

Chapter 9

Designing FMNR projects

Summary: Designing FMNR projects

- FMNR projects should be catalysts for ongoing, self-replicating FMNR movements. As such, building the capacity of the community and partners to continue to support FMNR beyond the project period is key.
- Projects should focus on the community's goals and needs, and should avoid top-down approaches of imposing a solution, or providing inputs or external incentives for communities to accept the project.
- Because FMNR contributes to a number of important global priorities, and a wide range of programming, there are several ways to secure financial support for projects.

Resources

- The [Online FMNR Training Course](#) is designed to build the capacity of staff to design and support FMNR projects. The course is currently only available for World Vision staff. Please check the FMNR Hub website for updates.
- [Annex 7](#) contains examples of FMNR logframes.
- [Workshop facilitator guidelines](#)

Now we've discussed everything that goes into making FMNR successful, let's briefly cover key FMNR-specific aspects of formal project design. In this section, we won't cover general project design principles, but instead will focus on principles of successful FMNR projects – from the initial scoping of an FMNR concept to planning for the implementation of a funded project.

The FMNR project approach described in [Chapter 2](#) provides a general framework for any FMNR project. Complementary interventions, such as tree planting, market development, agricultural practices, and soil and water conservation practices, can also be incorporated into the project design where appropriate.

Community ownership of the process and results is foundational to FMNR, as the bulk of the work and investment of time and resources is done by the community and individuals practising it. Following inception, the project should not be the primary motivating force in the adoption of FMNR. Once FMNR is being used in an area, practitioners should teach others how to practise it. Include activities that support the promotion, advocacy and spread of FMNR at a local and national level where possible.

FMNR projects should catalyse self-replicating FMNR movements. To do this, a project should not prescribe 'one right way' to do FMNR; rather, it should engage the community, and build upon the community's own goals and efforts, to make changes. Projects should aim to adhere to as many of the FMNR principles as possible.

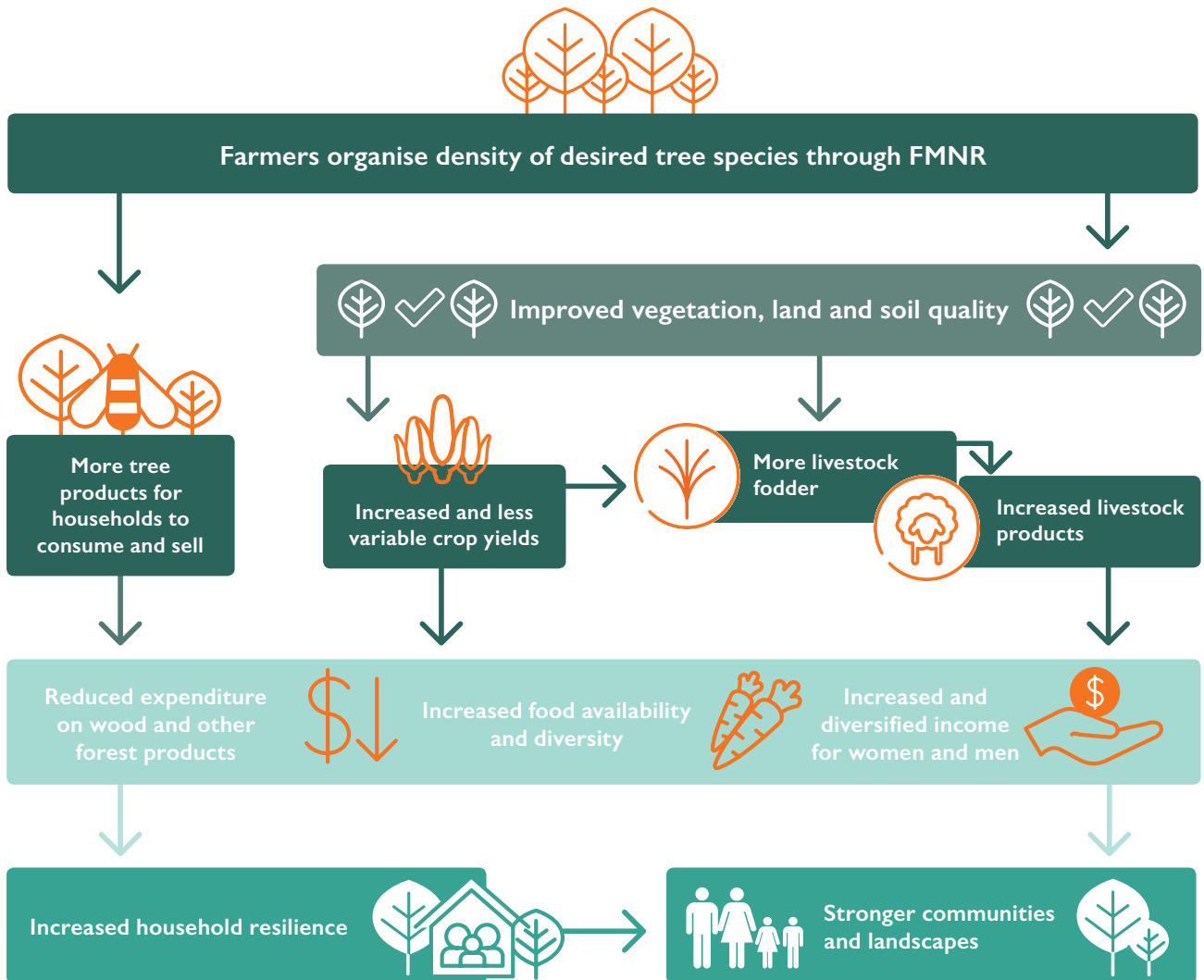
Even though a project must be set up as such – with a defined start and end date, budget, activity plan, indicators and targets – it's important never to lose sight of the fact that one of your major objectives should be to create an enabling environment for the birth of an FMNR movement. This is something that does not have a well-defined start and end point, is not dependent on external resourcing, and does not have set targets or geographic limits.

Theory of change

A project theory of change describes how you expect changes to occur as a result of your activities, and what outcomes and impacts are expected to result. Theory of change diagrams or descriptions are useful for communicating and explaining your project to the project team and other stakeholders, as well as for guiding the monitoring and evaluation of expected outcomes and impacts.

The FMNR theory of change describes the physical, social and environmental outcomes of FMNR. This theory of change may be useful when explaining FMNR to other stakeholders, or as a starting point for defining your project's own theory of change. As FMNR is usually one of a number of activities in a project, your own theory of change may also include other causal pathways or outcome chains.

Figure 1 Simplified theory of change for FMNR. Source: C. Kabore pers. comm. (2015).



Concept notes

A concept note can be a very useful tool for focusing and clarifying your thinking about a new project. It provides a clear and simple outline of the proposed project for further development, as well as for creating the full project proposal, and can be easily translated into other brief marketing and informational material. Concept notes can also help introduce the project to potential partners and other stakeholders, and are useful when proposing FMNR as an innovation to existing projects where environmental or livelihood degradation has been identified as a fundamental issue to be addressed.

Preparing a concept note for FMNR does not differ significantly from other types of programming. What is different with FMNR is that, due to its versatility and inclusion of both environmental and social components, FMNR may appeal to a wider variety of donors than more specific interventions.

Potential FMNR donors include those focused on:

- development
- environment
- natural resource management
- agriculture
- disaster risk reduction
- climate change adaptation and mitigation
- building social capital
- indigenous rights and empowerment
- women's rights and empowerment
- minority group rights and empowerment
- resilience
- sustainable livelihoods
- youth livelihoods
- economic development and income generation
- water, sanitation and hygiene
- conflict reduction
- numerous other fields affected by the economic capacity of communities, such as education and healthcare

The concept note will need to be tailored to the focus of the donor, describing the whole process of FMNR while highlighting the activities and outcomes most directly relevant to donor interest.

Simple ways to make your concept note effective

- Concept notes are very brief, so don't include lots of detail, but make sure that what you do include is clear, confident and well stated.
- Make it positive. You want to make a difference, so make sure your reader can see what can be achieved in what you submit. Describe your vision for the future!
- Your concept note should fit the donor. Do some research if you don't know the donor, and tailor your concept note to their interests and areas of focus.
- Make sure your concept note is easy for an outsider to understand – avoid jargon and acronyms unless you define them. Simple, clear language and strong, clearly described ideas make friends of busy readers!
- Always check your final document to make sure it is error free and easy to read – make sure the text is large enough and cleanly spaced, and all information is correct.

Logframes

Logframes are now widely accepted means of organising project information and are required by many donors. Logframes include project activities, timelines, the targets to be achieved, who will be involved and how this will be tracked. A logframe is a simple way of summarising a project plan.

Because FMNR projects vary enormously – from a community group starting FMNR with no outside funding, to a large-scale carbon sequestration project supported by a consortium of NGOs – there is no one right way to build an FMNR logframe. Nor is there one standard template; often a donor will require you to work with a specific logframe template. However, the basic information you will need to design a logframe for any of these projects or donors is similar. This chapter will not cover all possible template formats, but focus on the basic logic of FMNR.

FMNR project logic

The underlying logic of FMNR is:

IF we **encourage** the systematic regrowth of existing trees or self-sown seeds,
and manage the resulting mature trees in a way that suits the practitioner's individual needs,
according to a set of bylaws and governance structures agreed by all stakeholders and implemented communally,
and working with leaders and government to ensure a policy and law enforcement environment in which individuals can profit from their work,

THEN

Communities can restore the productivity of their natural resources and take control of their livelihoods to progress out of vulnerability and poverty.

FMNR is therefore promoted by supporting the community's own efforts and empowerment rather than by a top-down mechanism of imposing a solution, or providing inputs or external incentives for communities to accept the project. Empowered and enabled communities then reach out to others and teach them the skills they have learned.

FMNR logframe considerations

A key priority in FMNR is to link all actions and evaluation to the conditions and problems identified by the community. It is important that the logic of your project clearly demonstrates this, and ensures that, throughout the life of the project, the community is able to exercise their ownership over the direction of their work and resources.

Because FMNR always requires both environmental and social components to succeed, the project logframe needs to appropriately identify and explain all components.

Social equity is also a priority for FMNR, so indicators should be disaggregated by sex and, where relevant, possibly by ethnic, religious or vocational group as well. FMNR objectives, activities and indicators should also track the degree to which women and other minority or vulnerable groups hold positions of power in the FMNR work.

A sample logframe can be found in [Annex 7](#) showing how FMNR project goals, outcomes and activities can be structured. The next chapter, on [monitoring and evaluation of FMNR](#), will go into more detail about indicators and how different types of indicator may be useful for different projects, so be sure to review that section as well.

Budgeting

It is quite possible for a community to practise FMNR with no funding at all, and without the knowledge or intervention of government or NGOs – this is exactly how the people of Niger reforested some six million hectares!

However, to spread FMNR quickly involves more cost, as this requires building awareness and movements in countries and regions where it is not known. The cost will vary widely, depending on the approach and the scale of the project. There is no typical FMNR project size.

An FMNR budget might be as little as US\$10,000-\$20,000 per year, for such costs as training, exchange visits and follow-up. On the other hand, a budget of \$100,000-\$300,000 per year may be needed for a project involving advocacy, district-wide promotion and follow-up, assistance with cooperative formation, registration and policy engagement, etc. If other components are involved, such as improved agricultural methods, market chain development and livestock rearing, costs will increase accordingly.

The major costs of FMNR promotion include:

- staff salaries for promotion, workshops, training, field visits and follow-up, facilitation or establishment of organisational structures, bylaw creation and stakeholder buy-in;
- transport;
- exchange visits and residential training events;
- monitoring and evaluation; and
- advocacy for favourable policy environment. (Good use of funds will always involve an advocacy component so that favourable policy environments, which encourage individuals and communities to sustainably manage their natural resources, are created.)

At the most basic level, FMNR projects can be implemented within existing budgets through government extension or development program staff with FMNR training, or via partnerships with government agriculture, environment or forestry officers and community-elected FMNR promoters. Complex or large-scale projects, especially those requiring rigorous evaluation, such as carbon projects, would require dedicated staff with extensive FMNR experience and additional technical experts at intervals throughout the project life. If the project includes work at a national level to influence policy, then advocacy staff or technical input may also be needed.

Keeping the end in sight

The aim of an FMNR intervention is for communities to own the entire process of managing their natural resources, so field staff should focus on building capacity of community leaders who will become the main promoters of FMNR in the area. This means that the costs of an FMNR project should not be ongoing, but should involve a specific exit plan through which the community is able to take over full responsibility for their well-being and lands.

Staffing

FMNR promotion staff should ideally have a natural resources, agriculture or forestry background. FMNR experience, of course, is preferred; commitment and skill are more important than number of diplomas. The explosive spread of FMNR to date has been largely because of (mostly uneducated) practitioners talking to their neighbours – this shows that the most important assets in promoters are people skills and passion for FMNR.

Staff should be outgoing, friendly, good networkers, encouraging and able to persevere in the face of setbacks. Staff should be enthusiastic about FMNR, understand it in-depth and be genuine in promoting it. Field staff with their own farms should lead by example and practise FMNR extensively themselves.

Whenever possible, staff should be employed long term. Adoption of FMNR takes time, therefore rapport, consistency and commitment of staff are important. To this end, field staff and volunteers should be local.

Training and support

For staff completely new to FMNR, close supervision and support during the first six months will give them a foundation for success. It is recommended that new staff undertake the online FMNR training course. One visit per month by an experienced practitioner or, at the very least, somebody with good experience in rural development is advisable. It is also valuable to have a visit from an external FMNR champion at least once a year for the first three years.

We highly recommend that in-country FMNR staff have an external mentor they can talk to about specific problems. For example, while a technical advisor visits World Vision's FMNR for East Africa project once a year, country project managers consult their peers in neighbouring countries regularly, learning from each other when issues arise and during annual cross-country meetings.

Technical expertise

For most FMNR projects, external technical assistance may only be required for troubleshooting, evaluation and research. Carbon projects, however, will almost certainly require additional external expertise and oversight.



Case study

A day in the life of an FMNR facilitator

Dodoma, the capital of Tanzania, was a woodland and game reserve 80 years ago. Over the past 30 years, deforestation has accelerated to the point where the Dodoma region is now a semi-arid zone where people struggle to eke out a living from previously fertile soils. The main contributor to this deforestation is a combination of poor farming practices and the production of charcoal for urban centres.

Andrew Jones has worked with the Anglican Church in Tanzania to deliver an FMNR training program to 60 villages in the Dodoma region, with Tanzanian friend and FMNR facilitator Nassoro. Here, Andrew shares some of the day-to-day workings of the project.

Each village receives five visits and the cost of the entire program is only US\$3,500 over a 12-month period. I have been providing encouragement and accountability, and contributed to the initial training design. Nassoro has called the program '*Ufufuji wa miti*' which means 'Resurrection of the Trees' in Swahili. The acronym he uses is 'UMI', which means 'life' in the local KiGogo language.

Nassoro heads out on his motorbike for village visits three-to-four days per week. His methodology is to dig the hole of felt need on his first visit to the village. Usually an older person is selected (to start the discussion) from the participant group. We find they remember better times when the rivers ran all year round; when wild animals lived nearby, trees were abundant, crops were more successful; and when they used to forage for forest fruit. Following this sobering remembrance, Nassoro will explain five key functions of trees in the environment and then explain the good news: that an existing rootstock of felled trees can be regenerated. A single laminated page of notes and pictures written in Swahili is circulated, and villagers are challenged to train those who are not present at Nassoro's workshop in FMNR. He finishes his first visit by pruning a number of trees with his audience, making sure that several villagers have a go, before he leaves them with their homework of pruning 10 trees each for 10 days.

Nassoro's subsequent visits are to provide encouragement and accountability, as well as to provide training for other business opportunities that villagers can exploit, such as raising chickens or pigs for market.

Through our work, we are essentially asking people to stop cutting trees down and making money from charcoal sales to urban markets. In order to gain traction with tree regeneration activities, we need to help them to explore and begin alternative money-making business activities.

So far, Nassoro has visited 30 villages – some of them twice. He has been warmly accepted by most and given a hard time by a few. The challenge, as always, is in the follow-up; and helping villagers to see the relatively quick benefits of tree regeneration in their village environment.



Figure 2 Andrew Jones (left) and Nassoro deliver training on FMNR in Tanzania (2015). Photo: A. Jones



Figure 3 Nassoro demonstrates and then calls a volunteer to prune a tree, Tanzania (2015). Photo: A. Jones

Typical components of an FMNR project

Some of the following activities are often included in projects promoting and supporting the adoption of FMNR. No one project is likely to include all these activities, so make sure that the activities you do include are well designed to meet the specific needs of your project stakeholders.

FMNR capacity building, mentoring and support

- Training of project staff to understand the relationship between environment, agriculture and livelihoods, if FMNR is new to the organisation or office promoting it.
- Capacity building of staff to implement FMNR and to integrate it with other appropriate activities, such as water harvesting, income-generating activities, rotational grazing and value chain development.
- Training of selected staff and community champions to instruct others in FMNR.
- Awareness creation through workshops and exchange visits in communities and with partners.
- Training of community members to practise and contextualise FMNR.
- Facilitation of visits to and from existing FMNR practitioners.
- Training of men and women in the community to understand the link between FMNR and livelihoods.
- Ongoing follow-up, mentoring and troubleshooting of FMNR practices to increase success.

Exchange visits

Ideally, people taking part in exchange visits to other districts or countries already practising FMNR should include:

- project coordinator;
- male and female representatives from the community;
- field staff;
- one or two government counterparts from forestry, environment or agriculture departments; and
- other identified key stakeholders, such as religious leaders.

If space, social norms and budget allow, it may also be beneficial to include members of local media and influential local leaders.

Numbers must be adjusted according to budget and cost. For example, it would be far cheaper to hire a bus and take many observers to a local FMNR site than to fly even a few observers to a distant country.

Community engagement and support activities

- Connecting with or, if necessary, helping to set up governance and support structures, such as FMNR committees, farmers' and women's groups, children's clubs and cooperatives.
- Supporting the inclusive creation, implementation and enforcement of bylaws for natural resource management.
- Facilitating engagement with government and traditional leaders to create or alter policies so community members have the right to sustainably use their resources (trees, land, fodder, water) and benefit from their work.
- Facilitating FMNR action planning at a community, watershed or landscape scale.

Complementary interventions to support or build on FMNR

- Helping to create links to markets, value addition opportunities or alternative livelihood options, such as beekeeping, that increase the profitability of FMNR.
- Providing training in sustainable agriculture practices.
- Encouraging soil and water conservation practices.

Partnerships and scaling-up activities

- Forming a communications strategy.
- Creating a research plan.
- Promoting and advocating for FMNR practices and outcomes that have been achieved by the community.
- Facilitating award programs and recognition of FMNR champions and their achievements.
- Celebrating relevant national days, such as World Environment Day, to raise the profile of FMNR.
- Establishing or supporting national FMNR networks of government, non-government and research organisations.
- Engaging with government forestry, agriculture and environment departments to share their knowledge and experience, but also for them to be exposed to FMNR.
- Partnering with other organisations and groups in the area who are also working on one or more of the community's development priorities.



A note about paying people to practise FMNR

Projects should not pay communities to practise FMNR, nor provide the tools required, or provide any other financial incentives beyond those that FMNR itself produces. The one exception is when FMNR is added to disaster response and recovery programs, such as food-for-work or cash-for-work programs, where communities would not be able to participate otherwise.

It is important that even these incentives are strictly short term, do not detract from the benefits inherent in FMNR practice, and do not create the impression that future FMNR activity should take place on condition of receiving an incentive. Whenever FMNR is linked to incentives, there should be strong messaging around the purpose and duration of the incentive and the value of FMNR. The benefits of FMNR, combined with the depth of mindset change and motivation experienced by practitioners, should be enough to convince communities of its value.

Customising FMNR projects to community circumstances

As we have discussed throughout this manual, each community is unique and, while they will have some similarities, they will have differences too. FMNR will only be effective for a specific community if it is practised in ways that are effective for them.

FMNR projects are customised by, with and for the community through:

- involving all stakeholders;
- making sure that the needs assessment, goals, concerns and environmental conditions are well understood; and
- tailoring project activities and methods of practising FMNR to address these needs, goals, concerns and conditions.

Projects need to be customised to address characteristics such as when:

- the particular status of women and girls is traditionally not equal with that of men, and/or if women have no decision-making roles or control of assets;
- the status of other stakeholder groups in the community is traditionally not equal with that of the more powerful group(s);
- settled and migratory stakeholders use the same land differently, and/or have a history of conflict;
- different land tenure arrangements exist, or communal land is being included in the project;
- better market access is necessary for FMNR products;
- FMNR is already being implemented, along with other contextually relevant activities, especially those supporting economic development – such as village savings and loans groups, watershed management, beekeeping, etc;
- FMNR is a component of emergency assistance programming, such as food-, assets- or cash-for-work; and
- focus in a specific context will address community key needs and priorities such as agricultural or livestock production, fuelwood and timber shortages, flooding and water shortages, etc.