

## A PARTICIPATORY PROJECT MANAGEMENT CYCLE: CAN IT ADD VALUE TO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT?

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### ABSTRACT

*Many agricultural research and development projects appear to be implemented without following any clear plan or management framework. Similarly, many of these projects do not involve the real participation of the local actors, such as the farmers. Subsequently, such projects do not achieve the desired or planned outcomes. In worst case scenarios the projects seem to continue with a life of their own and without clear direction. With the increasing emphasis on participation in agricultural development there is a need for a project management framework that encourages and monitors participation. Such a framework also needs to clearly identify the phases and the associated activities that must be followed to ensure the successful operationalisation of a project. This article explains how the project management cycle can be transformed to do this by including participatory principles and methods. It illustrates this, by means of a recent case study of a proposed agricultural development project, and the importance of systematic process and good communication throughout the project phases.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Our experience in the agricultural sector in Southern Africa suggests that many agricultural development projects seem to be considered as

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linear journeys from point A to Z with very little consideration given to timing, duration, cost and external influences. Similarly, scant attention has been paid to how they achieve their intended goals and how this process unfolds (Hart, 2003). Today this has changed and it is recognised that projects undergo a series of phases from their conception to completion. These phases are collectively termed the project management cycle (Commission of the European Communities Evaluation Unit, 1993; Kagiso Trust and European Union, 1994). Phases can overlap, run parallel and even loop forward or backwards depending on what transpires during each phase, suggesting that projects and their phases are unlikely to be free from both internal and external influences (Gardner and Lewis, 1995). This cycle offers a framework by which the project can be defined and put into operation in terms of its goal, objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes, and it also serves as a management tool for plotting and tracking the resources, costs and progress (developments) during each phase (Conyers and Hill, 1992). Hart *et al.* (2004) pointed out that it can also be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Agricultural development projects in Africa have predominantly followed the input-output development model, which assumes that a country's economic and social development can be externally induced (Donnelly-Roark, 1998), ignoring the roles and effects that the project actors, internal and external influences bring to bear on the project process. Projects based on these models identified beneficiaries who received various externally derived, and often locally unavailable, inputs that were expected to bring about development. However, such models have not brought about sustainable development because once the externally derived inputs are stopped, due to any number of reasons, the associated development falters. Sustainable development is now considered to be achievable only if participation occurs and beneficiaries become participants and actors in their development (Burkey, 1993). While participation is only part of the answer to development and poverty alleviation it is the one which we focus upon here. To achieve participation, a common framework and platform is required upon which farmers, researchers and extensionists can interact. The participatory methods such as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Rural appraisal (PRA), Participatory Innovation Development (PID), etc. can provide the platform. When these and participatory principles are combined with the project management

cycle it is possible that a suitable framework emerges for managing participatory development projects. This paper considers the transformation of the typical project management cycle into a participatory project management cycle (PPMC) that is suitable for managing participatory agricultural development projects. This is done by identifying the principles and methods after which their relevance during the various phases is indicated.

## **2. PARTICIPATORY PRINCIPLES**

There has been much international debate about levels and the types of participation utilised in rural development and research (Mikkelsen, 1995; Mouton, 2001; Pretty, 1996). These debates range from what is essentially considered non-participation or coercive participation (Hart, 1992) in which participation is by virtue of manipulated presence rather than voluntary action, to complete participation whereby local actors identify, design and control the project. Despite the broad range of types of participation there seems to be common agreement regarding the general principles of participation that are desirable for a project to be considered participatory. Taking the characteristics which Brown and Tandon (1983, as cited in Mouton, 2001) and Mouton (2001) attribute to participatory research projects we identified the following seven principles of participation:

- Local identification - the problem or required intervention is identified in the community by the local residents;
- Local conceptualisation - local people are involved in setting the project agenda and goal and in the generation, recording and analysis of data;
- Local control - local people are involved in the management of the project and gradually assume control of the process and the use of the outcomes;
- Shared ownership - there is joint or shared ownership of the project and the outputs or products of this process by all parties directly involved;

- Equity - the terms researcher or development agent are applied equally to all participants, both those with and without formal training as well as to insider and outsider alike;
- Empowerment – the process strengthens people’s awareness of their own abilities and resources while supporting their mobilisation and organisation;

During the practical application at project level the ensuing participatory strategies continue to strive for different degrees of consultation, negotiation, participatory ownership, responsibility and ultimately empowerment (Chambers *et al.*, 1989; Pretty, 1996, Donnelly-Roark, 1998). From our experience we would argue that any agricultural development project assuming a participatory identity should at least reflect the agreed requirements and the involvement of the beneficiaries as well as those of other stakeholders, i.e. consultation, participatory ownership and responsibility are prerequisites. However, we would further charge that for a project to be truly participatory it must initiate an empowerment or learning strategy, enabling participants to “... define their own goals and objectives; assess the implications of options open to them; decide and assume responsibility for actions to achieve their agreed to objectives” (Donnelly-Roark, 1998:4). In other words, to be truly participatory a project should include all seven of the identified principles and not only the first five. Managing the process in such a fashion seems more likely to enable the actors to assume control and thereby claim their rights and responsibilities than when these principles are ignored.

### 3. PARTICIPATORY METHODS

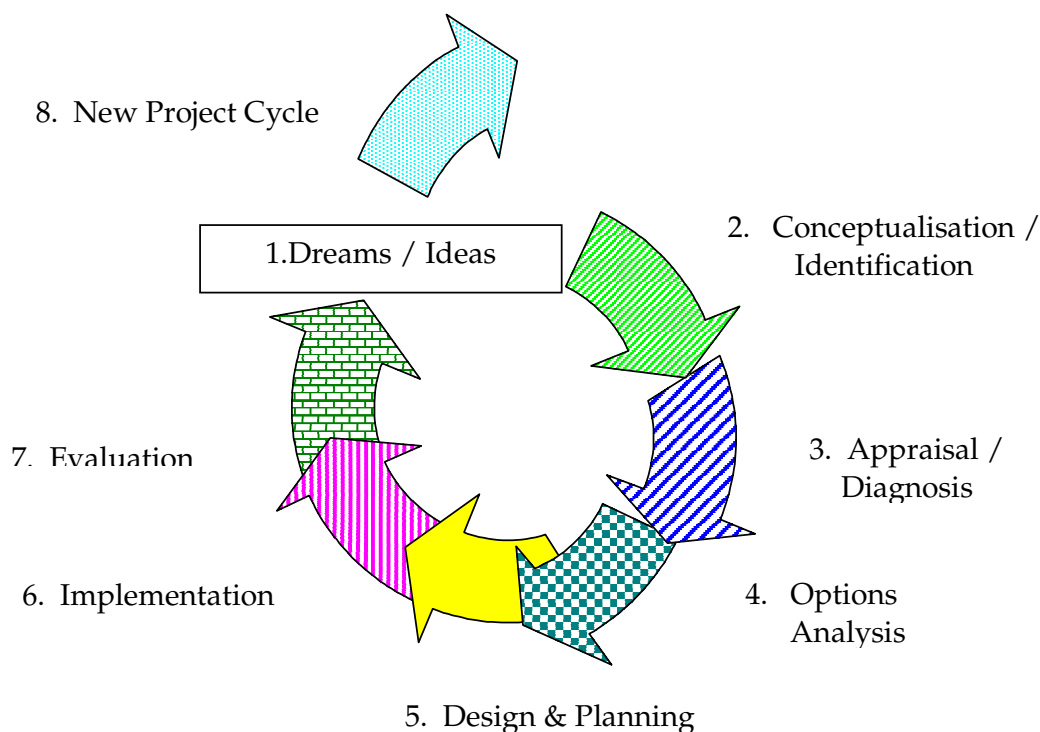
Participatory projects are complex, involving multidisciplinary teams (natural and social science personnel), diverse stakeholders (extensionists, researchers, farmers, NGOs, local leadership and community members) and diverse resources (local and external origin, on-farm and on-station, varying in availability and cost); therefore a clear participatory project management cycle (PPMC) is needed to manage the different phases of these projects. In order to ensure that such projects are indeed participatory the various phases must focus on the employment of participatory principles. Likewise, due to the diversity of the actors a number of different participatory methods can

be implemented during the various project phases to achieve the specific objectives of these phases. These methods include Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Learning in Action (PLA), Participatory Technology Development (PTD) or Participatory Innovation Development (PID), Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM) and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) (Scoones and Thompson, 1994; Van Veldhuizen *et al.*, 1997, Waters-Bayer and Van Veldhuizen, 2004), each of which invoke various participatory tools and are available for ensuring participation and good communication during the different project phases. A detailed discussion of these methods goes beyond the focus of this paper but the methods are indicated at each of the phases where they are applicable. While the PPMC is similar to a typical project management cycle (see Conyers and Hill, 1992; Commission of the European Communities Evaluation Unit, 1993; Kagiso Trust and European Union, 1994; Letsoalo, 2002 for examples) it is distinguished by its incorporation of participatory principles and methods in the phases of the cycle. If these are excluded then the project management cycle is not participatory. Similarly, the degree to which all of these principles and methods are included in the various phases indicates the level of participation practised during the project life cycle

#### 4. THE PROJECT PHASES

Projects can be broken down into eight basic phases (see Figure 1): (1) Dreams and Ideas; (2) Identification/Conceptualisation; (3) Appraisal/Diagnosis; (4) Options Analysis; (5) Project Design and Planning; (6) Implementation; Evaluation; and (7) the New Project Cycle. Two of the phases, namely Dreams and Ideas and the New Project Cycle are not really managed directly by the project manager, who is typically appointed during conceptualisation or appraisal phases.

Consequently, they are often overlooked. However, in order to comprehensively understand the life-cycle of a project as a framework for implementation, as a management and communication tool and for *ex-post* evaluations, these two phases are highly relevant. Therefore they are included in our discussion of the phases of the PPMC.



**Figure 1: The Participatory Project Management Cycle**

In order to illustrate the project development process and what can transpire at each phase details from the implementation of the PPMC are included in the theoretical discussions of the phases of the PPMC by means of a case study. This case study involves a project that was identified and initiated using the PPMC and focused on the proposed small-scale production of stone fruit (peaches, apricots and nectarines) in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Based on information obtained by following the PPMC the project was temporarily suspended at the beginning of the fourth phase and terminated twelve months later. This decision avoided the unnecessary use of scarce resources. The figures in parentheses next to the names of each phase of the project cycle indicate the time period in which that particular phase occurred.

#### 4.1 Phase 1: Dreams and ideas

Agricultural development projects usually emanate from the list of dreams and ideas of farmers and other local actors. These may arise from ideas to improve local circumstances, the awareness of a need or

the desire for some change, development, or improvement. Dreams and ideas can also be borne out of the process of requiring solutions to problems experienced by the farmers or community members. In agricultural development dreams and ideas can include any of the following:

- Improvement of the standard of living;
- Increased food security;
- Addressing problems with regards to access to water, pests, diseases, etc.

Dreams and ideas form the basis for the project goals. They are often vague and need to be conceptualised into projects that are able to attain them in some locally acceptable form. If conceptualisation does not occur then they remain nothing more than dreams and ideas which are not acted upon. PRA and PLA activities can be a means to catalyse ideas and dreams. However, local actors often seem to have many dreams and ideas which can be identified and conceptualised into potential projects using PRA and PLA techniques.

#### *4.1.1 Case Study Phase 1: Dreams and ideas (February and March 2003)*

While conducting an exploratory study for USAID in farming areas along the Greater Fish River Valley in the Eastern Cape, researchers encountered a group of land reform beneficiaries and local stakeholders who wanted to cultivate stone fruit (specifically apricots) for commercial purposes. A nearby area was the site of a thriving dried apricot industry in the 1920s and 1930s and there was a local desire to rekindle the industry. The existence of new rootstocks and cultivars suggested that this was a possibility. Local stakeholders<sup>4</sup> believed that the future re-introduction of a large-scale stone fruit industry in the area would improve the socio-economic circumstances of local residents by ensuring local economic development and job creation. Meetings were held with the various stakeholders in the area and proposed sites were visited with them.

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<sup>4</sup> Stakeholders included farmer, service provider, provincial government and local government representatives.

## 4.2 Phase 2: Identification/conceptualisation

If a project manager is not appointed during this stage a temporary one should be identified in order to manage the next couple of phases until project planning and design occurs. All participating stakeholders, including proposed actors and beneficiaries, must be involved in conceptualising the dreams or ideas into a potential project. Such a project must address the requirements of the farmers in order to avoid confusion and conflict at a later date. The project goal is identified and the dreams and ideas are formulated into objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes that coincide with this goal. While consensus is generally sought differences must be clearly understood. A combination of techniques from the PRA and PLA methods are used to identify and prioritise local requirements. The same methods are used to formulate the goal into objectives and activities by means of a participatory project planning process (Waters-Bayer *et al.*, 1995). If this proposed project concept seems workable, a feasibility study is conducted to test it for its practicality and viability.

### 4.2.1 Case Study Phase 2: Project Identification/Conceptualisation (May 2003)

After discussions with local stakeholders and representatives of a local land reform beneficiaries' Trust, a potential project was conceptualised in which two to three hectares of stone fruit would initially be planted on the Trust's farm and gradually scaled-up during the ensuing years. This site would also provide a training area for the beneficiaries, other farmers and household gardeners engaged in farming activities in the surrounding area. A number of workshops were held with local stakeholders and various subject matter specialists were brought in to advise on various opportunities and constraints that could generally be encountered in the area when attempting stone fruit cultivation. Local stakeholders provided information with regard to various proposed sights and also provided some data regarding the socio-economic circumstances of the proposed (at the Trust farm) and potential (from the surrounding area) beneficiaries.

The researchers envisaged that they would need to provide technology transfer support for the next five years or until at least two harvests had occurred. Subsequently, the Agricultural Research Council Infruitec-



Nietvoorbij (ARC) in Stellenbosch appointed a project manager to manage the project and to liaise with the appointed local representatives from the group of identified stakeholders. The two ARC research and training coordinators, an economist and an agricultural anthropologist were members of the ARC team. This multidisciplinary team was formed to ensure awareness of the activities required during each phase and to promote an interdisciplinary culture within the project from the outset. This was done to ensure participation between the research disciplines involved in the project and also to ensure that the specialists could assume their specific roles during the different phases in an interdisciplinary manner that integrated them into the overall project. During this phase the different team members were able to integrate their understanding of the different technical, economic and social requirements of the project and potential obstacles associated with these dimensions. The various stakeholders, including the manager of the Trust, some local service providers, emerging farmers and representatives of the local authority formed part of the local project team and like the research team were made up of diverse disciplines. During this phase two workshops and various discussions were held between the research team and representatives of the local stakeholders. Visits were also made to the proposed sites and farmers in the area. The local stakeholders approved the concept of a commercial stone fruit project, pending the results of the appraisal.

### **4.3 Phase 3: Appraisal/Diagnosis**

This phase involves the implementation of the feasibility study of the approved project concept, i.e. the concept idea is tested to determine if it can be implemented, if it will achieve the desired outcomes and if it is worth doing. Social, economic, technical and natural resource data is collected, integrated and analysed in order to test the feasibility and viability of the concept in terms of the local resource base. Baseline data is collected for the purposes of future monitoring and evaluation. If this phase is correctly implemented, involving all the necessary participants, it offers recommendations about how to proceed in the next phase, options analysis, to ensure that the selected option is feasible, implementable and will in fact achieve the intended goal and outcomes. Various PRA and PLA tools are used during the appraisal process. These can be supplemented with some PIM techniques to ensure that

everybody is aware what the expected outcomes are and their relevant indicators.

#### *4.3.1 Case Study Phase 3: Project Appraisal/Diagnosis (June to October 2003)*

In order to determine the technical, economic and social feasibility of this project the ARC embarked on a Participatory Appraisal process in conjunction with the manager of the Trust, some local stakeholders, service providers and some local farmers; including the land reform beneficiaries.

Technical findings in terms of the local climate, and the water and soil analyses indicated that of the four proposed sites only the Trust farm had potential for the commercial cultivation of stone fruit, such as peaches, nectarines and apricots. Other areas surveyed were unfavourable for even small-scale production of stone fruit for household consumption. This was mainly due to the salinity of the soil and water, although other factors such as frost, hail and poor soil were also noted in the survey.

The economic feasibility study indicated that the production of early bearing stone fruit cultivars could be economically viable in the areas which met the necessary technical requirements; specifically on the Trust farm. However, given some of the environmental risks such as hail and frost, the management of the production process would be critical for success. This was especially due to the fact that many of the typical preventative measures (hail nets and overhead irrigation were not readily available or currently affordable.

Due to faltering commitment from some local stakeholders during the feasibility study, only a cursory social assessment was done in order to avoid raising the expectations of many of the local farmers. However, local farmer management structures were identified and included in the assessment. Preliminary socio-economic and socio-cultural data was obtained regarding the Trust members and some of the local farmers who intended participating in the project. The assessment indicated that most local smallholder farmers were not overly interested in stone fruit production as they were involved in other agricultural activities, including cattle, goat, chicken and vegetable production. It also

revealed that those expressly interested in stone fruit production did not have the necessary experience and commitment to manage the production process. This phase indicated that a number of options were available.

#### **4.4 Phase 4: Options analysis**

The information obtained during the appraisal might identify a number of alternative options to reach the identified goal, or alternative potential projects, all of which can differ from the original concept. All stakeholders must decide on and clarify the project objectives from the information obtained and the resources available. PLA and PRA tools are used to analyse the options. If a new option is selected the cycle loops back to Phase 3 to determine the feasibility and viability of this new option. If the original option is both feasible and viable the cycle proceeds to Phase 5.

##### *4.4.1 Case Study Phase 4: Options analysis (November 2003 to March 2004)*

Based on their experiences during the feasibility study the research team realised that some local stakeholders were not committed to the conceptualised project, as they were unable or unwilling to carry out some of the collaborative tasks that had been required during the appraisal phase. Given the distances involved, if the research team was to provide ongoing and long-term support, including technology adaption and transfer, it was imperative that the locally based project management team was committed to the project. This commitment seemed to falter during critical periods and activities of the appraisal phase and was considered likely to pose a long-term constraint to the success of the project. The feasibility study also indicated that some of the current activities with which the local farmers were involved, such as chicken, goat, cattle and vegetable production, were experiencing technical and economic problems. Some of these problems were the result of ill conceived or weakly designed projects in which their feasibility had not been accurately assessed. Other problems related to temporary delays in funding that were outside the control of the management structures of the projects.

Given these circumstances the ARC project manager recommended that the farmers, local stakeholders and service providers review the existing

local agricultural activities and continue with those proving successful, rather than embarking on activities such as stone fruit production which demanded a greater use of resources, many of which were both scarce and costly. It was also recommended that the project be suspended for a one-year period during which the farmers and local stakeholders monitor the salinity of the soil and water sources and the climatic patterns. After this period, based on the data collected by the farmers and the research team, a combined decision would be taken whether to proceed with the project or to officially close it. A data-logger, which would measure maximum and minimum temperature, was purchased and installed on the Trust's farm. Local stakeholders undertook to collect water samples on a monthly basis and to send these to the ARC research team for analysis.

#### 4.5 Phase 5: Project design and planning

This phase is initiated when all stakeholders agree to proceed with the project. If a manager has not yet been appointed then the stakeholders jointly select one for the specific project, finalise the project structure and allocate resources (Keeling, 2000). The manager is responsible for managing the project and ensuring that activities are implemented according to the schedule and participatory principles. The project plan involves the finalisation of goals, objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes or expected benefits and indicators for the achievement of outcomes. It is vital that all stakeholders participate in this phase in order to achieve:

- Clarity on expected goals and outcomes;
- Identification of logical objectives and activities;
- Integration of all the required resources into a schedule of activities and associated resources – the identification of *who* does *what*, *how*, *where* and *when*;
- Consensus about the project plan;
- The development of an evaluation and monitoring plan as well as a communication plan indicating when these activities will occur.

If the necessary resources are available and the plan allows for the attainment of quality outcomes and administration, the project can be implemented (Keeling, 2000). Here PRA, PLA, PIM and PME methods are used to design and plan the project and encourage local control of the project (see Waters-Bayer *et al.*, 1995). Much of the data needed for planning will have been collected by this stage using the first two methods. PIM and PME, the monitoring and evaluation methods, are used to concretise plans and to identify the mutually agreed indicators for the identified outcomes and outputs.

#### *4.5.1 Case Study Phase 5: Project Design and Planning (June to October 2003)*

Eliciting support from donors is always a time consuming process. Although, the feasibility study of the appraisal phase was still taking place during this period the research team and the local stakeholders agreed that some tentative planning of the project concept should occur. This would enable the various stakeholders to develop a concept note and proposal in order to elicit support from various donors. This illustrates how certain events or external requirements bring about the overlapping or looping of the project phases. While a concept note was compiled and proposals were submitted to two local potential donors, complete project design and planning did not take place as the project was temporarily suspended at the end of the fourth phase.

#### **4.6 Phase 6: Implementation**

The project is executed and the plans are put into action. In conjunction with this process the various resources are managed and the activities are monitored to:

- Achieve objectives;
- Produce outputs;
- Ensure indicated outcomes; and
- Reach the project goal.

During implementation adjustments might be necessary and the project plan revised, necessitating that previous phases are revisited or future phases initiated, thus looping backward or forward during the project cycle. Again it is vital that all stakeholders are involved when the

progress reviews are conducted and that the management guarantees participatory interaction to ensure the success of the project. By this stage the project participants should be familiar with the participatory methods and a combination of all the methods and tools will be used; especially PLA and PRA. If the project involves technology development an approach such as PTD or PID can be followed.

#### *4.6.1 Case Study Phase 6: Project Implementation (proposed for April 2005)*

Because the project was temporarily suspended for a year, starting at the beginning of 2004, it was envisaged that any implementation of the project would take place from April 2005. However, given various changes in the local situation and following on from recommendations made during Phase 4 the stone fruit project was not implemented.

#### **4.7 Phase 7: Evaluation**

This forms part of the systematic assessment during any of the phases of the PPMC and it consists of a number of activities, namely:

- Monitoring at regular intervals during the life of the project (reviewing relevance, progress, performance, expenditure, recordkeeping and constraints);
- Determining impact:
  - Immediate impact at the end of the project (did various activities and outputs achieve the desired outcomes?);
  - Intermediate impact a year or two after the project is completed (considers short- and medium-term effects on the participants/beneficiaries);
  - Ultimate impact a number of years after the project is completed (considers the long-term effects of the project on the participants/beneficiaries).

Impact can only be assessed if baseline data exists for comparison purposes. This must be collected during the diagnostic/appraisal phase. Monitoring records must be kept of project progress at every review

activity such as meetings and interim evaluations. It is good practice to appoint an external evaluation specialist and to include all stakeholders in the evaluation activities. Results of the evaluation can add to the pool of ideas and dreams, thereby identifying other projects. During this phase the primary participatory methods used are PME and PIM in conjunction with some of the tools from the other participatory methods. Good record keeping is essential.

#### *4.7.1 Case Study Phase 7: Evaluation (April 2003 to April 2005)*

At the outset of the process the research team collected and kept baseline data, which was to be increased and reviewed as the process unfolded. The data would be used for determining the various impacts of the project. Regular monitoring records and reports of site visits were compiled and exchanged amongst stakeholders. These were to be used in the impact assessment process. From Phase Two onwards the stakeholders or their representatives held meetings and monitored the progress and process of the various project phases. During the actual site visits and at various stakeholder workshops the stakeholders reviewed relevance, progress, performance, expenditure, record keeping and constraints relating to the project concept and the activities undertaken during the various phases. It was these review activities and monitoring reports that enabled the project manager to make the decision to temporarily suspend the project at the beginning of 2004. Following site visits and meetings during 2004/2005 period the researchers realised that the focus of the other stakeholders had changed and that they were pursuing other agricultural activities. During this period the status and involvement of various stakeholders (including the researchers) had changed. These changes were a result of both internal (resignation of key staff and the appointment of unfamiliar successors) and external factors (decisions not to fund the project concept and receipt of local funds for existing projects).

These factors suggested a serious breakdown in communication during the period in which the project was suspended and indicated that strengthening existing local activities might have more immediate and widespread benefits. They also reinforced the decision to terminate the project concept. Continual participation up until the temporary suspension had ensured that changes became evident as they transpired and that no unexpected surprises appeared.

#### **4.8 Phase 8: The start of a new project cycle**

After completion of the project and the assessment of immediate impact, some resources will be available for new projects. The project cycle is now able to start again with the identification of new or similar projects in the same or other locations. Sometimes a new project cycle can start during any of the phases of the project cycle if the necessary resources are available. Here the primary methods used to mobilise local people and identify possible new projects are PLA and PRA. By this stage the bulk of the work should be carried out by the local participants to indicate that they are assuming greater control and claiming their rights and responsibilities.

##### *4.8.1 Case Study Phase 8: Start of a New Project Cycle*

The temporary suspension of the project in early 2004 enabled the research team to release the bulk of their resources (human, temporal, financial) for other activities and projects. Only a very small proportion of resources were set aside to monitor the project process during 2004/2005 and to do the evaluation at the beginning of 2005. The total value of these resources (human, temporal, financial) used during this period was approximately R15 000. While no new projects developed out of this project concept resources were available for other agricultural development projects.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The description of the phases of the PPMC has indicated what is expected to take place during each phase of the participatory project management cycle and what basic participatory methods need to be used in each phase. Notably, PLA and PRA methods are included in all phases as they historically formed the basis of the other participatory methods and tools. We have specifically not identified which principles of participation should be found in each phase. It is our belief that each of the seven principles that we identified at the outset should be evident in each phase. These are the principles on which the agricultural development workers (research and extension) must interact with the local farmers and actors if the interaction and subsequent project is to be considered participatory. In order to determine if they are involved in a participatory project the project manager and team members, including



farmers and other local actors, need to consider if the seven principles are being applied in each phase of the project. If this is the case then the project can be termed participatory. The participatory methods merely provide a means for interacting in a participatory manner rather than ensuring participation. Too often we have heard of PRA tools and PRA surveys being used to give top-down projects participatory legitimacy. It is the principles rather than the methods that are most important.

By identifying each phase and the associated activities the PPMC makes project managers and local participants aware of what is required in terms of activities, timing, methods and tools during each phase, i.e. it communicates to all involved as to what needs to happen where, when and how. The incorporation of a case study into the discussion of the phases illustrates the usefulness of the associated activities in providing a useful checklist for project management and also a means of identifying if something worked or not, as well as the reasons for and timing thereof in the project cycle.

The use of the PPMC in the case study, invoking the commitment to the principles of participation and the use of tried and tested participatory tools, allowed for greater interaction and communication between stakeholders from the Conceptualisation / Identification Phase onwards. The participatory nature permitted them to reflect on the process and discuss concerns at a number of combined meetings held during phases one to four and the seventh phase. This enabled the research team to identify the likely strengths and weaknesses and to report on these. Furthermore this equitable interaction enabled the project manager to build a strong case for postponing project implementation and obtain unanimous agreement during Phase Four that the project should be suspended for a period of one year. It also enabled the project team to consider the various local options and to make suggestions on how existing activities could be improved. The decision to postpone the project was taken within seven months after project conceptualisation. The final decision to terminate the project concept was taken within two years. This ensured that resources were not wasted, as might have been the case if the project had not followed the PPMC (see Hart *et al.*, 2004).

## 6. CONCLUSION

The basic project management cycle can be adapted to allow for its use in participatory agricultural development projects, despite their inherent complexity. The identification of the various phases of the project management cycle and the associated activities provide a platform on which participatory principles and methods can be utilised. While some of the methods are individually often only relevant to a few phases, such as the PIM and PTD, the principles are important to all eight phases. By transforming the typical development project management cycle the resulting PPMC provides us with a framework for implementation, management and communication of participatory projects. Of course if participatory principles, such as regular communication, are not followed then problems can arise, as occurred during the period of temporary suspension. This indicates that managers require a sound understanding of the participatory principles and project management obligations. The use of the PPMC in the study illustrates that even when projects are not implemented its framework provides a means to manage resources and costs and to monitor progress so that the appropriate project concepts can be identified which maximise the use of scarce resources. Inappropriate project concepts can be terminated so as not to waste these resources.

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