

# 1. Introductions and getting started

## 1.3. The FARE guide and toolbox for doing it yourself

### Why and for whom this FARE toolbox ?

Sustainable and inclusive food system transformation is complex and requires many changes and multiple actors. The FARE guide and toolbox targets all development professionals who are interested in inclusive agro-economic development, and in working with and for farmers. The practical approach and tools aim at making the inevitably complex food system approach more actionable for facilitators and innovators who want to make a difference in practice, on the ground.

With the FARE approach and tools, we target and aim to inspire:

• Development professionals, aiming at farmer-inclusive agro-economic development and working with and for farmers.	✓ Focus on farmer-inclusive facilitation
• Development leaders and connectors who are interested in the collaboration of agrifood system actors and stakeholders.	✓ Focus on farmer-inclusive team play
• Donor portfolio managers, seeking to adapt procedures and methods with the aim to achieve better, more sustainable and inclusive project and programme results at ground level.	✓ Focus on project identification, design and formulation

The group of targeted development professionals is quite diverse:

- Leaders and staff of producer organisations - for developing their strategic orientations and activity programmes;
- Policy makers – for involving farmers in policy and strategy development and adapting their programme design approaches to the benefit of agricultural producers
- Business managers and procurement officers - for sourcing from smallholder farmers;
- Knowledge centres (universities, research centres and extension services) - for innovating action research, education curricula and training methods;
- Financial institutions – for providing loans to producers and their individual and collective entrepreneurial initiatives;
- NGOs and civil society organisations - for adapting their support programme design and implementation modalities.

FARE provides many practical tools, which can be applied in any agricultural sector and in any part of the world. In this way, FARE hopes to be a practical approach that makes the food system approach actionable and farmer-inclusive. In fact, development professionals can (fully or partially) use the FARE approach and tools to conduct complementary analyses, identify options for action and contribute to the strategic and operational planning of producers, their organisations and partners.

The ultimate goal of FARE approach and tools is to support professionals to become ‘change agents’ and/or ‘game changers’ who - directly or indirectly - make a difference for thousands of family farms and hence contribute to sustainable and inclusive food system transformation.

## The FARE guide : a multiple entry toolbox, structured in 8 blocks

The FARE cycle structures the systematic design of a comprehensive, farmer-inclusive development programme that is well anchored and grounded because it has started with a practical case (block 1); it has made the effort to see and understand farmers' realities and priorities (block 2 and 3) and it has analysed the case from multiple analytical perspectives (block 4, 5 and 6). In this manner a well-grounded theory of change and a coherent result chain and plan of action can be designed (block 7)

This explains why the FARE handbook is organised in four main parts and eight blocks, which have the following objectives:

	Blocks	Objectives
<b>Getting started</b>	1. Introductions and start-up	Understand the background, the principles, the cycle and the possible applications of the FARE approach. Initiate a practical case for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development and food system transformation.
	2. Farmers' realities and conditions	Profile farmers, assess their resource endowment and understand farmer motivations and entrepreneurial behaviour.
<b>Farmer agency</b>	3. Organisation and collective action of farmers	Reflect on the current organisation of farmers, evaluate the governance, management and performance of existing farmers' organisations and assess the perspectives for farmers' collective action.
	4. Agricultural production and family farm management	Analyse the current situation at the production side and identify options for improving yields and quality of agricultural production and for reducing farmers' production costs and losses.
<b>Analyses for actions</b>	5. Value creation and market access	Analyse the sub-sectors and value chains that are relevant for the selected case and identify options for improving producers' added value creation, market relations and sales.
	6. Team play for sustainable and inclusive agrifood system transformation	Make an inventory and assessment of the actors of the agri-food system, focusing on improving and innovating multi-actor collaboration and options for increasing producer involvement in the development of (more) inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems.
<b>Putting FARE in action</b>	7. Strategic and operational planning	Formulate strategic directions and plan practical actions in complementary areas of intervention, based on the challenges, opportunities and options for action that came out as being most important for producers and their organisations.

### Outline of the FARE guide and toolbox

Each of the blocks have several entry points: these are the FARE tools. A general outline of the FARE toolbox, structured according to the four categories and eight blocks, is shown in the figure on the next page. Please note that the indicated entry points are not exhaustive; more entry points and tools are possible.

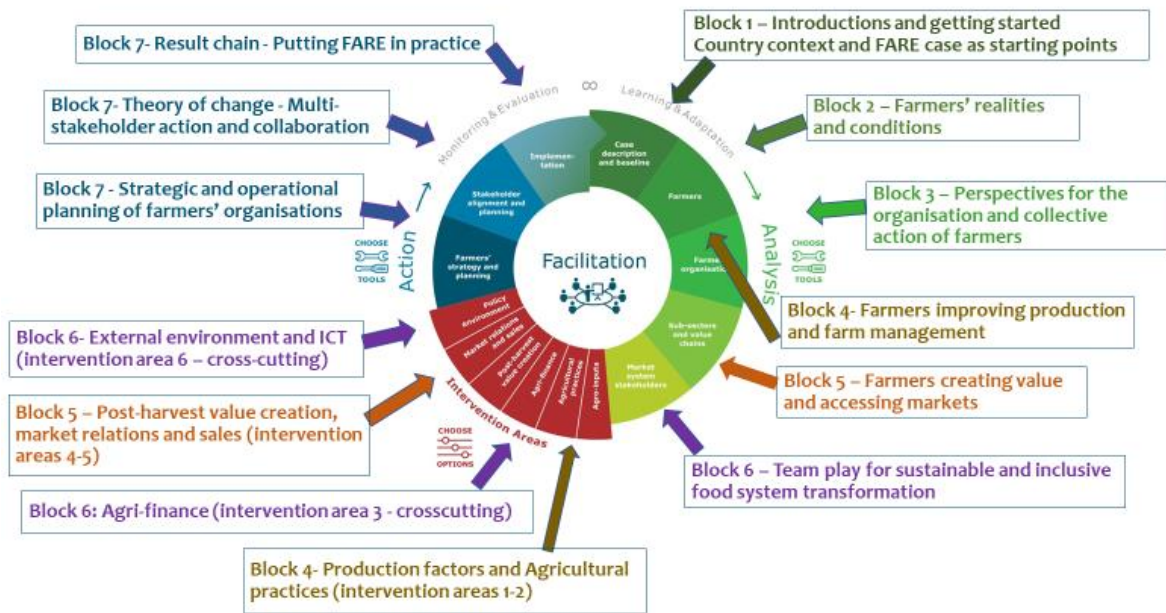
<b>Starting up</b>	<b>Introduction and start of the FARE approach (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers: food producers &amp; consumers</li> <li>• From dependency to farmer agency</li> <li>• Systems thinking: farmers as actors in a broader context</li> <li>• FARE approach: analyses for action</li> <li>• FARE toolbox</li> </ul>	<b>Approaching agro-economic development and food system transformation differently</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situating the (country) context</li> <li>• Selecting and presenting a FARE case (3 P's)</li> </ul>	

<b>Priorities for farmers' livelihood improvement and empowerment</b>	<b>Farmers' realities and conditions (2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing and profiling farmers</li> <li>• Assessing farmers' resources</li> <li>• Exploring farmer entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	<b>Farmer agency</b>
	<b>Perspectives for the organisation and collective action of farmers (3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking from different angles at the current organisation of farmers</li> <li>• Assessing the governance, management and performance of existing farmers' organisations</li> <li>• Weighing the perspectives for the organisation and collective action of farmers</li> </ul>	

<b>Analysis for action</b>		<b>Intervention areas</b>
<b>Agricultural production and family farm management (4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing the potential for improving smallholder farmer's production</li> <li>• Making farmers partners in agricultural innovation systems</li> <li>• Taking action for improved access to production factors and better agricultural practices</li> </ul>	Production factors and agro-inputs  Agricultural practices
<b>Value creation and market access (5)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting on the diversity of products, markets and consumers</li> <li>• Positioning of farmers in markets and along value chains</li> <li>• Exploring models and options for farmer-inclusive agribusiness</li> <li>• Taking action for improving farmers' added value creation, commercial relations and sales</li> </ul>	Post-harvest value creation  Commercial relations and sales
<b>Team play for sustainable and inclusive food system transformation (6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping and assessing actors and stakeholders</li> <li>• Outlining the agri-finance system and identifying options for improving the farmer-finance interface</li> <li>• Harnessing the potential of ICT solutions for farmers and their partners</li> <li>• Strengthening the farmers' voice for a more enabling environment</li> </ul>	Agri-finance  Political and economic environment  ICT

<b>Putting FARE in action</b>	
<b>Strategic and operational planning (7)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking stock and prioritizing identified challenges, opportunities and options for action</li> <li>• Strategizing and articulating the plans for making change happen (theory of change)</li> <li>• Designing the result chain for operational planning and result-oriented management</li> </ul>

The figure below shows how the blocks are related to the FARE cycle of Analyses for Actions:



### FARE Guide and workbook

The FARE tools are supported by manuals (explanatory papers) and worksheets. The manuals make up the FARE guide. The worksheets make up the FARE workbook. Most tools focus on the identification of challenges, opportunities and options for action in different intervention areas. Although the sequence of presentation of the tools is from block 0 to block 7, and from farmer households to agrifood system innovation, the guide is a ‘multiple entry’ handbook, allowing each user to focus on those subjects, tools and analyses that are most urgent and relevant for the practical case they are working on.

### Learning and applying the FARE approach and tools

In a training situation, the FARE approach, cycle and tools are explained and exercised in eight training blocks, including the general introduction that is part of Block 1. Learning by doing is the preferred training strategy. The starting point for a FARE learning trajectory is a the understanding of the rationale of the FARE approach, the Analysis for Action cycle and the complementary intervention areas. Also in a training situation the FARE approach and tools are applied to practical cases. For this reason, case selection is the first step in the process. Starting from the producer level and progressively extending to the entire agri-food system, the case is analysed from different angles. Practical tools are proposed to support the analyses and action planning. The analyses focus on identifying challenges and opportunities and options for action in different areas of intervention.

In actual practice, it is important to prioritize and select tools, according to the realities of the case at hand, available time and resources. This can only be done if the purpose and application of the tools are sufficiently known, which is the justification for a FARE training course.

## FARE – do it yourself

The following sections provide additional information on the tools of the seven blocks: objectives, perspectives and tools, and the work book titles for presenting the results of the applied tools.

FARE practitioners can use the FARE guide and work book:

- Manuals that provide background information on certain topics (such as farmer entrepreneurship, producer organizations or agribusiness models) and/or explain the tools make up the FARE guide.
- Worksheets that facilitate analyses and the application of the tools. Together, the worksheets constitute the FARE Workbook.

### Block 1 – Getting started with the FARE approach

The general objective of block 1 is to initiate a practical case for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development and food system transformation. With the proposed analytical perspectives and tools you can start the FARE process.

Specific objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand and present the agro-economic development context, the changes and the consequences for family farms</li><li>• Initiate the development of a farmer-inclusive agro-economic development case</li></ul>	
Proposed perspectives and tools	
By referring to the introductions to the FARE approach (origin, rationale, principles, cycle of analyses for actions, toolbox (...), the FARE practitioner can deduce the elements that he/she finds essential to communicate to his/her readers. Usually the FARE conviction is established at the beginning, but the introductory text is made towards the end of the FARE journey.	
The ' <b>Atlas</b> ' tool (1.2) helps to make and present an analysis of the current agro-economic development situation in the FARE practitioner's country or region.	
The ' <b>FARE Case</b> ' tool (1.2) helps to delineate, describe and present the practical case that is selected to promote farmer agency and collective action by producers, in collaboration with other actors and stakeholders. The case is circumscribed with three P's: Place, Products and Producers.	
The passport is the context for the specific FARE case that is selected.	
The initial description of the case can help in drafting a concept note and in presenting the case to other stakeholders, including authorities and/or partners. In a training context, learners present their case to other course participants, with the aim of creating the conditions for learning from each other.	
FARE do it yourself	
1.1.	Introduction to the programme / project approach
1.2.	Agro-economic situation and farmers' position in .... (country / region /island)
1.3.	Practical case for farmer-inclusive agrifood system transformation

*After the initial case description, the design process can follow the FARE cycle. Analyses can go in depth by zooming in on farmers' realities and conditions (block 2), agricultural production and farm management (block 3), producers' organisation and collective action (block 4), analysis of agricultural value chains (block 5), and on the inventory and analysis of actors, stakeholder collaboration and options for making agri-food systems more inclusive for farmers (block 6).*

## Block 2 – Farmers’ realities and conditions

The general objective of block 2 is to profile farmers, assess their resource endowment and understand farmer motivations and entrepreneurial behaviour.

Farmer inclusion starts with the farmers themselves. The aim of the perspectives and tools that are shared in this section is to make an effort to put ourselves in the shoes of farmers, i.e. to see the realities from their point of view.

Specific objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Profile producers to understand and communicate their realities, challenges, motivations and initiatives.</li><li>• Assess the resource endowment of producers, which is the basis of their strategies to improve their livelihoods.</li><li>• Explore farmer entrepreneurship and reflect on how to improve farmers’ competitive intelligence and entrepreneurship.</li></ul>	
Proposed perspectives and tools	
<p>The tool '<b>Farmer Profiling and Farmers’ Facebook'</b> (2.1) aims to give farmers a face, to tell and share their stories, to identify development issues and challenges from their perspectives. It is possible to make profiles with quantitative data portraits and qualitative descriptions (and better still a combination of these two options). Farmer profiles can be valuable elements for proposals, reports and websites.</p> <p>Farmers’ resources are the starting point for farmer entrepreneurship. The tool '<b>Farmers’ resource endowment – Capital pentagon'</b> (2.2) is useful to assess the natural, physical, financial, human and social capital of farmers, and to visualise these as a pentagon. The aim is to identify actions that would strengthen the resource endowment of producers.</p> <p>Profiling producers and analysing their resources helps to better understand producers' attitudes and behaviours and to put these into context. The tool '<b>Exploring farmer entrepreneurship'</b> (2.3) aims to demystify, recognise and assess farmers’ entrepreneurial behaviour.</p>	
FARE do it yourself	
2.1.	Introducing the farmers
2.2.	Farmers’ resource endowment
2.3.	Assessing farmers’ entrepreneurial behaviour
2.4.	Most important challenges, opportunities and actions according to farmers

## Block 3 – Organisation et and collective action of farmers

The general objective of the third block is to reflect on the current organisation of farmers, to evaluate the governance, management and performance of existing farmers’ organisations and to assess the perspectives for farmers’ collective action.

Specific objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the challenges related to the organisation and collective action of farmers</li> <li>• Support the profiling and visibility of farmers' organisations.</li> <li>• Assess the governance, management and performance of farmers' organisations and propose options for improvement.</li> <li>• Identify orientations and entry points for improving the organisation of producers for taking collective action for the benefit of members.</li> </ul>	
Proposed perspectives and tools	
<p>In this section, the focus is on what producers could do together, for example to better procure inputs, market their products and/or defend their interests.</p> <p>Different perspectives help to analyse <b>'The current organisation of farmers'</b> (3.1), which can be informal and formal. This is important to effectively start from the real life field situations and to put the options for farmers’ collective action into context.</p> <p>The <b>'PO identity card'</b> (3.2) is a simple tool, which provides a basic format for farmers' organisations to present themselves to their partners and the outside world.</p> <p><b>The 'GGP' tool</b> helps to assess the governance, management and performance of farmers' organisations (3.3), with the aim of improving internal organisation (governance and management) and improving services to members (performance).</p> <p>Different perspectives are suggested to answer the question <b>'What are the perspectives for developing the organisations and collective actions of farmers?'</b> (3.4).</p> <p>In this block, other tools and perspectives are possible, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Starting a cooperative</li> <li>- 'FORCE', a self-assessment tool (evaluation of a farmers’ organisation by the members themselves).</li> </ul>	
FARE do it yourself	
3.1.	Organisation of farmers and their collective action: current situation
3.2.	Profile of “name of farmers’ organisation”
3.3.	Evaluation of the Governance, Management and Performance of “FO name“
3.4.	Perspectives for the development of the organisations of farmers and their collective actions

## Block 4 – Agricultural production and family farm management

Block 4 looks at the agricultural production. The general objective is to analyse the current situation at the production side and identify options for improving yields, quality and innovation, and options for reducing farmers' production costs and losses.

Specific objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess current yield and quality gaps and identify opportunities for improvement in current farming practices.</li><li>• Assess current farmers' access to production factors and agricultural inputs, and identify opportunities for improvement.</li><li>• Identify options for innovating agricultural research, training and extension and improving the involvement of farmers.</li><li>• Explore the challenge of improving producers' financial knowledge and practices and the options to improve family farm management, savings and access to credit.</li></ul>	
Proposed perspectives and tools	
<p>Agriculture is the core activity of farmers. In most cases, there are many opportunities and challenges to improve agricultural productivity and quality, and to reduce production costs and losses. The tool <b>'Current agricultural production situation- what are the stakes?' (4.1)</b> starts with observed yield and quality gaps and reasons back to find out the causes of sub-optimal production and to identify the key levers to change the prevailing situation.</p> <p>The tool <b>'Innovating with and for farmers'</b> (4.2) draws attention to the question of how the agricultural innovation system (research, extension and farm advisory) can become more inclusive.</p> <p>The perspectives and tools of this block focus on <b>'Options for improving producers' access to inputs and for innovating their farming practices'</b> (4.3), which corresponds with FARE intervention areas 1 and 2.</p> <p>Professional farm management requires financial management skills. The 'Farmer Financial Literacy' tool is an option for building farmers' capacity in cost recording and cost-benefit analysis, with the aim to improve farm management, savings and access to input credit.</p>	
FARE do it yourself	
4.1.	Current agricultural production situation
4.2.	Reorienting the agricultural innovation system
4.3.	Production factors and farming practices: options for action and change
4.4.	The set of changes required to improve agricultural production and farm management



## Block 5 – Value creation and market access

The fifth block looks at the market side. The general objective is to analyse the sub-sectors and value chains that are relevant for the selected case and to identify options for improving farmers' added value creation, market relations and sales.

Specific objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse and assess the sub-sector(s) and commodity value chains relevant for farmer-inclusive agro-economic development case.</li> <li>Suggest the most relevant and/or promising product-market-consumer combinations.</li> <li>Identify options to improve value addition and assess the feasibility of post-harvest operations.</li> <li>Identify options to innovate commercial relations and sales for the benefit of farmers and their business partners (inclusive business models).</li> </ul>	
Proposed perspectives and tools	
<p>Most farmers sell part of their production, to obtain the financial resources that are necessary to take care of their family (including the purchase of food) and to meet necessary expenses (health care, school fees, transport, social events, ...). This section suggests complementary perspectives for exploring an agricultural sub-sector. The focus is on systematic value chain analysis, with the aim to enhance the farmers' market intelligence and market power.</p> <p>The first part of the analysis is done with the <b>PMC tool</b> (5.1), which focuses on product-market-consumer combinations (tool with 3 analytical perspectives).</p> <p>The second part of the analysis, <b>farmers' positioning in markets and along value chains</b> (5.2), which, among other things, deals with value-adding operations, transactions and prices and relations between sellers and buyers (tool with 3 additional perspectives).</p> <p>The six analytical perspectives are input for <b>mapping value chains</b> (5.3). The maps show the product flows from producers to consumers and highlight the main challenges and opportunities for agricultural producers.</p> <p>An important issue in the transformation of agri-food systems is the development of agri-business relationships that are more farmer-inclusive. There are perspectives and tools available to zoom in on this important issue: review of possible agribusiness models; principles for inclusive agribusiness; producers' relationships with input suppliers and/or companies that are buying their products.</p> <p>The analyses lead to the identification of strategies and options for practical action for added value creation, product and market development and for improving farmers' commercial relations and sales (FARE intervention areas 4 and 5).</p>	
FARE do it yourself	
5.1.	Product-Market-Consumer combinations
5.2.	Value chain relations
5.3.	Value chain mapping and most important challenges and opportunities for farmers
5.4.	Strategies, models and actions for inclusive agribusiness
5.5.	Added value creation, commercial relations and sales: options for action and change

## Block 6 – Team play for sustainable and inclusive agrifood system transformation

In the sixth block, the attention goes to multi-stakeholder collaboration and food system innovation. The general objective of this block is to make an inventory and assessment of the actors of the agri-food system, focusing on improving and innovating multi-actor collaboration and options for increasing producer involvement in the development of (more) inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems.

Specific objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an inventory of all relevant actors for the selected farmer-inclusive development case.</li> <li>• Assess the performance and collaborative links of key actors and other identified stakeholders.</li> <li>• Identify possible options for creating a more enabling environment, with particular attention to agri-finance, the enabling (economic and political) environment, and information and communication technologies.</li> </ul>	
Proposed perspectives and tools	
<p>In this section, the analyses focus on the agri-food system and all stakeholders, both from the private and public sector, who are of direct or indirect importance. The aim of introducing different perspectives and tools is to support a farmer-inclusive food system transformation process.</p> <p><b>‘The ‘burger - the actors in the agri-food system’</b> (6.1) helps to identify a wide range of actors and stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involved in an agro-economic development case. Three groups of actors are distinguished: value chain operators, supporters (private sector) and enablers (public sector). A fourth group of actors is added: those who are (mainly) funded from abroad and who (should) play a temporary role. The tool helps to identify actors, to reflect on their current and required roles and on options for improving stakeholder performance and collaboration.</p> <p>Several issues are of particular importance for the transformation of agri-food systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The <b>agri-finance system</b>, the relations and collaboration of farmers and financial institutions, the innovation and effective delivery of financial services. Particular emphasis is given to the identification of strategies and actions for agri-finance (FARE intervention area 3)</li> <li>- Strengthening <b>the farmers’ voice and advocacy</b> to make the economic and policy environment more favourable to them (FARE intervention area 6)</li> <li>- <b>Exploiting the potential of ICT solutions</b> for producers and their organisations (cross-cutting issue for all FARE intervention areas).</li> </ul>	
FARE do it yourself	
6.1.	Inventory and assessment of actors and stakeholders
6.2.	The agri-finance system and options and innovations for making it work
6.3.	Priorities for creating a more enabling economic and political environment for farmers
6.4.	Promising ICT solutions for more autonomy and better performance of farmers and their organisations
6.5.	Agri-food system transformation with and for farmers – action-oriented conclusions

## Block 7 – Strategic and operational planning

In this block, the results of the action-oriented analyses come together and result in comprehensive planning. The general objective of this block is to formulate strategic directions and plan practical actions in complementary areas of intervention, based on the challenges, opportunities and options for action that came out as being most important for producers and their organisations.

Specific objectives	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For the FARE case, formulate strategic directions and identify priority options for action in all complementary intervention areas, based on the identified challenges, opportunities and options for action.</li><li>• Propose and operationalise an action plan for agricultural producers, their organisations and partners.</li></ul>
Proposed perspectives and tools	
	<p>The FARE approach and all its tools are geared action. The tool '<b>Taking Stock</b>' (7.1) allows for the collection and prioritisation of challenges, opportunities and options for action.</p> <p>The tool '<b>Change Strategy</b>' (7.2) supports the formulation of strategic directions and the reasoning of the 'theory of change', which form the basis for <b>the result chain</b> (7.3) and <b>operational planning</b> (7.4).</p> <p>The various tools in this block explain step by step how to move from analysis to action. They help to define strategic orientations based on the results of FARE analytic tools. The strategy development process leads to the formulation of a vision, the definition of primary and intermediate outcomes and the planning of practical activities. The FARE intervention areas are used as a reference and are the backbone for both the theory of change, the result chain and for result-oriented management.</p>
FARE do it yourself	
7.1.	Overview of identified challenges, opportunities and options for action
7.2.	Strategic orientations and theory of change
7.3.	Result chain
7.4.	Operational planning