SECOND SERIES OF TARGET AREA WORKSHOPS
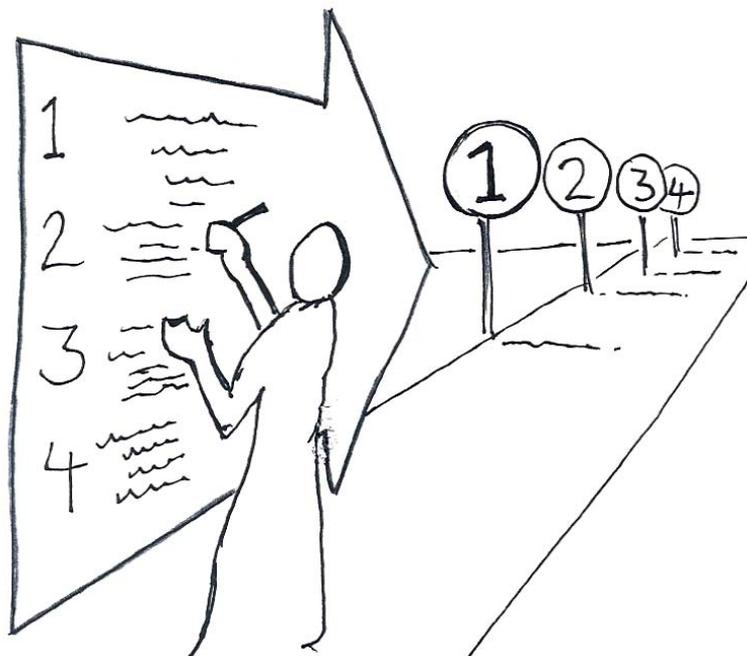# June – September 2003
Process design and implementation

MedAction Deliverable #9

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1 Introduction

This report provides an in-depth discussion of the second series of stakeholder workshops that were undertaken in two of the four target areas in the Meditteranean. As a follow up to the first series of workshops that were held in November 2002. The workshops were held in the following, respective order:

Guadalentin, Spain – 25th June 2003
Val d'Agri, Italy – 26th July 2003

The workshops were planned as closely together as possible but the actual date largely depended upon the particular needs of the local stakeholders that were invited to attend. More specifically cultural, traditional and/or political influences, also time constraints in terms of demands upon those involved in the agricultural and tourist industries were just some of the considerations that the organising team needed to take on board when choosing the workshop date.

A full description of the results of the second series of stakeholder workshops can be read in Deliverable 11 of the MedAction project.

1.1 Background

In the beginning of 2002, when the first series of workshops were being planned, it was already envisioned that a second series of workshops would be planned. However, there was no clarity as to what they would contain or how they would be conducted, mainly because any follow-up would largely depend on the results of the first series of workshops. The decision to undertake the backcasting excersise was a result of discussions by the research team following the first series of scenario workshops, when deciding how the information collected from those workshops should be best used.

The first series of workshops provided an opportunity to achieve a number of things. Not only were the research team able to use local stakeholders in constructing land use change scenarios for the local regions, but the stakeholders themselves were given the opportunity to interact with one another on issues common to all of them. Although opinions varied amongst stakeholders, the group setting provided a unique opportunity for discussion and consensus amongst the individuals on many issues.

The main outcome from the three scenario workshops was nine detailed scenarios (see Deliverable 7). However, attention focused on the end situation in 2030 and relatively little attention was paid to the storyline behind it, especially on short-term actions. Although some of the scenarios were more explicit than others on their visions for an end situation (e.g. Big is Beautiful in Italy), none of the nine constructed scenarios identified *clear* policy options that *progressively guided* the reader to the end image.
Given the main goal of MedAction, 'policies to combat desertification', it was essential to link visions on long-term future changes to short-term policy actions.

An additional objective of the second series of workshops was to provide a link between the two main products of the first workshops, 'the story of the present' and 'the story of the future'. In all Target Areas, there was a striking contrast between the list of problems, obstacles, and lack of opportunities that made up the present situation, and the list of radical changes and abrupt transitions that characterise most of the scenarios.

In both cases, our main interest was on developing short(er)-term events or actions that would lead to the more detailed long-term futures.

Reflecting upon the feedback received from the participants it was clear that in general they enjoyed the process and found the methodology extremely interesting and useful. The more critical response pointed to the insufficient times allocated for individual sessions throughout the workshop. This determined the participants' appreciation of the usefulness and ultimately their overall satisfaction with the workshop. Thus it was the expressed intentions of the research team to build upon the spirit of the first workshop without repetition of the process. The second series of workshops needed to provide an opportunity for further discussion to generate participant enthusiasm and interest. Consequently much of the success of the second series of workshops depended upon the ability of the research team to devise a process that invigorated the participants to constructively use the outcomes from the first workshop in as innovative a way as possible.

Thus, the challenge resided in the ability of the process to enable the participants to translate the long-term scenarios developed in the first workshop, into clear storylines that could aid local decision-making in policy formulation for sustainable land management in the Target Areas. The final product has to offer concise guidelines for this purpose.

1.2 Choosing a methodology

After much discussion the research team decided upon incorporating a methodology more commonly known to scientific practitioners as 'backcasting'. The backcasting methodology seemed to fit well into the context of the scenario work already developed. More specifically it is a process that enables for more consideration to be given to the 'how' as oppose to the 'what' when projecting desirable futures. In other words the process challenges the participants to explain in detail how they can achieve the futures they created in the first workshops. The backcasting process asks participants to identify incremental steps in the form of policy solutions, projecting them in a chronological order over the time-period and gradually leading them to the end scenario. So whereas in the first workshops much of the focus was upon the creation of the scenario with reference to dominant trends, little time was allocated to detailing or explaining the storyline. In contrast the second workshop devotes attention to the development of the scenario over a period of time in a more structured manner. Theoretically the task involves a process of working from the future back to the present. So while in the first workshop, the forecasting technique applied focused upon what type of futures are *possible*, the backcasting technique will question how possible futures can be *realised* (Kerkhof 2003).

2 Constructing the Backcasting process

Initial discussion amongst the research team focused upon the extent to which participants needed to be guided in their thought process during the backcasting workshop. In the first workshop participants were provided with the main developments at European and Mediterranean level within three scenarios (Knowledge is King, Big is Beautiful and Convulsive Change), and were asked to keep these developments in mind when constructing Target Area scenarios. (see Deliverable 1). So although the starting points of the backcasting exercise were these local scenarios, participants were still bound to some degree by European and Mediterranean developments.

As before the purpose of the scenarios was to structure, but not steer, the thinking of the stakeholders. It also served to aid comparability between the three regions for the research team. However, we felt that some of the scenarios constructed in the first series of workshops were influenced too much by the information given to the stakeholders in the introduction of the European scenarios. Therefore, a prime concern was to minimise any information provided by the research team during the backcasting workshop. The information used was that which the stakeholders had created themselves in the first workshop. It was hoped that this would encourage greater ownership of the results amongst the participants. Discussing their own input should encourage participants to provide more explicit explanations or justifications to their proposed policy solutions.

The backcasting process would require participants to concentrate on short and medium term action with their long-term vision in mind. In this way the participants can identify bottlenecks and restraints to the realisation of their long-term vision. Thus to a large degree participants will be driven by a sense of reality - what 'could' be achieved given these various short and medium term realities. This may ultimately require revision or adjustments to the long-term visions that were created. Although it is not the intension of the exercise to constrain participants within boundaries that prevent them from using their imagination when considering desirable futures, it is nevertheless important that their futures can be realistically achieved.

Furthermore the process had to consider the complicated relationships not only between, but within the various sectors at play. Thus in order to flesh out the complexities that existed amongst the potential actors from within each sector and to consider their perspective, the programme needed to include time in which individual sectors could be discussed at length.

Thus the process was constructed keeping these considerations in mind as well as the more practical issues learnt from the first workshop. These included:

Timing - The general stakeholder feedback from the first series of workshops emphasised that insufficient time was provided for the various activities. Through the very nature of such participatory workshops insufficient time is a common cause of frustration where participants are often rushed through certain stages to ensure completion of the process. However as is often the case, the research team were limited by a minimal workshop budget and the need to have a specific outcome by the end of the participatory session. Upon reflection very little could really have been edited from the programme from the first series of workshops. Likewise the backcasting workshop was also pressurised in achieving ambitious goals in only a one-day workshop. Although careful planning of the programme was needed, the research team were highly dependent upon the local organisers, the facilitators' ability to keep to the programme as it had been constructed, and finally upon the course of events as they unfolded during the day. Stopping interesting discussions in favour of sticking to the programme of the day is simply neither desirable nor always possible - particularly in situations when dialogue between participants is at a critical point.

Flexibility - As is so often the case with such participatory workshops a certain degree of flexibility is needed to be provided within the programme. Although the programme needed

to be followed as closely as possible the research team were also aware of the need to be sensitive to the cultural or individual characteristics of each of the groups. Following the first series of workshops it became apparent that the restrictions of a tightly constructed programme cannot always ensure the best or most conclusive outcome or involvement from all stakeholders. For example in Portugal (November 2002), a generally successful scenario workshop was weakened by many participants leaving during the coffee break just before the final session.

2.1 The workshop programme

After long discussions, it was decided to do the backcasting process within a one-day workshop. This decision was partly based on budget constraints, but there are other arguments for limiting the work to one day. An important consideration was the need to increase the number of farmers at the workshops. We feared that extending the process to two days would discourage many farmers from attending, as many could barely afford to be away from their farm for one day. Additionally, we did not want to create 'stakeholder exhaustion'.

Although this was possible it still resulted in a somewhat ambitious programme for the day – something that the research team were trying to avoid for the second series of workshops. To overcome this it was decided that a certain degree of flexibility should be built into the programme i.e. less time allocated to lunch and coffee breaks, to enable potentially long discussions to be 'fit' comfortably into the programme.

Morning session – discussion on the story of the present
The research team realised that it was unwise to immediately launch participants into a backcasting exercise. The half-year time gap between the first workshop in 2002 and these second workshops meant that the process needed to be phased into components that included enough time for the participants to properly discuss the issues. Many of the stakeholders may have either forgotten what they had said in the first workshops while others may have even changed their minds on certain issues. Furthermore there is also the high possibility that there would be participants attending the backcasting workshop who had not attended the first series of workshops. For these reasons it was decided to use much of the morning session for open discussion of the present situation and reflection of the scenarios that were created in the first workshops.

The morning session was ultimately divided into several sessions (the following is illustrated in table 1):

Introductory session: The organising team provide a welcome introduction to the group. This is also an opportunity to familiarise participants with one another. Although some participants would have already met in the first workshop, it is still a good opportunity for re-introduction as well as for new participants to introduce themselves for the time.

Following the introductory session (session 1) participants are provided with a brief reminder of the first workshop. The facilitator draws focus upon the story of the present enabling participants to contribute. This process invites participants to clarify issues that were brought up in the initial discussions of the first workshops. Inevitably this may involve a certain degree of debate amongst the participants. The purpose of this process is not to force consensus amongst the participants but rather as a warming up exercise, to familiarise the participants with the various issues and arguments that may arise later in the day.

The purpose of next stage was for the participants to sketch out realities/'givens' of the immediate future within a time horizon of 5 years. It was decided for the participants to be split into groups for this session and for each group to focus on a given theme i.e. water, agriculture, etc…. Selection of actual themes was based both on the information from the first workshop and on the preferences of the stakeholders present in the second workshop. This would initiate teamwork at an early stage in the workshop and create a foundation of

information that will be needed in constructing the policy options upon later in the day. The groups are also to be given the opportunity to present their lists of predetermined factors, opening a discussion again for the whole group.

So the opening session provides an opportunity both for introducing, although for some, reintroducing the main issues that will need to be considered later in the day. It also serves for group dynamics to come into action with participants working together as a team to produce agreed upon factors for the coming 5 years. The benefit of this brief session is that participants are introduced not only to discussing factors in a group but also to reach consensus where possible, and where needed, to negotiate certain outcomes. Individuals will be forced into a process of 'divergent thinking' where they enter into an open discussion, followed by 'convergent thinking' where they are forced to organise their ideas and reach closure (Kaner, 1996).

Early afternoon session – presentation of the constructed scenarios
As with the story of the present it is as important for the participants to be reintroduced to the future scenarios that they and other participants had created in the first workshop. The presentation will serve to refresh their memory of the storylines and scenarios that would then act as their main point of reference for the remainder of the day.

The facilitator will then follow up this session by introducing the backcasting process. They will provide a thorough explanation as to what the participants will be required to do in the backcasting exercise that will complete the remainder of the day.

Afternoon session – implementation of the backcasting process
For this exercise the participants are split into 3 groups each allocated a different scenario. The entire process is facilitated by a member of the research/ organising team, and it is their task to conduct the backcasting process through a series of pre-constructed stages. Each group is allocated a facilitator who is briefed prior to the workshop. The session is undertaken as follows:

Reviewing information
The first task requires the groups to consider the main factors of their scenario, based upon the discussion from the morning session. This includes the story of the present and the scenarios that were constructed during the first workshop. This opportunity should serve as a brainstorm for the groups and to warm them up for the backcasting process. In this time the participants should consider the issues both by themselves and with one another. Participants are also encouraged to write down any important issues that they consider could serve as main discussion points for their backcasting exercise to be built upon.

Creating a focus – purpose and challanges
The groups are then required to choose a focus within their future scenario – an image of their future. This could be used as a frame of reference in their backcasting exercise, for the analysis of selected policy options (Kerkhof et al. 2002). Clear and distinct images help participants to consider radical changes and think more creatively. Ultimately this forces the participants to choose a very specific aspect of the scenario that they have been assigned to concentrate on. It was decided that this specific aspect could either be something that is envisioned to take place in the scenario as developed in the first workshop, or be the opposite of a (negative) aspect of the scenario, thus focusing on a more desirable future.

This challenging task of prioritisation will force the participants to discard or ignore other issues that they may find important, therefore they will need to discuss and argue points if agreement can not be reached. This encourages participants to engage in further dialogue, disagreement and consensus, familiar to them from the morning session. The participants should try as much as possible to create an achievable target as their focus point, based upon a

particular theme. It is important that they avoid creating a focus that remains vague or general and it is the responsibility of the facilitator to ensure that this happens.

Furthermore the purpose of participants creating a very clear future goal with which to focus upon should help in clarifying whether it is a future they are working to achieve or one to prevent hence determining their discussions and agreed upon options.

However, such a task is also burdened with the possibility of diminishing participant enthusiasm. Common acceptance or, at least understanding of the created future image is critical for the overall success of the outcome. But by simply focusing upon one or two end images, creating a very specific end point can critically reduce the interest of some of the participants. If participants feel estranged from the chosen future image this may alienate them from any further involvement in the exercise and thus exclude their valuable input both in the backcasting and possibly even in any future participatory involvement in the region. Thus to ensure that the creation of the future image prevents participants from becoming disinterested it was necessary to build in enough time in the backcasting exercise that gives plentiful time to achieve maximum acceptance amongst the participants for this activity through dialogue and revision of future image where necessary. It is important that all participants feel ownership of their creation at this early stage of the exercise.

Undertaking the backcasting process
Once a clear focus for the scenario has been created the participants will need to begin the backcasting exercise, plotting their actions points onto a timeline that everyone has equal access to. This exercise remains fairly open but as it is a group process participants are encouraged to work together as much as possible. The facilitator remains objective although it is their responsibility to encourage participants in reaching a decision as to their options and where they place them. A certain degree of prioritisation will be required and it is important that the group do not get stuck on any single issue. If participants fail to agree on a specific option it will be necessary for them to devote time to examining this further to help them reach a conclusion. Participants again should not be forced to reach consensus but should at least understand the purpose of one another's standpoint. If necessary, the group may choose to construct two possible courses of action as a compromise. To aid organisation the action points are best plotted onto a timeline. This will not only identify the role of each action point but also help in identifying the actors responsible for them.

Additionally, participants may feel uneasy with one another and thus may hesitate upon choosing for a more controversial or complicated course of action to realise or prevent their created future image as this would require deep discussions and invite possible disagreements. In participatory sessions it is often the case that in order to reach a conclusion and gain consensus amongst all participants, the more easily achievable and most realistic targets are chosen, the most challenging are usually ignored. Thus to prevent this from occurring in our workshops it was necessary to provide further participant guidance. Participants should be challenged to choose for the most challenging and difficult targets, and action points to reach them.

There is also the danger of a group overloading themselves with too many action points. With only limited time to work with, participants are encouraged to prioritise the discussion points and issues to focus upon. This enables for a more efficient process and helps the action points to be better articulated and examined. For the same reason it is also important that participants have the courage to challenge their own conclusions or proposed action points. This provides the opportunity for identifying any loopholes in their action plan and also serves to strengthen their arguments.

Table 1. – Post-it exercise
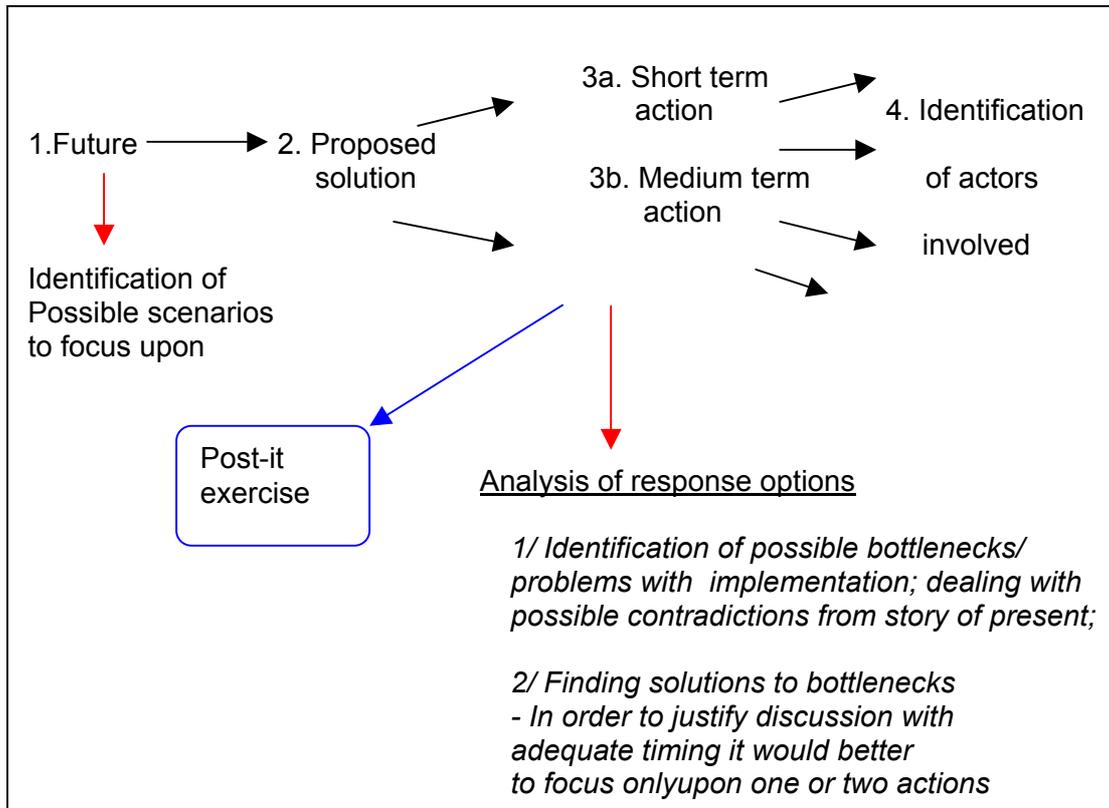
Time-line presentation in plenary setting
As the group reconvenes back into the plenary setting a representative from each group presents their groups' time chart. The presentation should include a full explanation of the journey from the present to the end target, where necessary pointing out what points of discussion had caused problems in the group, why and how they overcame them. It is important that the wider plenary group understand why the presenting group came to the conclusions they did and how. Although one participant is responsible for presenting it may also be necessary for others within the group to contribute or clarify any points of confusion.

It was necessary to use all three scenarios in both the forecasting and backcasting exercises, as opposed to just one, in order to cope with the uncertainty of the long term. An additional advantage was that most participants dealt with the scenario that they themselves developed, which shortened the discussion on the scenario itself and increased enthusiasm among the participants. However for the purpose of identifying clearer guidelines that correspond to all scenarios, it is necessary to consider commonalities amongst the three. Such commonalities may come in the form of agreed upon action points or policy proposals, but they could also be common problems that the group encountered i.e. they all felt powerless when it came to a particular sector because of it's bureaucracy.

2.1 The workshop layout

As with the first workshop the room layout of the second workshops had to be functional for the various activities planned for the whole day. Furniture had to be moveable and changeable to cater for the alterations from plenary to group work. Furthermore, it was fundamental that participants did not feel confined to one position but that they could comfortably move around according to where the speaker was positioned. However having said this, it was essential that the general seating pattern as arranged by the organising team was respected and maintained by the individual participants. Therefore it was essential to communicate to the

organising team that the workshop venue must allow for the changeable room layout. It was also essential that the room layout was prepared well in advance of the arrival of the participants on the day itself. In the first stakeholder workshops this was rushed at the last minute while participants were arriving and reflected disorganisation on behalf of the organisers. It gave an unprofessional image of the workshop as a whole.

As the work schedule for the second workshop was very full, and going by experiences from the first workshop, it was important not to waste any time with room seating arrangements. So for the purpose of the working sessions, the room layout would need to be fairly informal with participants sitting in small groups around a table (Chambers 2002). All groups also need to be in easy view of the facilitator. This could then sufficiently cater for both the group work and the plenary sessions alike.
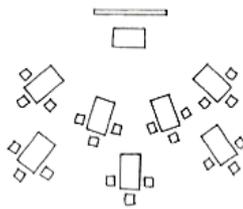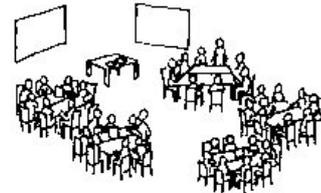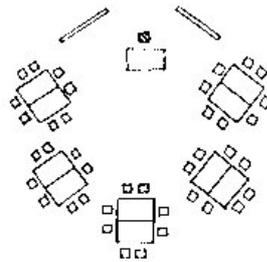
Figure 1

Figure 2

Table 2. The program of the second series of workshops

Time	Session	Setting	Activity	Facilitator/ presenter	Allocated time	
9:30 – 9:45	◄──────── Welcome and Tea / coffee ────────►					
9:45 – 10:15	1	Plenary But in table groups	Introduction - Purpose – briefing of workshop 1 - Stakeholders	Carmen + All participants	15 mins 20 mins	
10:15 – 10:45	2	Plenary but in table groups	Presentation of 1st workshop; Reiteration of 'story of the present' with comments from participants	Carmen + Kasper	30 – 40 mins	
10:45 – 11:15	3	Working in table groups	Participants in their groups to develop main pre-determined factors for immediate 5 years	Carmen + Kasper	20 – 30 mins	
11:15 – 11:40	◄──────── Tea / coffee break ────────►					
11:40 – 12:10	4	Plenary	Representative/s from each group to present their factors (facilitated)	Groups + facilitator	30 mins	
12:10 – 12:40	5	Plenary	Presentation – story of the future; explanation participants task in break-up group	Carmen + Kasper	30 mins	
12:40 – 13:30	6	3 Break-up groups	The groups will undertake the backcasting exercise as instructed	Carmen; Kasper; 3rd facilitator	45 mins	
13:30 – 14:50	◄──────── Lunch ────────►				1 hr 20 mins.	
14:50 – 15:35	6	3 Break-up groups	Backcasting continued…	Carmen; Kasper; 3rd facilitator	45 mins	Tea / Coffee to be served throughout this period
15:35 – 16:15	7	Plenary	Presentations of time-charts from each group – (10 -15 mins each)	3 appointed representatives from each group; (Carmen; Kasper)	40 mins	
16:15 – 17:15	8	Plenary	Open discussion reviewing time-charts – commonalities and contradictions	Carmen and Kasper	1 hour	
17:15 – 17:45	9	Plenary	Conclusions + feedback + thanks	Kasper and Carmen	30 mins	
17:45	Participants are free to leave or can join research team for tea/coffee + snacks					

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3 Implementation of process

So far this document has outlined the thinking and planning process that went behind the process design for the second series of workshops. However in reality actual implementation of the process can be very different from the initial hopes and desires of the research and organising team. The individual characteristics and unpredictability of human processes mean that no amount of pre-planning can ever ensure perfect execution of a planned process. With this in mind the research team remained candid to the possibility of changes and alterations to the programme.

The remainder of this chapter individually recounts each of the backcasting workshops. It reflects on the implementation of the process, drawing upon their more interesting characteristics in detail.

3.1 Spanish workshop, Guadalantin, Spain - 25th June 2003

General observations
A few important alterations were made with respect to the first workshop in the Guadalentín. First of all, the location was changed - the first workshop took place in Murcia, which is located within the Guadalentín, but relatively far from where most of the stakeholders live. The second workshop was organised in Totana, a small village in the centre of the Target Area. The actual venue was a very well known conference centre, built as a monastery, although it was never used for this purpose. It is one of the most famous buildings in the Guadalentín, and as such had two advantages as a venue for our workshop: participants were eager to see the inside of the building, which provided an extra incentive to accept the invitation, and participants familiarity with the venue made it an easy place to get to. A second alteration was that extra efforts were made to increase the number of farmers that participated. Other than the change of venue, which was much more convenient for the farmers to get to, the organising team also doubled the number of farmers that were invited and made sure that the date of the workshop did not coincide with harvesting or other activities. As a result, out of a total of 25 participants that were invited, 5 participants were farmers all of whom stayed for the entire day.

An (unintended) effect of organising the workshop in a small village was a high interest from the local press and the city council, which was both good and bad. The positive effect was that the workshop received a lot of attention and made the headlines of the local newspapers, which in turn could help support future efforts. On the other hand, the mayor was present during the first hour and his opening speech together with questions from the journalists took a lot of time. As already mentioned, the program was rather ambitious and was therefore severely delayed even before it started.

The workshop faced further delays during the day. More specifically the discussions after the 'extension of the present' session took more time than anticipated. This was partly because of the over-enthusiasm and depth of the discussions and partly because of inexperience of the main facilitator. But it was also accepted that stakeholders from Mediterranean countries simply cannot be rushed and are less likely to follow a carefully constructed programme. These cultural considerations were noted and accepted by the research team in both series of workshops. Thus deviations from the original program were allowed. The third source of delay was the lunch break. Traditionally, the Spanish take at least two hours for lunch including a short siesta. We therefore opted for a proper sit-down lunch break, and not a buffet (as was the case in Italy), which would have taken much less time.

Lunch finished around 16:30, instead of at 15:00 as we originally had hoped for. By this time, it was clear that we would have to leave out the last items of the program. That is, we finished at almost the same point as where the first workshop finished. The backcasting exercise in

groups was completed and the results were shortly presented to the other groups. The plenary discussion and the official conclusions were dropped.

Nevertheless, the workshop seemed to be a great success. Stakeholders went home satisfied, the output was very useful, and we came one step closer to a mutual understanding of the different perspectives and problems that exist in the region and beyond, both between stakeholders and scientists and between stakeholders from the various sectors.

Below are some more specific comments.

Comparisons with the first workshop
Compared to the first workshop, this second workshop was more successful for the following reasons:
-   Most of the participants were present in both workshops. This familiarity helped both participants and facilitators feel more at ease during the second workshop, and as a consequence animated discussions starting directly from the beginning. Additionally, they had a much better idea of what to expect and what was expected from them.
-   The discussion of the second workshop focused on short-term developments. Participants were not used to thinking about the long-term future, especially when combined with global driving forces that are very different from the ones they are familiar with. The 'story of the future' session was therefore more challenging for them, than the 'extension of the present' and the backcasting exercise.
-   All groups chose to discuss a desirable future that enabled them to relate better to the story they were developing.
-   The venue: All participants were extremely pleased with the location. Being in a monastery in the mountains created a more relaxed atmosphere than being on the compounds of the University of Murcia (as was the case for the first workshop). Furthermore the venue was also in much closer proximity for the participants to reach then the venue used in the University venue of the first workshop

Deviations from the programme
Considered as the most important negative aspects of the second workshop in the Guadalentín, most of the deviations from the programme have been discussed above. However, it can be added that any participatory workshop will have deviations and that this was anticipated in the second workshop. We (the research team) cannot and do not want to rush a group of stakeholders through a process to get what *we* want. More than anything, it is also about what the *stakeholders* want. Therefore, part of the delay was consciously tolerated to not disturb the process of integration and discussion that was taking place. In the future delays could possibly be reduced by keeping additional items, such as the press session, separate and maybe even by shortening lunch.

Overall opinions of facilitator

Backcasting process
It turned out to be extremely difficult to explain the concept of the backcasting technique to the stakeholders. Although the facilitator provided a very detailed example to stimulate the participants thinking process all participants still struggled enormously with the task of starting in the future and then having to relate that to short-term actions. These issues were additional to the research teams preconceived ideas of what problems may occur. Thus it took about an hour of discussing the backcasting exercise, before most of them realised just what it was they were asked to do.

Even so, all groups ended up selecting desirable end-points that were too general. Examining the results, that appears as being the main problem of the backcasting exercise. All groups

opted for long-term goals, like "sustainable tourism" or "sustainable agriculture". Although these terms were treated very specifically, it was difficult to get the participants to actually write their more defined ideas and thoughts down onto paper. For example, sustainable tourism for the participants in the Guadalentín, means zero golf courses, no new large apartment buildings, and development of eco-tourism. However, these are three different long-term goals. The discussion on short-term actions, therefore, was sometimes difficult to control, as the groups had chosen to deal with large-scale issues.

The main conclusion is thus that when dealing with a group of stakeholders that has little experience with long-term thinking, it is very difficult to establish concrete, long-term goals.

Group dynamics
During both workshops, the group dynamics were very good. In the first workshop a number of people tended to be dominant for various reasons (see Deliverable 6), but this problem was much less in the second workshop. The main cause is probably related to the growing confidence and mutual respect among the stakeholders.
In general, participatory workshops that focus on (long-term) future developments instead of on current problems and tensions are extremely suitable to create a good atmosphere in which 'real life' problems can be set aside.

Workshop organisation
It is clear that it is not ideal to organise a series of workshops, when one institute drafts the program while another institute is responsible for the main facilitation. Even more so because of language and cultural differences between the two institutions involved. However in the Guadalentín, this problem was relatively small, as the main contact person at ICIS is fluent in Spanish and could therefore be closely involved throughout the process of both workshops, including preparation of presentation and feeding back results to the stakeholders. In Italy, the problem was overcome by inviting one of the main facilitators to the workshop in the Guadalentín and for a prolonged stay at ICIS to enable us to have closer interaction and joint development of our ideas for the workshop. However, the problem is not to be underestimated. There is a real danger of miscommunication between scientists of different cultures and between stakeholders and scientists. In our case although these problems were either resolved or simply did not occur, one should always remain very conscious of such cultural differences.

Effectiveness of results
An in-depth analysis of the results of the first and second series of workshops will be provided in Deliverable 11. However, from a methodological point of view, there are some important conclusions on how the results of a participatory process could be used within the framework of MedAction.
- The workshops could have been improved by changing the program such that what was discussed in each workshop was kept quite separate. More specifically so that in the first workshop the 'story of the present' and the 'extension of the present' were concentrated upon, while the second would focus only upon the 'story of the future' and the 'backcasting' exercise. The disadvantage of not reflecting on the stories of the future in the first workshop did not really matter as there still was the advantage of exactly the same group dealing with the future and the present.
- In a group process, it is difficult to obtain 'hard' results. Collages, stories and mutual understanding are difficult to quantify. The other Modules of MedAction do demand such quantitative input. The process has been extremely rich, as was the output, but most of the results cannot directly be used to answer the question "what policies do we need to combat desertification?". However, together with Decision Support Systems (DSSs) and a multi-scale policy analysis, a very complete picture has been sketched of the "other" dimensions of desertification, that go beyond land degradation and agriculture. And this is precisely the main message of the results.

- In the Guadalentín we have started a participatory process that might continue beyond the duration of MedAction. Stakeholders have a better understanding of the scientists in the project and the researchers in MedAction have a much better understanding of the perception of the stakeholders. The opportunity of developing these processes in the long-term can lead to much better informed and accepted decision-making. .

3.2   Italian workshop, Val d'Agri, Italy – 26th July 2003

Results from the Italian workshop, Val D'Agri (Hotel Apogeo, Missanello, Potenza), 26 July 2003

General observations

The experience of the first workshop stressed the relevance of organisational and logistical aspects, elements that could contribute significantly to creating the right atmosphere in a workshop. Thus, the lessons learnt from the previous workshop were important and necessary from which to make substantial adjustments able to improve the organization of the backcasting experience. Firstly, as in the Guadalentín, the location of the backcasting workshop was changed from where the first workshop was held. The backcasting workshop took place in the centre of the target area, so the location was easier to reach for the local stakeholders.

The impact of the new location, nevertheless, was less important than the new ways adopted to involve and motivate the participants. In fact, the main weakness of the first workshop was the lacking in representatives of farmers and NGOs. Thus to improve the involvement of such groups the organization tried to find issues of concern more relevant to the local situation. First of all, the date of the workshop was decided according to farmer's needs, avoiding the main harvest-time.

The most important resource was to establish a direct connection with the main local association of the young farmers union. Thanks to this strategy, it was possible to use an appropriate "trust" intermediary, whose major role was to motivate the farmers adopting suitable incentives, good means of communication and local networks. The cooperation built within the union was very important, especially for establishing an open and clear dialogue with the associates, improving the farmers' understanding about the opportunity offered by the workshop and developing their awareness. For these reasons it was also important that they were able to freely express their voice and point of view.

Prior to the workshops it was extremely crucial that they were encouraged to attend. To do this the organisers needed to reassure the stakeholders of their legitimacy to participate. Furthermore it was important they had no false expectations or pre-conceptions of the workshop, thus they were briefed prior to the day, which also helped in ensuring their preparedness. Also to further encourage them to attend it was important that they understood that it was <u>not</u> necessary for them to have knowledge on any specific issue or come from a scientific background.

The idea of encouraging more attendance of 'young' farmers meant that there was also a greater likelihood of involvement of people interested and open to 'new' experiences. Moreover, the farmer union, knowing best the specificities of associates, were consequently involved in the stakeholder selection process. This enabled for a more heterogeneous and representative group of participants to be invited.

Regarding the NGOs, in the first workshop the representatives of local environmental NGOs that were invited unfortunately did not come. This came as somewhat of a surprise to the organisers who perhaps overestimated the interest of NGOs in participating in the workshop. Thus in the organisation of the second workshop the organisers paid more attention when inviting these very NGOs. They took more effort in stressing the relevance of their

participation to the workshop. For example, in the case of one NGO, instead of inviting the local representative as had been done in the first workshop, instead they contacted the regional one, and also included more human resource staff and representatives more sensitive to the issues discussed. Adopting this more thought-through approach when inviting the NGOs there was a greater representation of the NGOs to the workshop. These participants were also amongst those that provided a more constructive and enthusiastic contribution to the discussions in the workshop.

Another interesting change with respect to the first workshop was the introduction among the participants of a representative from the tourist industry - an actual tourist! This representation was able to enrich the debate with different perspectives including that of a "foreign" point of view of the area. As a consequence, the discussion about the local situation was developed in parallel and in comparison with external realities, improving the quality of the debate as a whole.

Although time constraints meant that some of the work session discussions were compromised, generally the backcasting workshop proved to be quite successful, both from the methodological point of view and from the viewpoint of stimulating local awareness.

Comparisons with the first workshop

Better representation of the local community
The initial, more positive, outcome in the backcasting workshop with respect to the first workshop, was that there was a *better representation of the local community* due to the higher participation of local NGOs and farmers. These groups had a deeper knowledge of local environmental problems and land degradation. The debate was thus enriched with different and very qualified points of view, adding meaningful information and new insight.

Better quality of process and results
With respect to the process as well as the results, the backcasting workshop resulted in being more effective than the first one.
The first important difference to point-out, relates to the second exercise. In this participants were asked to be more explicit as to how they judged the final outcome to be. They were then asked how they would change it into a more 'desirable' outcome. It is clear that sometimes there is a big difference between how the people think that the future *will* look like and how they would *like* that the future to look like. In fact during the workshop many participants felt uneasy with the scenarios defined in the first workshop, because they did not agree with some of the assumptions underlying the future images.
Obviously the role of policy is to try to realise a desired future, so in order to build a correct policy framework it is crucial to clearly define both the most plausible and the most desired long-term vision.
Also, such an option does not depend directly upon the backcasting technique itself, thus adopting this in the exercise really demonstrated progress, stimulating a better quality of policy design and increasing the participants' involvement in the work of the group and in the end product.

In the first workshop, apart from the novelty of the process making it difficult for participants to think about the future, many people also found it rather difficult to apply the elements from the scenarios to the local context. It was largely because the scenarios are so far removed from their everyday life, and as such it was thus difficult to imagine this in 'their' future also.
The result was that during the first workshop it was more difficult to generate real practical ideas in the construction of the local scenarios, such as translating the visions of the Agri in 2030, into concrete actions.
The facilitators made clear the possibility to think and elaborate scenarios without any limits and, moreover, to not use the global and Mediterranean scenarios as a straightjacket.

However in the first workshop the stakeholders' perception remained restricted to following directions of a pathway already defined. Although they did not necessarily agree with them, the stakeholders still acknowledged the trend defined by global and Mediterranean scenarios presented to them.

The stakeholders appreciated the backcasting exercise as it gave them the very opportunity to be able to propose changes for the future. This gave group members a sense of responsibility, empowerment and motivation.

The backcasting methodology also proves to be a most valuable tool in this direction, by helping involve stakeholders in directly addressing practical problems, and giving them the opportunity to discuss and create with the others a more defined and shared objective. Even though the participants differed in cultural background, age or education, the vision creation process and the possibility to propose future actions elated all of them.

Moreover the technique enabled the main obstacles and bottlenecks to become more explicit. From the community point of view these have to be overcome in order to realise the desirable future.

Deviations from the programme

The workshop followed the programme without any significant deviation, although the timing of each of the working sessions was adjusted on account of the workshop starting late according to that planned in the schedule. The late start was in order to account for the late arrival of some of the participants. Initially the organizers had decided to provide a buffet for lunch in order to save time, but finally this idea was abandoned for a more formal sit-down lunch, to respect the Mediterranean culture of having a more social and relaxed lunch. In fact lunch was a useful time for further team building and conversing between the stakeholders in a less formal and structured setting.

The only relevant component **not** in the programme was the showing of a movie at the end of the last working session. The movie, made by the local NGO, concerned the environmental problems of the target area, focusing especially on the fuel oil issue. The NGO representative that attended the workshop, suggested the idea of showing a movie, reflecting the high enthusiasm that some stakeholders had with respect to the workshop and, moreover, to reflecting their understanding and appreciation of being involved in such an active and participative way. This also clearly demonstrated how the workshop could be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen the local actor network and to stimulate and nurture greater expertise and local knowledge.

Overall opinions of the facilitator

Backcasting process
It is important to emphasise that in Italy, as well as in Spain, the stakeholders found it quite difficult to understand the concept of the backcasting technique and their part in the process. However, after the first session, once they familiarised themselves with the technique, they were soon finding it even easier than the rather more challenging scenario construction of the first workshop.

The use of a flow chart not only increased the attention and involvement of participants, but it proved to be a crucial tool in helping to understand the backcasting technique. This is probably because people need to be able to visualise what is described in words.

Forecasting and backcasting as scenario techniques are complementary, one permits *vision making* and the other, *idea generation*. Thus implementing the two techniques enriches the whole process. They are also two distinctly different processes, so it is important that in the programme there is a clear break between the two. Further it is very important to have the same group of stakeholders for both techniques to encourage better and engagement and consensus of the discussions and tasks. However this, in reality is very difficult to achieve, particularly as each technique was applied on two separate occasions of the year. Thus in future in order to achieve the best outcome from combined application of the two techniques,

it would be better if they were undertaken on the same day, perhaps the forecasting in the morning followed by the backcasting in the afternoon. But then in order to allow enough time for each technique one may also consider the possibility of stretching the workshop over two days thus giving one day for each technique.

Group dynamics
As in Spain, most of the participants attended both the workshops and it was evident, especially at the beginning of the day that those stakeholders with previous experience felt more comfortable and became more easily involved in the process. This places further emphasis upon the need to 'educate' participants as well as the organisations to participate, particularly when there is already so little opportunity to discuss with very different people 'actively' in an open debate.

It is important to emphasize that the anxiety and the scepticism that some participants showed in the first part of the day, turned into evident enthusiasm later in the day. The friendly, comfortable and informal atmosphere stimulated all the stakeholders to contribute much to the process. Participants who were representatives of institutions, and who were obviously more familiar with participating in public dialogue, manifested a greater will to take part in the debate and were able to better communicate and support their positions.

Thus the facilitators had a crucial role to play in managing group dynamics. It was important that they were all provided with the same opportunity to speak and that the more silent stakeholders were encouraged to contribute more to the discussion.
Moreover, the mediators tried to analyse the more controversial opinions by bringing them up as points of discussion for the group, and then carefully taking note of the interaction and the debate among the participants on.

Workshop organisation
The organisers had to be extra careful and prepared in keeping the process as objective as possible. This meant ensuring that the various local groups were represented among the participants and that one specific actor did not dominate the discussions.
In the workshop organisation the most significant difficulty was in knowing the most effective way to stimulate the local actors to take part in the workshop. It was realised that for this purpose just sending a formal invitation was not going to be enough. For instance all the mayors of the municipality of the Agri Basin, 34 in total, were invited but just through means of a formal letter - and 'none' attended.
As in all participatory processes, the success of stakeholder analysis and the adoption of effective means of communication was possible only because the local organisers had a deep knowledge of the local context and the possibility to use the local network already active. Furthermore they already knew the participants quite well as they have had good contact with them on an individual basis in the past.

One of the facilitators involved in the first workshop was unable to participate, so he was substituted by a researcher that had a special expertise both on the local context and the desertification process, but lacking in any experience in participatory processes. This lack in familiarity in participatory processes of the new facilitator brought further difficulty in managing the whole process, thus further underlining the crucial importance of the facilitators' skills and expertise. This is particularly evident in the backcasting exercise, which demanded a great deal more skill from the facilitator in comparison to the forecasting technique. More specifically they needed to be able to guide the debate in a more structured way.
Furthermore another key skill required of the facilitator is their ability in time management. This was because of the very high time constraints existing in the programme. In fact, in this second Agri workshop the problem of timing was particularly apparent and a problem that the new, less experienced facilitator found particularly difficult to manage. The general

impression from this group was that everyone would have preferred to have more time available for discussion.

This experience highlights two main difficulties/observations related to the organization of participatory processes. The first one is specifically related to the local context: in the target area experiences of participatory processes are quite absent, so it is very difficult to find local people with expertise in this field. The second is more general: the dilemma of knowing whether to choose for a facilitator with good expertise in participatory processes, and so able to manage the group dynamics in an efficient way; or whether to choose a facilitator who has good knowledge of the context and of the subject of the workshop. Someone who can more easily communicate with the local stakeholders, who better understands their perspective but moreover, who can focus the debate in the path more relevant for their specific issues and concerns. The best solution would be a balance between two conditions but this option is not always possible.

Effectiveness of results

The discussion about the extension of the present was very interesting. The picture of the present situation, in fact, became more useful and effective when it also included dynamics and trends already happening. In fact, during the workshop, the debate was able to improve a better understanding of the local area (including different perception and information) and to make the backcasting technique easier to implement.

The backcasting technique helped the participants in translating a long-term vision into short-term actions and strategies. And as such, the result was better-defined and more definite in comparison to the results of the first workshop. However, the strategies, objectives and actions identified by the participants still remained rather vague and general. However this result was both obvious and inevitable, because of the time constraints and the lack of technical expertise. Both these were necessary conditions required to yield deeper decisions from such a process. Thus the most useful result was having a *general* vision of the local future, developed with a bottom-up approach, for use as a framework for policy makers coherent with the local idea of sustainability.

To improve the whole process, it would be necessary to give participants the opportunity to evaluate and reformulate the idea suggested. In this way scenario techniques could become a much stronger tool. A final evaluation could also avoid the common 'group dynamic' problem where you have dominant actors have more of an influence than others in the group. This ultimately results in a vision that is not shared by the majority of participants. For this reason the plenary presentation is very important as it provides an opportunity for the results to be elaborated upon by each of the smaller working groups that were randomly formulated during the process. It also serves to enrich the results of the workshop while adding legitimacy and robustness to the whole process. However, this presentation component is, unfortunately not always possible either because of potential time constraints of the workshop, or because of stakeholder fatigue. This presents another solution - to have participatory assessment of the workshop results on another day with the same group of participants. However although in theory this is good solution to a potentially time consuming yet necessary component to the workshop it also brings with it the dilemma of extra financial demands not to mention the extra time that will be required of the stakeholders.

Moreover it was a great learning experience for all involved parties and an important awareness raising initiative on local problems and environmental issues. This experience demonstrates the value of the scenario technique, but also further highlights the need for improving it as a tool for stakeholder engagement in decision-making and long-term planning. It also highlights the necessity for it to be strongly adapted to the local context.

3.3 Reflections and observations of the backcasting workshops

Reflecting on the two, backcasting workshops there are some common experiences of the *process* and *implementation* of the process that we can draw upon (the actual *results* of the backcasting exercises will be discussed in Deliverable 11). These experiences enable us to better understand the benefits and challenges we face when undertaking such participatory processes. But more important for the purpose of this research is to see whether the workshops did in fact serve their purpose by actually helping to engage key local actors into the decision-making process while also helping the researchers better understand the issues facing the target areas. The following points attempt to summarise some of the common features of the workshop experiences.

Common observations between both workshops
The backcasting workshops acting as the 'second part' of a series of two workshops served to 'lighten the load' somewhat in terms of expectations and introductions, etc… Familiarity between participants, between participants and the organisers, and of the participants to the 'participatory' part of the process seemed to favour the momentum of the workshops. Furthermore particular 'lessons learned' from the first workshops were integrated into the development of the backcasting workshops and certainly served to improve their overall conduct.

Participant selection
A great deal of effort was put into careful stakeholder selection by the organising team as well as in actually ensuring that more of the key invited stakeholders attended. This was the case in both Spain and Italy and was fed by direct experiences from the first workshops. In both countries the location of the workshop event itself was recognised as being a significant contributing factor to the attendance of key stakeholders. For instance in both cases a venue was chosen that made it easier for farmers to attend – a key stakeholder whose presence lacked in the first workshops. The Italian organisers recognised this as part of an overall need for 'better representation of the local community' – necessary for enriching the debate with different and qualified points of view by adding meaningful information and new insight. Improving stakeholder selection demonstrates the recognition amongst the organisers as to what was 'missing' before, and furthermore, how the performance and outcome of a workshop can be improved.

Participant interaction
It is only to be expected that more time spent together enable for individuals to become more familiar and accepting of the characteristics and perspectives of one another. More specifically in the Spanish backcasting workshop a degree of *mutual respect* amongst the participants developed. This was in part attributed to their previous experience of working together in the first workshop. But for this reason there also seemed to be a growing level of confidence amongst the participants resulting in their increased active involvement in the discussions. The increased familiarity also enabled for greater enthusiasm and stimulation amongst the participants to get things going.

Social/group learning
Given the premise that participation does not necessarily result in *social learning* it was interesting to find that both workshops, particularly as being the second part to a longer-term process, provided good examples of what could be recognised factors for improved social learning. Within the workshops there were various cases that help demonstrate this more clearly. For instance aside from 'mutual respect', as referred to in the Spanish experience, participants were also seen as being involved in a process of greater mutual *understanding* of one another's perspectives.

Furthermore participants' level of enthusiasm was raised reflecting what could be regarded as greater *respect* for the workshop accredited to the success of the first workshop. This was

very clearly demonstrated in the Italian workshop through one participants' very active involvement when he brought a video with him to show the group about the local environmental issues. The organisers recognised this as demonstrating improved participant understanding of the issues, as well as *appreciation* of actually being involved. Furthermore they refer to the workshops as being an opportunity to 'strengthen the local actor network and stimulate and nurture greater expertise and local knowledge'. These factors go some way to demonstrate how the group setting provided conditions for a greater learning experience.

Experiences and challenges of the process
Generally participants seemed to find that the task of undertaking the backcasting process somewhat confusing – it was difficult for them to clearly understand what they were being asked to do. However this lack in comprehension of the task was only short lived, and eventually participants found the task even easier than the forecasting of the first workshop. Although it is difficult to say this may in part be due to their growing familiarity with such processes. Perhaps being asked to undertake a rather unusual task in the first workshop prepared them mentally for the possibility of being asked to undertake a similar task in the second workshop.

In both workshops participants found the task of discussing the future very difficult. More specifically they were challenged by the prospect of choosing a 'desirable' future to focus upon. Although the first workshops familiarised them somewhat in 'dealing' with the future, the second workshop proved to be just as challenging especially as participants were required, this time, to come up with a more 'specific' end point to work from – challenging their imagination. However the Italian team recognised the benefits of the backcasting methodology, seeing it as complimentary to the forecasting of the first workshop. They refer to one as *vision making* and the other as *idea generation* – an interesting yet useful way of understanding why the research team decided upon applying the backcasting technique to the follow-up workshops.

4 Conclusions

The overall success of these backcasting experiences must not be taken for granted. The process was carefully chosen and prepared, taking into consideration the specific concerns of the stakeholders from the target areas, the organisers and the research team. There were additional factors that contributed to the successful outcome including good use of visual aids, such as the timeline and flow chart, improved facilitation, and a careful consideration of participants needs.

It is important to emphasise that participatory processes must be carefully attuned and designed according to the very specific goals, requirements and concerns of all involved. Thus no one process should be simply mirrored from previous experiences. When planning the backcasting process the research team were strongly influenced by the experiences and expectations that transpired from the first workshop. Although previous experiences and literature on backcasting methodologies were referred to in the planning and preparation stages, the research team only used these as a guide and source of inspiration. It was really only the backcasting 'theory' that the researchers used as a basis upon which to design the workshop process.

It is important to highlight the significant social process that was initiated through both the forecasting and backcasting workshops. The workshops were able to qualify information that perhaps could not necessarily be properly understood through other means of scientific research. The purpose of the workshops was to actively bring key members of the 'public', or 'local knowledge', into the research and decision-making arena and to re-value them as 'experts' in their own right – as 'specialized citizens' (Fischer 2002). More specifically, the workshops served to interconnect and coordinate the different interdependent discourses of citizens and experts.

Furthermore such process must be recognised in light of being one in **many** different processes that *could* have been used to bring local knowledge more actively into the research arena. The arguments *for* and *against* the chosen processes must be reflected upon in this light.

Finally it is necessary to value the workshops as a part of a much longer-term process of public participation. Much information was collected within the workshops but little can be done with this information if not used within a longer-term process. Likewise and more importantly, the *social process* that was created through this is far more valuable than the information generated from it. The group structures and local stakeholder networks that have developed as a result of the workshops acts as a resource tool for developing and discussing longer-term solutions for the problems and issues facing the targets areas with 'local' experts. But this can only be achieved, as acknowledged by all involved, through greater investment of time and money.

Appendix 1. Programme detail
Guidelines for facilitators in Spanish backcasting workshop – June 2003

1/
- Carmen will begin with brief introduction/ rough explanation of day/ and introduction Kasper and other facilitator;
    - In this Carmen needs to outline her expectations, hopes and fears for the day so to in courage others to in their introduction;
- Participants to introduce themselves expressing their expectations, hopes and fears; notetaker to record these on 3 large A1 sheets on the wall labelled expectations, hopes and fears; - this will be useful for facilitator and group alike to reflect upon them throughout the day particularly at the very beginning and at the very end of the day; **this also adds some humour to the day as well as helps everyone relax – very important!!**;
    - Facilitator may find it constructive to deal with issues that were raised in the participant feedback forms collected from 1st workshop.

2/
- Presentation of first workshop – Brief overview of results of first workshop, to remind the group of what they produced last year and introducing the process and production to new participants.
- Connecting with plans for second workshop – presentation of programme, more concrete/detailed outline of what the backcasting process will involve; what is expected from the participants; and what is hoped to be achieved from this.
    - It would be useful to mention that a more detailed explanation of how there input in the scenario construction will be used in DSS, at the end of the workshop – an incentive for them to stay.
- Story of the present – More detailed presentation from what was produced in 1st workshop.
    - Opportunity for participants to analyse, and add or rearrange things as necessary – changes should at best be done in consensus with the group
    - This discussion should be tightly controlled and not seen as an opportunity to totally revise what was produced in the first workshop, rather clarify factors and fill gaps if necessary particularly if there have been an recent developments of major influence. Participants however may as a group choose to reject/re-word certain issues.

3/
- Participants must work in small groups organised by theme (water, community, tourism, agriculture) to identify the main autonomous short-term changes and (if applicable) how is responsible – till the year 2007/8. These must be predetermined, real changes that will happen certainty over the coming 5 years within the knowledge of the participants and can not be presumptions as to what they think *may* happen.
- There is no limitation as to the quantity of what the group can produce but they should consider the appropriateness and relevance of the factors for the region as a whole.
- We are thinking of factors like water demand that will rise because of rising demand from agriculture (illegal irrigation?? what organisation is checking?), or water supply (what agencies are responsible??), or immigration (from Morocco, from Ecuador?)

4/
- A representative from each group then presents the list of factors that their group has produced. (This will then be typed up by the note-taker to be distributed for use in session 6) (20 mins).
- The group discuss the factors (10 mins).

5/
- Facilitator (Kasper) to brief/remind the participants of the three scenarios that were created in the first workshop. (20 mins)
- Facilitator to then outline task that participants will be required to do in the break-up session (10mins).

6/
- In this session participants will be broken into three groups and will be each assigned a scenario to focus upon for backcasting. The task of the group is to:

    a) Examine the main factors of the scenario and consider the information provided in the morning exercise. The summary sheet provided can help provide a quick overview of the important factors within the scenario. Participants should take some time reading and considering this by themselves and as a group – use of flipchart may help facilitate this process.
    b) Discuss and select 1 or more points of focus/frame of reference that can define the scenario in more detail. This will require the group to reach consensus as to what they want to focus their discussion on. The need to focus and prioritise will require them to ignore other factors within the scenario. The chosen image should take the form of an assumption or achieved target i.e. 'By the year 2030 X% of all agriculture will receive sufficient irrigated water':

        - If the defined image is positive the group will need to identify obstacles and opportunities for its realisation, or, if it is negative, for its prevention. This is best achieved by creating an over-arching solution/s for achieving or preventing the defined end scenario. The group must then construct action points mapping them on various parts of the time-line that are necessary for the achievement of the solution/s (see Fig. 1). It will be necessary for the group to keep in mind the predetermined factors that were established for the first 5 years (session 3).

        - Alongside constructing and mapping action points participants should identify the actors involved with each action. This would ultimately help in pin-pointing responsibility.

    Finally participants should bear in mind the following:
    - To attempt to propose and deal with *the most challenging/difficult solutions* and action points – it is these that usually get ignored;
    - Likewise prioritising analysis on *only a few action points* from the total, is sufficient and more efficient as it will enable better articulation and examination of them;
    - Question/challenge proposed solutions and action points *as a group* - do not just accept them i.e. are they realistic and sufficient. This will help identify any loopholes within the proposed solutions and will serve only to strengthen them;
    - Participants do not have to *believe* in their proposed solutions but should *understand* them;
    - Participants should not force consensus. But should voice different *arguments* on potential solutions.

    If there is time……:
    - …..groups may wish to reflect upon their chosen action points in relation to the other two scenarios. This can be quite complex and should only be attempted if sufficient time and energy remains amongst all those in the group;

7/
- Groups reconvene into plenary and an appointed representative/s from each of the three groups present and explain their time chart. The decision-making and thought-process

behind each time chart needs to be communicated and justified to the plenary group as best as possible…and of course members from each group are allowed to contribute to the overall presentation. Members of the other groups are allowed to stop the presenter if clarification is required but generally questions should remain until the end of each presentation.

8/
- After presentations the facilitator will then initiate an open discussion that will ask participants to consider the similarities and contradictions amongst all three time-charts. This may require focusing only a selected few items to enable effective
- This is very important part of the whole process (Scenario construction and Backcasting) where the participants will be given the opportunity to construct clear policy guidelines from the work they have developed over the 2 days.

9/
- As well as drawing the 2 day process to a conclusion the facilitator will ask the stakeholders for their feedback raising specific questions to probe them.
  - In this the facilitator needs to draw upon the flip chart papers that outlined the hopes, fears and aspirations of the participants that were developed at the beginning of the session.

!!Facilitator will need to prepare the following!!

1/ One large room for plenary sessions – big enough to seat all participants comfortably;
2/ Two or three smaller rooms that can be used for session 4;
3/ Chairs and tables that can be easily moved and changed to suit alterations in seating arrangements;
4/ Enough space for facilitator to present and to move around;
5/ Materials/Equipment: Beamer/overhead projector; laptop; flip charts & coloured marker pens, plenty of wall space upon which paper sheets can be stuck with blue tack or tape; camera/video recorder – enough to record whole session; paper & pens for stakeholders; post-it pads – different colours;
6/ Long time chart that has enough empty space upon which plenty of post-its can be stuck;
7/ So not to use up valuable time it would be best if tea/coffee is made available to participants throughout the day, in a easily accessible location so that they can help themselves;
8/ Camera person to video-record the whole workshop particularly the open discussions;
9/ Photocopier;
10/ Laptop + printer;
11/ Flip-over x 3 + blue-tac;
12/ Coloured markers; 13/ Notetaker

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