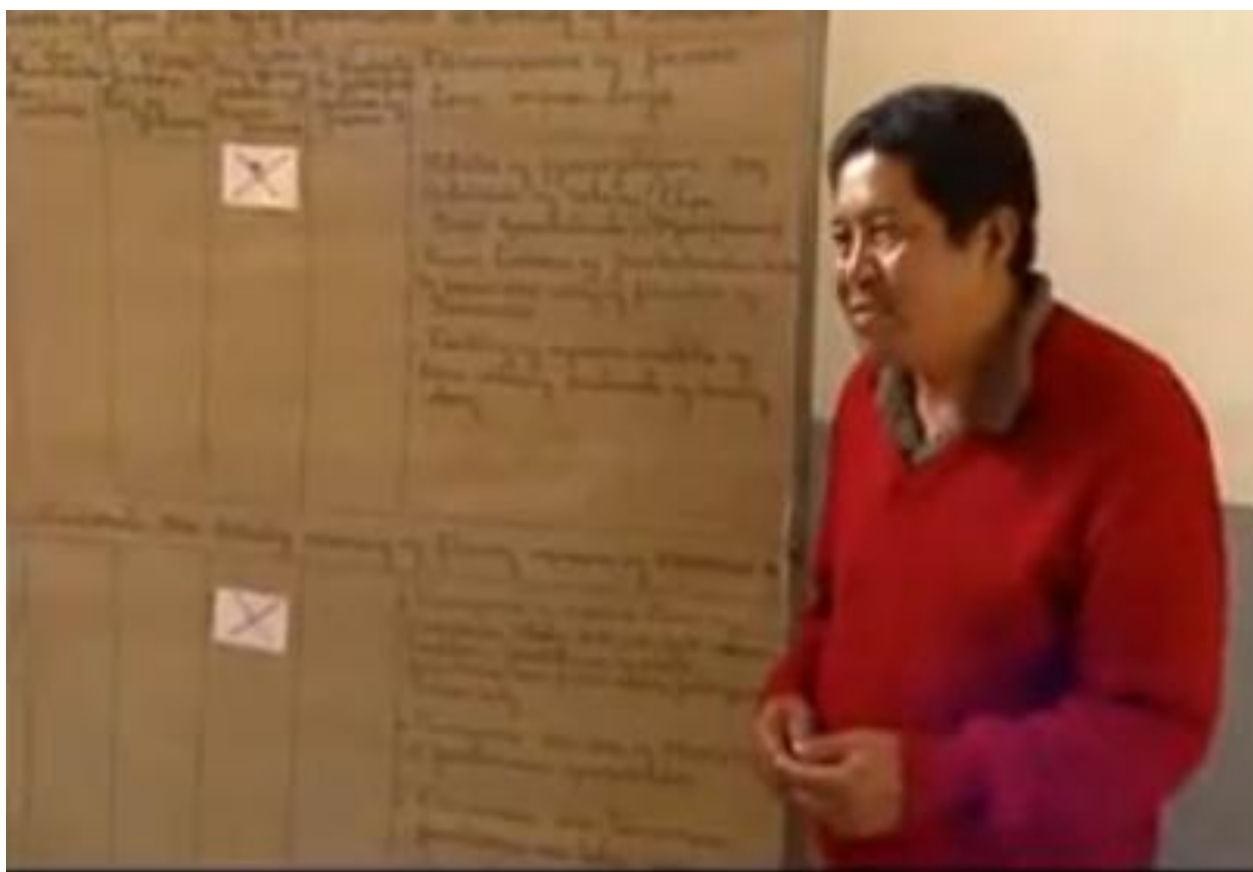

OUTCOME MONITORING SYSTEM

SAHA (Sahan'Asa Hampandrosoana ny Ambanivohitra), Rural Development Programme

Country: Madagascar



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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| OMM | Outcome Mapping Methodology |
| OM | Outcome Measurement |
| SAHA | Rural Development Program / Madagascar |
| SDC | Swiss Development Cooperation |
| YPO | Yearly Plan of Operations |

Key features and learnings

- SAHA has developed and put into practice an almost unique OM methodology, based on a program planning with the outcome mapping tool and subsequently developing an outcome measurement tool that is built on this planning tool.
- To be able to operate the system SAHA has to be active in a network of different partners at various levels and covering its geographical outreach.
- The OM, focusing on a series of changes at partner level, achieves to monitor properly changes made at partners' levels through their own efforts as well as to monitor the support given by SAHA itself.
- It contains a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators and relies strongly on the perception made by the partners themselves, but validated through mirroring; it is a good example of adjusting and breaking down governance indicators to the need of the program and its partners.
- The method needed considerable resources to be developed and applied inside SAHA; it has now the advantage of a mid-term experience (over two phases) in order to see its results.
- It has benefitted from a professional set-up of the system, training of specialists and broad communication to and training of its users
- It gets generally a very positive feed-back from its users (series of partners organizations of SAHA).
- Being focused on outcomes and partners the tool is less instrumental and less developed regarding the follow up of policies at national level.

- The OM has to count to a large extent on the commitment and understanding of its partners to run the system; being quite handy to use it has reasonable chances to be used without program support in the future.
- It can give some inputs to SDC's tool for country monitoring, but it could not be linked with a national system to monitor governance neither make a breakthrough with other donors in the country.
- It has the great merit to have been introduced in a very extensive and systematic way (also in the national language) and makes use of up-to-date communication tools (hard-back guidelines, short-videos, flyers).

Fact Sheet

| Outcome Monitoring System (OMS), SAHA (Madagascar) | |
|---|---|
| Developed by | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Coordination Unit of SAHA, with backstopping support of Helvetas Swiss Inter-cooperation and an international consultant (AGRIDEA, Switzerland) in the frame of the SDC financed rural development program 'SAHA' in Madagascar. |
| Applied in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phase III and IV of SAHA (2006 – 2012) on a large scale in six regions of Madagascar, and around 50 direct partners of the civil society and selected municipalities qualified as intermediary organisations. |
| Purpose | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitoring of changes of (management) capacities, interactions and implementation of activities at the level of the direct partners. 2) Supporting and fostering the empowerment of the direct partners in view of fostering self-responsibility of the population for their social and economical development. 3) Linking actions and visions through participation, learning and exchange; adjusting practice, tools and visions. |
| Methodology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of tools and guidelines and subsequently internal training of responsible and specialised national service providers to implement, document and adjust the cycle of outcome measurement activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Measure periodically (six-monthly) expected outcomes at partners' level (visioning, definition of expected outcomes, measuring according to progress markers, jointly decided adjustments and planning) according to the planned monitoring/evaluation cycle. 2) Periodical self-evaluation of its performance by the partner. 3) (annually) Joint evaluation of the performance of the partners with SAHA. 4) Mirroring by SAHA of the achieved outcomes by the partners and adjustments of support strategies as well as consolidation of the information for SAHA management. 5) Synthesis of information collected as per direct partner by SAHA comprising results given by progress markers, impact on the population and the environment, observed success factors and stumble blocks produced by the context factors. |
| Products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For each of the 46 direct partners: a half yearly monitoring report ▪ A half-yearly synthesis report as per type (5) of direct partners for the SAHA Management and Steering Committee and the Donor according to : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) commonly agreed progress markers; 2) selected information regarding the results at population level; 3) the key factors in the change process; 4) the support given by SAHA to influence the changes; 5) necessary adjustment (strategies) to introduce as per domain of intervention. |
| Dimensions / aspects addressed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to the project and partners' planning and building on a vision statement, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) changes in the (organisational) behaviour of the direct partners regarding the expected outcomes; 2) monitoring of the implementation strategies of SAHA; 3) monitoring of relevant changes(at national and regional level) for SAHA. ▪ Effects on the population (social, economical, environmental) especially regarding poverty alleviation as well as on relevant regional and national development are monitored by a yearly survey. |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building on the expected outcomes as identified by a direct partner, SAHA attributes a series of time defined (short, mid and long-term) and complexity related (easy, not so complicated and difficult) progress markers to the partner. |
| Attribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The attributions gap is taken into consideration and is especially relevant at regional and national level; at the level of the direct partners success factors and stumbling blocks are directly addressed, at the level of the households measuring direct impacts is not practiced. |
| Conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A performing team of specialists to develop and maintain the OMM running. ▪ Specific organisational and methodological capacities of the partners. ▪ At least a mid-term perspective (two phases) and a sequencing of the monitoring and evaluation to measure changes over time. ▪ Active involvement of the partners, openness in the communication, and ▪ Commitment of change agents towards the expected outcomes. ▪ Commitment of SAHA management and steering committee with regard to OMM ▪ Context allows for genuine activities of the civil society. |
| Remarks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The OMM as developed by SAHA is a resource and time intensive monitoring and evaluation process and needed a quite time-consuming introduction. ▪ The detailed methodology and a certain complexity in the practice. ▪ If implemented in a professional way it allows for a high degree of participation, self-evaluation and decision-making of the partners while strengthening significantly their (organisational) capacities and advocacy power. ▪ As an innovative tool at program level, harmonisation and integration in a national system remains a big challenge. |
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Introduction and Background

The project and its main outcomes

SAHA is an SDC funded rural development program in some specific regions of Madagascar, starting in 2000 and aimed to come to an end in 2012. It is implemented by Intercooperation, now HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. The total contribution of SDC to phase IV of the program amounted to 9.8 Mio CHF (2010 – 2012).

As a rural development program in a social context of poverty, SAHA aims at the reduction of poverty by improving the conditions of livelihood in the six rural regions through attributing the lead over their economic and social development to the respective rural population. It supports 46 direct partners of different type and builds strategic alliances with around 100 partners at regional and national level; furthermore it contributes to a policy-dialogue through active membership in various platforms.

SAHA encloses three domains of intervention: local governance, local economic development and the transversal themes vulnerability, gender and HIV/SIDA. SAHA strengthens the capacities of its direct partners through mobilizing their resources and their good local governance, planning and implementation of local development processes, delivering quality services to the rural population with specific attention to vulnerable groups and women, finally by fostering the participation of citizens in local public affairs and strengthening of (civic) leadership.

SAHA focused its interventions in the last two phases on **the intermediary partner level**, by partnering with five specific types of intermediary organizations – from the civil society as well as from the decentralized state structure – (farmers' associations with economic goals, intermediary organizations of the rural civil society, inter-municipal associations, individual municipalities and municipal associations). Indirect cooperation with the private sector, the regional administration and deconcentrated technical ministries was envisaged.

SAHA participates also in (national) policy dialogues and strengthens the communication at the different state and actors' levels and, finally, capitalizes and disseminates its experience and knowledge.

The expected outcomes at the level of the intermediary organizations are: efficient internal organization, good corporate governance, quality service delivery to the members and advocacy to strengthen the frame conditions for development and sustainable management of natural resources.

And for the municipalities and its associations the expected outcomes are: coordinated steering of the local economic development and application of good governance principles in the management of (local) public affairs.

The Outcome Measurement Methodology

SAHA elaborated and uses since its phase III the 'outcome mapping' system as its system for monitoring and evaluation of its interventions, focusing on the measurement of changes at partners' levels, especially their way of observing, acting and exchanging with their social, institutional and natural environment.

An adaptation of the system, especially its procedures, mainly due to the different types of partners that SAHA is working with was needed. The starting point of the method is a definition of the vision, mission, the identification of progress markers, the development of strategies of interventions as well as tools and skills of organizational practice. The method is applied in sequences and in a joint way

with the partners. The focus of the monitoring is laid on the level of progress toward the expected outcomes, practiced in different sequences over time and complemented by context and impact monitoring in a more classical way (reporting, surveys).

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Context monitoring | Not specifically included in the OMM but done on an annual basis. Frames the formulation of changes at institutional, social and environmental level fostered and supported by SAHA in the form of a 'vision' statement |
| Impact monitoring | Based on a specific mission statement SAHA defines and monitors its contributions to achieve parts of the vision by its partners. It is jointly and specifically defined and monitored how SAHA supports its direct partners. |
| Outcome monitoring | Results in terms of changes in the behavior, the relations and actions of (groups of) partners with which SAHA is directly collaborating. SAHA supports changes but the partner (e.g. a municipality) is responsible for achieving the change. |
| Progress monitoring | Repeatedly, progress markers define the progress made in the expected various changes of the direct partners allowing to achieve the expected results; progress markers are defined differently according to the time (short, middle, long term) and complexity (easy, moderate, difficult) and according to the respective domain of intervention. |

SAHA integrates these tools specifically in the strategy of the programme to support the different partners methodologically, capacity-wise and by co-financing in achieving the expected results (measured through the progress markers) at outcome level. This implies progress markers for necessary organizational development in terms of management of activities and the respective organization.

A repeated monitoring of the observed changes is organized by a common evaluation of SAHA and its direct partners on the partners' development. At the end of the phase SAHA conducts a quantitative evaluation of the changes at household level through a random survey at selected households and a specific impact survey in each of the 17 intervention zones.

Application of the Outcome Measurement methodology

Main purpose and link to baseline

The OM methodology was developed at the beginning of phase 3 (2006) by a specialised group of the SAHA team with the support of an external consultant. A continuous internal information flow and adequate decision making by the SAHA management and its steering committee allowed to introduce this methodology and its adaption to the specific SAHA partnerships. This introductory process was quite resource intensive and time consuming, backed by full commitment of the project management. From the beginning the OM methodology focused on developing the capacities of partners on the design and use of the methodology and to develop the methodology jointly. One of the reasons of the introduction was the strategic change to work in the future directly with intermediary partners and to stick to a clear function of facilitator whereas progress towards the goal should be made visible at the partners' level. This reorientation was initiated by an external evaluation.

At the start of phase III the key elements of the methodology, vision and mission statements, expected changes, progress markers, (operational) strategy and necessary organisational steps - were developed with each partner. The partners conducted a quick assessment of the initial situation re-

garding “good” governance of their organisation on which the planning was then built. During the planning process the dimensions of vulnerability and gender and diversity were also highlighted.

The main purpose to introduce and adjust the OM methodology to the SAHA program strategy is rooted in the results of the evaluation of the phase II (2006) and subsequently the changes made in the strategic orientation of SAHA for phase III. SAHA was quite successful in achieving impact at local level at phase II – and this with a considerable outreach; but at the same time SAHA had difficulties to anchor these local results at regional level and its organisations. A strategic choice was made to position SAHA as a programme to support different types of organizations (as mentioned before) and design interventions for change at the intermediary level - and the OMM methodology was identified as the best suited method to plan and monitor the expected outcomes – identified as changes at partner level.

At the beginning of phase III (during the first six months) trainings and specific planning workshops allowed to design the OM system in collaboration with each direct partner. During these initial workshops a kind of ‘baseline’ workshop was organized to identify the current level of capacity of the partner(s) to contribute to local development. Periodically (every six months) a monitoring-evaluation sequence is organised specifically at partner level – based on expected and contractually fixed results (changes at partner’s level) and the monitoring journal. This journal gives the respective information on the changes, the results at grassroots level and the “intervention areas”, as well as the specific successes or threats observed, the support given by SAHA and the necessary adjustments/re-orientations; its results are mirrored by a special SAHA team (regional or topical) and discussed with the partner; at the end of a phase a quantitative evaluation at regional and household level was organized.

The process and actors involved

| | Steps and activities | Who |
|----------|--|--|
| 1 | Getting to know and using the method | |
| 1.1 | Exchange learning through a study visit | SAHA |
| 1.2 | Internal information and training sessions | SAHA team, service providers, int. consultant |
| 1.3 | Adjustments to the local context and design of the tools (according to a real or value chain approach) | SAHA team |
| 1.4 | Elaboration of tool kits (context tool, strategic tool, implementation tool, organizational practice tool) and tailor-made trainings | SAHA team (programme, monitoring), local service providers |
| 2 | Implementation of the OMM | |
| 2.1 | Collection of existing strategic planning elements (partners’ visions); implementation through “pilot” partners | Direct partners, service providers |
| 2.2 | Elaboration of expected effects and progress markers, role repartition and action plan | (Selected) members of partner organisation |
| 2.3. | Negotiation and signature of a common “action” plan | SAHA, direct partner |
| 3 | Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation | |
| 3.1 | Internal evaluation (Action plan vs. Realized outputs and outcomes) | Direct partner |
| 3.2 | Mixed evaluation (developing a common view on progress made by partner and necessary adjustments for next period) | SAHA, direct partner |
| 3.3. | Mirroring the results of the monitoring (by different SAHA teams) for regions and types of partners | SAHA |
| 3.4. | Annual reporting (consolidated information) | SAHA (programme and thematic staff) |
| 3.5. | Annual programme planning | SAHA (Directorate and staff) |
| 3.6 | Annual programme steering | SAHA (steering committee) |

Indicators

SAHA has elaborated a consistent and detailed chart of indicators which are specific for each domain of intervention and linked to a series of specific progress markers; they are scored according to five ascending success criteria (from not yet started to recognised and institutionalised). This chart is concretized by max. two key change indicators. The progress markers are linked to the programmes goals but adjusted to the specific types of partners. They include also transversal criteria and mention explicitly success factors and (internal and external) threats. These series of indicators are followed by mentioning the training and monitoring activities carried out by the SAHA team. Finally the required adjustments in the planning of activities are mentioned. All is documented in specific manuals and journals.

Resources required

The full-fledged implementation of the OM methodology – building on its specific design for SAHA – needs a specialised full-time staff of four persons at SAHA level. This group is complemented by the thematic team of SAHA that spends 3 – 4 weeks per year on the OMM and the operational team that spends 5 – 6 weeks per year on the OMM. The whole activity is supervised periodically by an international consultant and the national director of SAHA. Finally the persons responsible for the programme at Helvetas and SDC level give also their feed-back once a year. The direct budget line for OM amounts to 105'000 CHF/year.

Products

The concrete products that SAHA produced linked to the OMM are a handbook on the 'capitalisation of experiences of SAHA with the OMM' (in French), consisting of four booklets (1: rationale and context; 2: the changes; 3: implementation process; 4: beyond the method) and technical journals (context, global orientations, cooperation and organisational practice) as well as periodical summaries of the information collected in the OMM. On top of this SAHA has produced a specific video presenting the OMM.

Analysis and Main Lessons Learnt

The OM Methodology

a. Purpose(s) of the methodology

The OMM focuses first of all on social, economic, environmental changes and organizational practice at partners' level, which are in the case of SAHA quite diverse and numerous, but basically regionally based organizations – (associations) of municipalities in a decentralized state structure and farmers' associations. Outcome is measured against progress made in the bettering of livelihood and broader local development (and advocacy) in the geographical areas impacted by SAHA.

b. Which aspects can be measured with the methodology?

The OMM can measure a range of changes as defined in the expected effects, the progress markers and the scoring of achieved results according to the different domains of intervention. All these changes are focused and attributed to the direct partners of SAHA at regional level. These include various dimensions of 'good' governance (according to the five standard principles of good governance) as well as the internal organizational capacities to develop projects and to increase lobbying and advocacy activities of the partners and to overcome the observed external stumbling blocks.

Outcomes at (individual) household or livelihood level are in a random sample periodically measured at partners' level during the joint evaluation step, whereas SAHA is periodically carrying out surveys at household level to measure changes at this level. An overall "beneficiary assessment" led by the donor at the end of the phase complements these monitoring tools led by SAHA.

Context monitoring, including governance at national level and policy reforms, is not systematically included in the OMM, but dealt with in the annual reporting and SAHA influences and is informed about the national agenda through an active policy-dialogue with the national government and relevant donors.

As a specific activity, SAHA disseminates its monitoring approach periodically in a structured way (producing booklets, videos and participating in meetings and conferences) including the global OM network.

c. How does the OMM work in practice?

Building on the information collected in the different monitoring steps, starting from the partners' own assessments and own additional reports of SAHA, the OMM is crucial to measure changes in the partners' governance and performance (e.g. service delivery, financial autonomy, project management and communication) but is not yet sufficiently disseminated to allow for a broader outreach. The OMM fosters also through specific events the dialogue between its partners and the final beneficiaries, structures the actions of the partners; the OMM as designed by SAHA focuses less on power relations, changes in gender relations and unintended outcomes and hardly on cost-benefit issues – as it builds highly on expected results as mentioned by the partners.

The 'implementation chain' follows the above mentioned process of steps and activities; the sequence of six months for progress measurement is the key time line; to remain effective SAHA keeps a well structured documentation on the outcome measurement process. To keep the OM operational, the cooperation and work capacity of the team and above all of the specific service providers and the leaders of the direct partners is crucial.

Direct partners are key actors of the OMM as they are responsible for the specific evaluations (self-evaluation and mixed evaluation) and an institutional partner for the half yearly monitoring of changes. Nevertheless, aggregated results are not specifically communicated to the end-beneficiaries. The partners however are free to communicate with the end-beneficiaries.

The activities of the OMM allow for a comparison of the performance amongst the different partners, but the indicators of efficiency and effectiveness can be different, at the level of one partner it allows to compare the ex-ante situation with the progress made and fosters for learning exchanges and negotiations amongst partners..

SAHA does not intensively monitor context changes, but it keeps a 'context journal' for monitoring relevant changes in frame conditions at regional and national level (mainly on socio-political, economical and environmental data) and reports on it explicitly in the annual report.

d. Harmonization and integration

With regard to the life cycle of a monitoring system SAHA has successfully developed and systematically implemented an innovative outcome measurement system. While focusing on the strategy of implementing the OM inside its program, there were hardly resources available to harmonize with OM systems of other donors or national institutions (if ever in practice in Madagascar); interest for the OM methodology is growing as there is a growing visibility of demonstrated results at partners' level and SAHA is pro-actively developing strategies to keep the system vivid after the end of the project; building especially on the capacities of the service providers and the demand of the partners. Under favorable frame conditions a broader outreach might even be an option.

e. Conditions required and relevance of context

The OMM is first of all a performing methodology to measure project outcomes at partners' level. It has its utmost advantage in promoting exchange and learning amongst partners and installing a culture of planning activities built on a vision at the partners' level. The following elements and conditions are required:

- Attitude of learning amongst the partners and growing competence of managing the own organisation and its activities/projects;
- Building-up and strengthening the accountability of the partner for its own organisation and projects;
- Capacity-building leading to mutual responsibilities amongst a group of (local) partners and promoting a sense of planning and negotiation (including responsibility for tendering and budgeting).

Following contextual elements are important:

- Availability of a group of 'change agents' supporting methodologically the partners in their endeavour of change and addressing power changes (from top down to participatory decision-making) and power sharing;
- Institutional space must be developed allowing the partners to apply capacities of the OM method;
- Partners and members of the partners organisation shall learn to develop (realistic) visions and not only accomplish short-term actions;
- Civil society organisations and decentralised state institutions (municipalities) must play a proactive role in local and regional development strategies and actions; it is of key advantage when "minimal" standards of good governance are practiced.

Concluding Remarks

The OM methodology as applied by SAHA is a highly successful good practice for outcome measurement. The way SAHA adjusted the methodology is well suited for a partner-focused, quite large scale and area-based rural development program. SAHA engaged and remains committed for a quite resource-intensive monitoring system with a longer term perspective, which is key for the success. Also the partners learned to develop highly probable visions and according actions. SAHA's OM is designed for the type of partners they work with. It would be difficult to apply it to (de)concentrated state institutions as well as to projects clearly planned in a Logframe perspective with no flexibility to merge the systems.

The application of the OM depends also on the capacities and availability of a group of specific service providers and of committed local change agents to act in the direction of the visions defined and to foster communication. It needs also an application and fine-tuning with a mid-term perspective of local development; realistic progress markers can eventually be improved. Furthermore it needs the strong long term commitment and back-up of the higher management of the programme to apply this methodology.

Being successful at programme level, this OM could unfortunately not make a breakthrough during the period applied in SAHA at donors' level and as 'good practice' at international level. To contribute to this is an additional challenge for SAHA in the near future and would allow to overcome a 'stand alone' situation where a richness of experience would not be fully used. But it will also need a clear statement of the donor and the international development community to develop a high commitment for this methodology.

References/Additional Information

SAHA has produced a series of four booklets (in French): Cartographie des incidences aus sein du Programme SAHA à Madagascar, SAHA, Antananarivo 2011 and a video on the OMM as developed by and introduced in SAHA.

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