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

V. Programme and Project Cycle management

ALL DECISIONS DURING SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITIES MUST CONSIDER THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND THE ERA-ARD LOG FRAME

Start-up activities: Programme definition

1. Needs assessment

Purpose:

Identify research gaps by systematically analyse existing need studies.

Actors:

ERA-ARD board; Task 2.1.

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Information output:

A clear definition of ARD is prerequisite for the compilation of a high quality table.

Title of the study	Author	Short description	ARD Themes	Year	Organisation.	Status of orga	Method	Geo-focus	Eco-focus	Justification Relevance for ERA-ARD
REGIONAL SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS Land and water management in the SADC region	C. Nhira & A. Mapiki (editors)	Conservation Farming, conservation tillage, soil erosion control	soil conservation soil fertility soil chemico-physical properties	2004	SADC with support of EDF (European development fund)	Public	National experts consultation	SADC region	all	Summarising earlier submissions from the Regional Steering Committee and the submissions from all Member States, save for two (Tanzania and Namibia), Research and training will focus, but not exclusively, on the issues in the Table below, whose frequency analysis and subsequent ranking took cognizance of Member States aspirations.
		Irrigation and drainage methods/management technologies	irrigation drainage water management							
		Water harvesting, conservation technologies	water conservation water management							
		Integrated soil fertility management, fertility evaluation	soil conservation soil fertility soil chemico-physical properties							
		Soil conditioners for crop yield enhancement (manures, lime, slugs)	cropping/cultivation systems							
		Land & Water conservation techniques under drought conditions	soil conservation water conservation							
		Integrated natural resource planning, management and conservation	Land-use & management environmental policies							

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

This is no more relevant for ERA-ARD since the three sub-programmes are defined. However studies, which highlight research needs should be continuously collected and evaluated.

Date of completion:

Permanent

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2. Define priority themes and expert groups

a. Priority setting

Purpose:

Select themes on which ARD should focus of transnational activities in order to achieve high returns for investments in ARD.

Actors:

ERA-ARD Board; Task 2.1

Information output:

Priority themes	Assessment of European expertise and capacity	Assessment of potential impact on ERA-ARD aim	Assess contribution of other partners of development outside Europe
Food Safety			
Capacity Development			
Food & Energy			

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

No more relevant for ERA-ARD but should be reviewed every 3 years.

Date of completion:

October 2006

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

b. Call for Experts

Purpose:

Identify experts who could contribute to the further planning, monitoring and impact assessments for a specific priority theme.

Actors:

ERA-ARD Board; Task 3.1

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Information output:

List of experts

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

One month. Every second year.

Date of completion:

December 2006

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

c. Nomination of expert groups

Purpose:

Nominate a group of committed experts who will contribute to the further planning, monitoring and impact assessments for a specific priority theme.

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Actors:

ERA-ARD Board; Task 3.1 and 4.2

Information output:

Expert group

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Date of completion:

For Food Safety January 2007

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

3. Elaborate a framework to define thematic scope and dissemination (RIU)

Purpose:

Develop a matrix that will facilitate:

- preparation of coordinated calls for Expressions of Interest (EoI) by programmes and researchers
- identify research gaps
- clustering and match making for programmes and projects
- project planning in the frame of a research consortia
- joint M&E and impact assessment according to the guiding principles and ERA-ARD objectives
- planning for activities related to communication of results to stakeholders

Actors:

Expert group; Task 3.1

Information output:

The matrix will be developed in two stages:

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Thematic framework: FOOD SAFETY

Stage 1: Define scope, impact indicators and interest groups (experts in science)										Stage 2: Work out recommendations for the communication of results			
Aspects relevant for agriculture	Research needs	Disciplines	Geo-focus	Eco-focus	Ongoing research activities	Impact indicators	Interest groups & Stakeholders	Interests / Stakes	Entry point for communication (e.g. Lobby, networks)	Format	Media	Proposed accompanying measures to put research into use	
e.g. Food safety regulations for global trade	e.g. Food safety regulations lead to a comparative disadvantage for producers in DC	Economy	Africa	all		Trade statistics	Producers in DC	Lack of information might lead to exclusion	Farmers organisations	- conclusions in popular format - guidelines	- mass media - print		
							Policy maker	Avoid conflict	WTO	- position paper	print		
							Commission's defining standards	Awareness	Direct	- conclusions and recommendations	print		
							Traders						



e.g. Food safety regulations of DC for import into DC	e.g. The institutional frame and capacity to allow certification according to int. regulations are insufficient in DC	Economy Micro-biology	Africa	all	ARC expertise in food safety			e.g. Food safety regulations do not consider agricultural production sufficiently							e.g. food safety regulations effect commodity chains and trade in DC												
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e.g. Effect of food safety regulations on diversity of products																				
e.g. Processing technologies																				

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Thematic framework: FOOD AND ENERGY

Stage 1: Define scope, impact indicators and interest groups										Stage 2: Work out recommendations for the communication of results			
Aspects relevant for agriculture	Research needs Formulate research hypothesis	Disciplines	Geo-focus	Eco-focus	Ongoing research activities	Impact indicators	Interest groups & Stakeholders	Interests / Stakes	Entry point for communication (e.g Lobby; networks)	format	media	Proposed accompanying measures to put research into use	
e.g. Competition for food production	e.g. Increased demand for bio-fuel will increase cost for food and have a negative effect on food security	Economy				- Income of biofuel products - Food prices in regions with biofuel production	German government	conflict of goals: renewable energies versus MDGs	lobby	summary of main findings / conclusions Documentation	Position paper Mass media in DE		
	e.g. Income from bio-fuel production reduces poverty	Economy					DC farmers	income from biofuel production versus food security	farmers organisations NGOs				



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e.g. Agronomic aspects of bio-fuel production in DCs	e.g. The genetic potential of sugar cane for bio-fuel production can be increased	e.g. Plant breeding	Humid Tropics and sub-tropics	e.g. genetic potential bio-fuel production	e.g. Sugar cane producers	availability of bio-fuel competition with veg. Oil from DCs				
e.g. Energy efficiency of production systems	e.g. Production systems in DC have a higher energy efficiency	e.g. Ecology Plant production Animal Production		e.g. net energy balance of production systems						
e.g. Effect of energy prices on production systems in DC	e.g. Effect of prices on the commodity chain of cassava	e.g. Increased energy prices induce decentralisation of cassava processing		e.g. distribution of land ownership e.g. land use						

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e.g. Contribution of bio-fuel to energy needs in DC		Economy Plan production										
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Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Three months every second years. Meeting at start, electronic discussion and meeting at the end of this step.

Date of completion:

April 2007

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

Create Programme Consortia

4. Call for Expressions of Interest (Eol) by programme managers

Purpose:

Evaluate willingness of donors and programme managers to invest into research for a specific theme, aspect and research hypothesis as defined in the framework. This might include donors who are exclusively interested to fund accompanying measures to facilitate “Research into Use” (RUI) activities.

Actors:

ERA-ARD Board and Expert group; Task 3.1 and 4.2

Information output:

Publication of call. Request to donors and programme managers to indicate priorities in the matrix.

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Date of completion:

June 2007

5. Submission of Eol

Purpose:

Evaluate donor preferences for investment. Mutual information of programme managers and donors prior to the creation of programme consortia.

Actors:

Programme managers; Task 4.2

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Information output:

Aspects relevant for agriculture	Research hypothesis	Programme / Donor	Research	Capacity development	Infrastructure	Equipment	Geo-focus	Eco-focus	Eligibility
e.g. Food safety regulations for global trade	e.g. Food safety regulations lead to a comparative disadvantage for producers in DC	e.g. BMZ	1000	500		200	SSA	all	CGIAR FARA Research orgs. in DE
e.g. open	e.g. Open	e.g. DAAD		300			SSA	n.a.	Master & PHD Students

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

One month. Task 4.2

Date of completion:

September 2007

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

6. WS to Create Programme consortia (task 4.2)

Purpose:

Match making among different programmes to avoid duplication, to strengthen complementarities, harmonise procedures, to agree on standards for information exchange and to prepare a coordinated call. Commit programme managers to contribute to transnational activities. Define contribution in quantitative terms.

Actors:

ERA-ARD Board; Task 4.2

Information output:

Programme Consortia agreement and guidelines for coordinated call.

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Date of completion:

October 2007

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Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

Create Research Consortia

7. Coordinated calls for EoI to researchers

Purpose:

Call for EoI from researchers in EU and DCs.

Actors:

Programme managers; Task 4.2

Information output:

Guidelines for coordinated call

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Every second year two months.

Date of completion:

December 2007

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

8. Submission of EoI by researchers in EU and DCs

Purpose:

Evaluate potential contribution of researchers. EoI can be submitted by individuals and groups. EoI must be addressed to a programme for which the researcher is eligible.

Actors:

Researchers in DCs and in the EU

Information output:

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					Required Resources						
Addressed Sub-theme	Addressed research hypothesis	Applicant Research organisation	Addressed funding programme	Description of activities (research, CD and communication)	Re-search	Capacity development (RIU)	Infra-structure	Equip-ment	Geo-focus	Eco-focus	Evidence of Excellence
e.g. Food safety regulations for global trade	e.g. Food safety regulations lead to a comparative disadvantage for producers in DC	IITA	BEAF	Commodity chain analysis for Maize	100	50	0	60	West and Central Africa	all	CGIAR

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Two months every second year.

Date of completion:

February 2008

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

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9. Clustering and Selection of EoI according to thematic framework

Purpose:

Select EoI according to the rules of individual programmes and clustering of EoI according to the matrix of the thematic framework.

Actors:

Programme managers and experts; Task 4.2

Information output:

Recommendation for project framework.

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

One month every second year

Date of completion:

April 2008

10. WS to create research consortia

Purpose:

- Work out project framework
- Nominate coordinator
- Create Research consortia
- Define information exchange and mechanisms between partners
- Define modalities for communication with stakeholders (e.g. RIU).

Actors:

Researchers with support of expert group; task 4.2

Information output:

Project framework

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Additional funds from involved programmes

Date of completion:

June 2008

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

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11. Work out project proposals

Purpose:

Apply for funding of sub-projects by individual programmes in the context of a project framework.

Actors:

Researchers

Information output:

Project proposals

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Two months every second year.

Date of completion:

September 2008

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

12. Approval of project proposals

Purpose:

Evaluate and approve project proposals.

Actors:

Programme managers

Information output:

List of approved projects

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

One Month every second year

Date of completion:

October 2008

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

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Implementation and monitoring

13. Research and Capacity Development

Purpose:

Carry out research activities including capacity development and RUI activities as specified in planning documents.

Actors:

Researchers and managers of research projects involved. (In case the size of the programme makes it necessary, the programme management unit).

Information output:

Project Progress Reports, eventually programme Progress Report

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Average project duration 3 years

Date of completion:

Start early 2009

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

14. Communication of results

Purpose:

Assure efficient and effective communication of research results to various stakeholders and interest groups

Actors:

Researchers; Board

Information output:

Information products that are adapted to the needs of stakeholders as defined in the thematic framework

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

To be specified in project proposals

Date of completion:

To be specified in project proposals

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Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

15. Monitoring

Purpose:

Monitor progress in order to create a basis for reacting to unexpected situations and for adapting project implementation.

Actors:

Researchers, project management, eventually programme management unit

Information output:

Specific monitoring tools, progress reports (It has been proposed to use a system which allows for geo-referenced data collection, analysis and display of results. To be discussed).

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

To be specified in project proposals

Date of completion:

To be specified in project proposals

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

Accompanying measures

16. Transfer of research results

Purpose:

Assure efficient and effective transfer of research results to stakeholders (Research into Use).

Actors:

Researchers, extension agencies, diverse partners of development

Information output:

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Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Date of completion:

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

17. Advocacy

Purpose:

Increase public awareness and investments into ARD. Positioning of European ARD.

Actors:

ERA-ARD board; Task 2.3, 2.4, 3.3, WP5

Information output:

Reports of the coordinating mechanism and position papers

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Task 2.3, 2.4 and 3.3

Date of completion:

Ongoing

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

Evaluation and Impact assessment

18. Evaluation

Purpose:

To evaluate relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the programme during and at the end of the programme (individual projects will normally be evaluated at the end of the project only). Mid-term and final evaluation should also give preliminary assessments of impacts.

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Actors:

External consultants for external evaluations, peers for peer-reviews, research staff for self-evaluations, stakeholders; Task 4.3

Information output:

TOR for evaluations, evaluation reports, log-frame and indicators of the programme and projects concerned.

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Date of completion:

Your suggestion for the improvement for the concept

19. Impact Assessment

Purpose:

To assess the impact of the programme (due to the high cost involved, impact assessments for individual projects would normally not be conducted).

Actors:

Expert group, specialized expertise on impact assessment, programme management, project management, stakeholders; Task 4.3

Information output:

Baseline survey, project and programme monitoring reports, mid-term and final evaluation reports end-of-programme assessment report

Required resources, duration and periodicity:

Date of completion:

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