

Chapter 2

Project Cycle Facilitation

This chapter covers

- Project cycle management and the difference between implementation and facilitation in sustainable mountain tourism
- The Triple-A (analysis, action, and assessment) model for sustainable mountain tourism
- Mountain tourism project cycles at strategic, organisational, and project levels

Introduction: Project Cycle Facilitation in Sustainable Mountain Tourism

This Resource Book supports NTOs and STOs to facilitate sustainable mountain tourism on three development levels.

1. Strategy level
2. Institutional or organisational level
3. Project level

Project cycle facilitation is used as an approach to address these three levels of facilitation. This chapter provides a framework for NTOs and STOs to facilitate tourism development processes at the strategic, institutional or organisational, and project levels (see Figure 2.1).

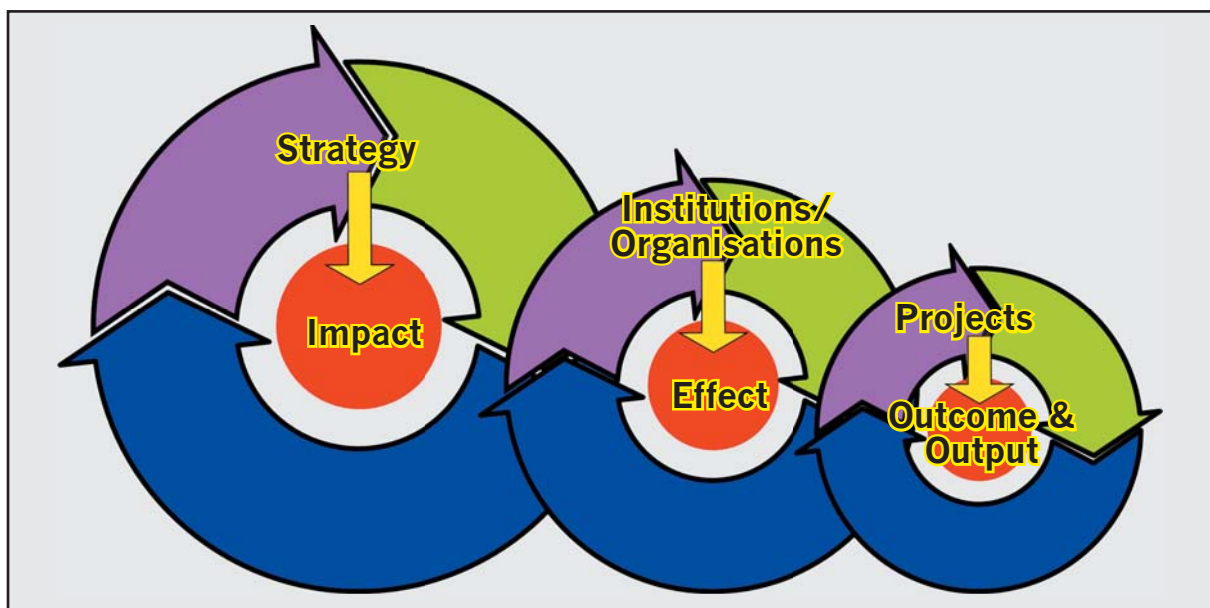


Figure 2.1: Project cycle facilitation at three levels

- **Strategy cycle** => results in **impact**
- **Institution** or **organisation** or **NTO cycle** => results in **effect**
- **Project cycle** => results in **outcome** and **output**

The three cycles (strategy cycle, institution or organisation cycle, and project cycle) are all elements of the involvement of NTOs and STOs in the development of sustainable mountain tourism. In this chapter these three cycles are explained.

A Framework for Tourism Project Cycle Facilitation

Facilitation versus implementation

By their very nature, NTOs and STOs are coordinating organisations. They provide policies and frameworks, they bring stakeholders together, and they support tourism development processes. More often than not, they facilitate these processes rather than implement them themselves. The case of the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) is used to illustrate the shift from being an implementing organisation (as SNV was until the end of the 1990s) to a facilitating and capacity-building organisation (as it is today), to exemplify an approach towards project facilitation (see Box 2.1).

There are several facilitation skills that can be used to facilitate sustainable mountain tourism development processes at a strategic, institutional or organisational, or project level:

- **Team commitment:** effective collaboration, good atmosphere, results orientation, openness
- **Steering and progress control:** efficient planning and organisation of complex activities
- **Focus on quality:** intention to develop others in order to function better
- **Innovation:** new ideas, solutions, and applications, as well as drive for continuous improvement of concepts, knowledge, and services
- **Relationship networks:** good contacts that are relevant to the realisation of the intended result
- **Impact:** influence, make a difference and convince
- **Expertise:** insights and skills in a knowledge area, information dissemination
- **Focus on partner needs:** intention to assist partners in achieving their goals and increasing their capacities

Three steps in the tourism project cycle: the Triple-A Model

There are three cyclic steps that should be present at all three levels of the project cycle, (strategy, institution or organisation, and project level) also called the 'AAA' or 'Triple-A' Model. The objective of the Triple-A Model is to identify the different steps within the three levels using standard formats for procedures, key documents, guidelines, and quality standards. In addition, the Triple-A Model provides a framework for allocating roles and responsibilities for key decisions in any tourism development process.

As any model, this model is a simplification of reality and can be useful as a sort of checklist. Even if the steps cannot be followed in sequential order, each step should have a story. It is imperative to be able to explain the courses of action undertaken, what the actions were about, and what results were achieved. A graphical representation of this model is depicted in Figure 2.2.

Box 2.1: SNV: From Implementation to Facilitation

1. From Poverty alleviation to the struggle against poverty

Poverty is more than just a percentage of people living on less than a dollar a day. SNV has experienced that helping small groups of poor people to earn and eat and drink more doesn't fundamentally change the structural causes of their poverty. SNV has learned that poverty exists because society and its institutions fail to correct excessive socio-political and economic inequalities and inequity, leading to injustice and exploitation. Meso-level organisations in developing countries have the position and the potential to influence such causes of poverty at the meso level and to act and inspire others to act.

2. From joint interventions to local responsibility

In the 1990s it was recognised that development cannot be brought about by external parties, but should be owned, guided, and led by committed local parties. Key notions are ownership and local responsibility. Increased capacity of local actors is essential to combat poverty effectively and in a sustainable way. SNV sees its relations with local organisations as ones in which SNV supports them in developing their capacities, doing their work, and realising their goals. Local organisations have direct responsibility; and they call the shots. They own and lead change processes. Their needs and priorities take centre stage. SNV's role is one of serving, challenging, advising, supporting, and, where necessary and at their request, SNV can influence and lobby on their behalf.

3. From project management to process facilitation

Development is a highly complex process, with physical, technical, economic, social, and political dimensions and with many stakeholders. The dynamics of development processes are, therefore, only partly predictable and manageable. SNV has experienced this – often the hard way. Project concepts and management instruments were developed originally for relatively well-controlled processes. A variety of more dynamic and flexible concepts of process facilitation for understanding and managing complex change has become available over the last 10 years.

4. From SNV programmes to client-driven activities

The shift from SNV as a manager of large development programmes with their own development objectives to a provider of demand-oriented, capacity-strengthening services entailed a profound review of the way in which SNV managed its interventions. Transparency in the process of demand formulation and negotiation is essential. Local organisations state their interests, expectations, and the intended results of the cooperation in a service contract in which the local organisation is the principal. Portfolios of such partner-driven activities form the new structuring elements through which SNV organises its advisory practice.

5. From implementers to change facilitators

The above-mentioned shifts have consequences for the role that SNV experts play. They are no longer required to achieve results in poverty reduction directly. Instead they are required to strengthen the capacities of local organisations to achieve results. As the changes aspired to are often complex, there is a special emphasis on support in change processes, rather than punctual advice on specific matters.

6. From isolated knowledge transfer to facilitation of knowledge exchange and development

Nowadays information is available from many sources. Arriving at solutions to complex issues requires relevant information from different corners and the ability to transform it into new applicable knowledge that addresses the specific situation. SNV advisors are no longer prescribing experts who transfer their knowledge, but facilitators of networks of knowledge exchange, enrichment, and development that are able to meet local needs.

Source: Adapted from SNV 2002

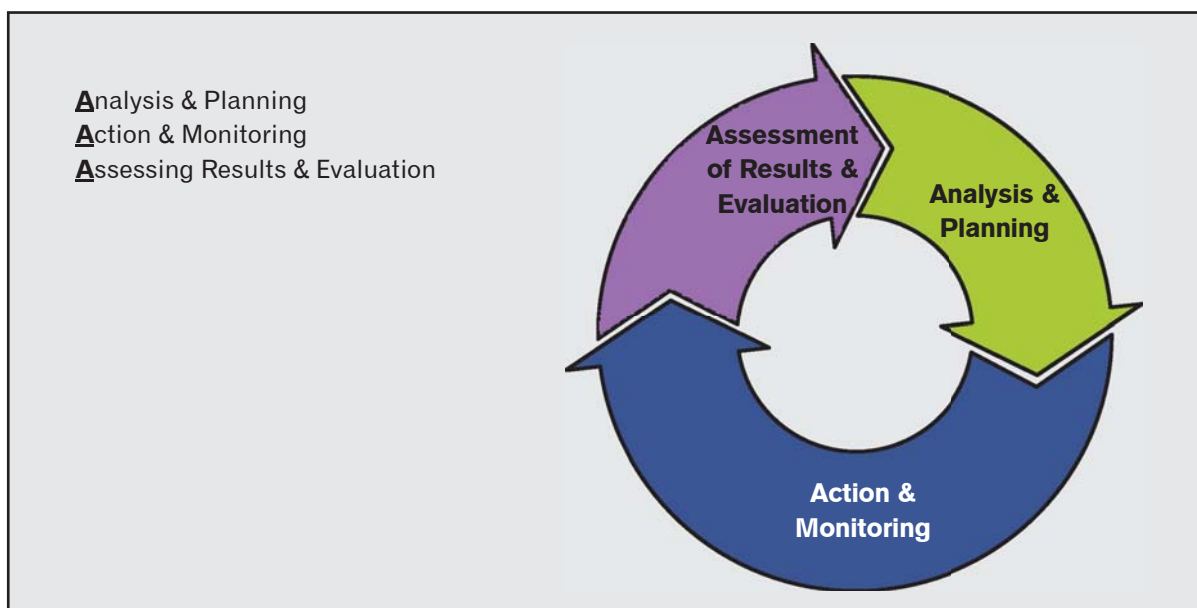


Figure 2.2: The Triple-A Model

This Resource Book explains how to conduct **A**nalysis, how to engage in **A**ction, and how to **A**ssess results on the three levels as shown below.

Triple-A on the Three Levels				
	Results to be achieved at this level	Process Steps		
		Analysis	Action	Assessment
Strategy Level	Impact (=improvements in the lives of the poor)	Strategic planning; contextual analysis (see Volume 2, Tools 32 and 5)	Implementing strategies and managing	Multi-stakeholder impact analysis
Institutional/ Organisational Level	Effect (=enhanced performance)	Organisational assessment	Capacity strengthening at NTO level	Effect assessment
Project Level	Outcome (=enhanced capacity) Outputs (services delivered)	Contracting (issue analysis and activity planning)	Implementing a project	Measuring the result of outputs and outcomes

Triple-A in the tourism strategic cycle

It is important to analyse where, and with whom, to work in order to achieve the most effective impact on poverty reduction through tourism. This requires substantial knowledge about the tourism context and the stakeholders in order to make proper strategic decisions regarding thematic and geographic scope. It needs to be defined how problems and opportunities can be identified; who the key stakeholders are that can bring change; how to ensure gender mainstreaming and social inclusion in tourism; and how to link tourism targets to the national poverty reduction strategies and to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The result of these considerations is a strategy document that guides choices for NTOs and STOs on what support to offer in the tourism development process and how to identify clients, partners, and sponsors; and which establishes realistic tourism targets.

Impacts are not achieved by one organisation working alone, but often emerge through the work of many actors and multiple factors. Therefore, measuring impact cannot be linked to a single organisation. It is recommended that a multi-stakeholder impact analysis be carried out to determine what changes have occurred and how the various actors and factors have contributed to this. Lessons derived from these impact analyses will feed into the positioning phase of the next tourism strategy cycle (see Figure 2.3).

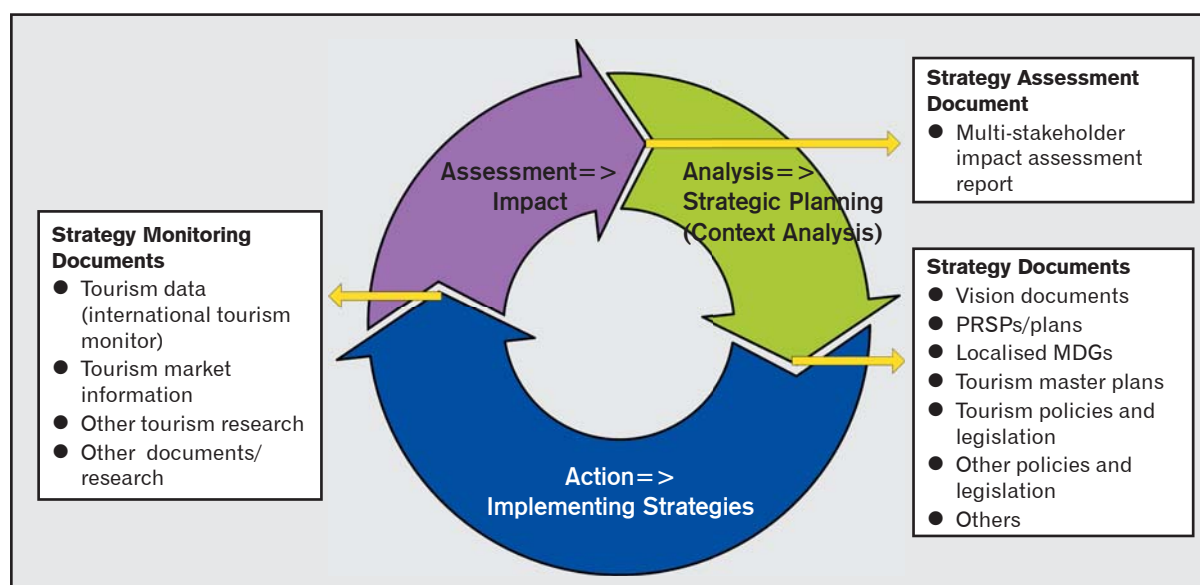


Figure 2.3: The strategic cycle

The first step in the tourism strategy cycle is **analysis** (strategic planning). The strategic planning exercise consists of a multi-stakeholder contextual analysis of problems, opportunities, stakeholders, issues at stake, and targets at the impact level (see Volume 2, Tool 5). This step results in strategic plans in which tourism targets are set in alignment with national tourism strategies. This should result in strategic plans being produced, for instance every three years (see Volume 2, Tool 32).

The second step is **action** (implementing strategies). Implementing and reviewing strategies consists of monitoring and checking the progress of strategic plans; evaluating their success and challenges; and regular adjustment of the strategy whenever necessary. This step should result in the projected impacts outlined in the strategic plan.

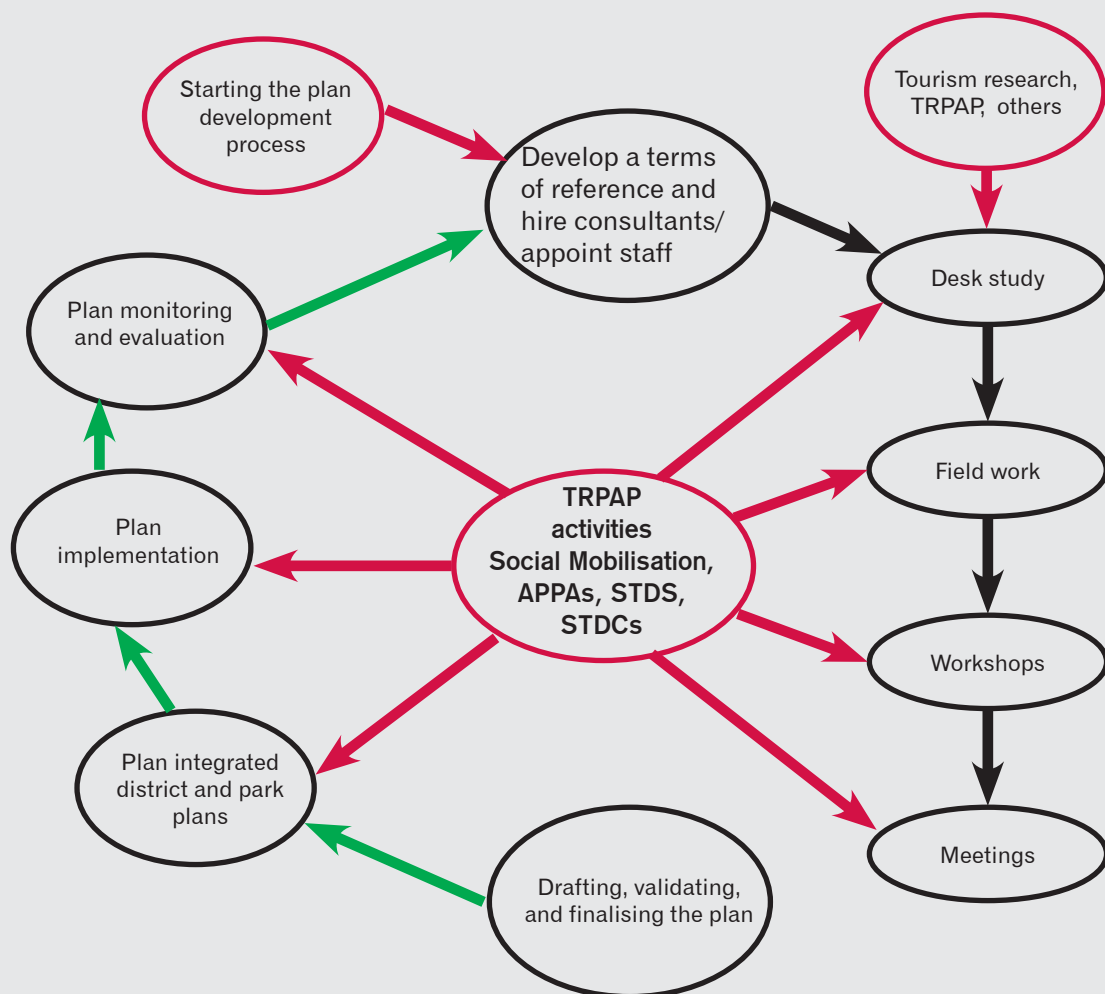
The third step is **assessment** (multi-stakeholder impact assessment). Impact assessments are always conducted by external consultants to maintain impartiality at the evaluation level. Partnering with other organisations improves the reliability of analysis results, as true tourism development emerges through the work of many actors and factors.

The tourism strategy cycle is concluded with an evaluation meant to provide insight into the impacts achieved (result measurement) and how the various actors and factors have made contributions. Lessons derived from these impact analyses will feed into the analysis and planning phase of the next tourism strategy cycle.

Contextual analysis (see Volume 2, Tool 5), predicting project trends, setting goals and objectives, identifying alternatives, and developing a strategy to reach the set goals is all part of the analysis (Strategic Planning; see Volume 2, Tool 32). The implementation of the plan is the action, and evaluating, reflecting on, and reviewing the whole cycle form the assessment. In all stages of the cycle tourism stakeholders are involved (see Figure 2.4). An example of a tourism strategy cycle is given in Box 2.2, showcasing this generic planning process in a localised context.

Box 2.2: Tourism Strategy Cycle from the Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme in Nepal

In the TRPAP programme, participatory district tourism plans were developed using a tourism strategy cycle process. TRPAP staff and staff of the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), as well as consultants and local authorities, were all involved in the district tourism planning process. The analysis phase included the development of terms of reference, desk studies, field work, workshops and meetings, and drafting and validating the plan. In the action phase the plan was implemented locally by stakeholders with support from TRPAP and the NTB. The assessment phase was also done locally, with support from TRPAP and NTB. The whole process is illustrated graphically below.



Red arrows indicate support from TRPAP/NTB

Black arrows indicate the taskforce/consultants' team

Green arrows indicate local implementation by district and park authorities

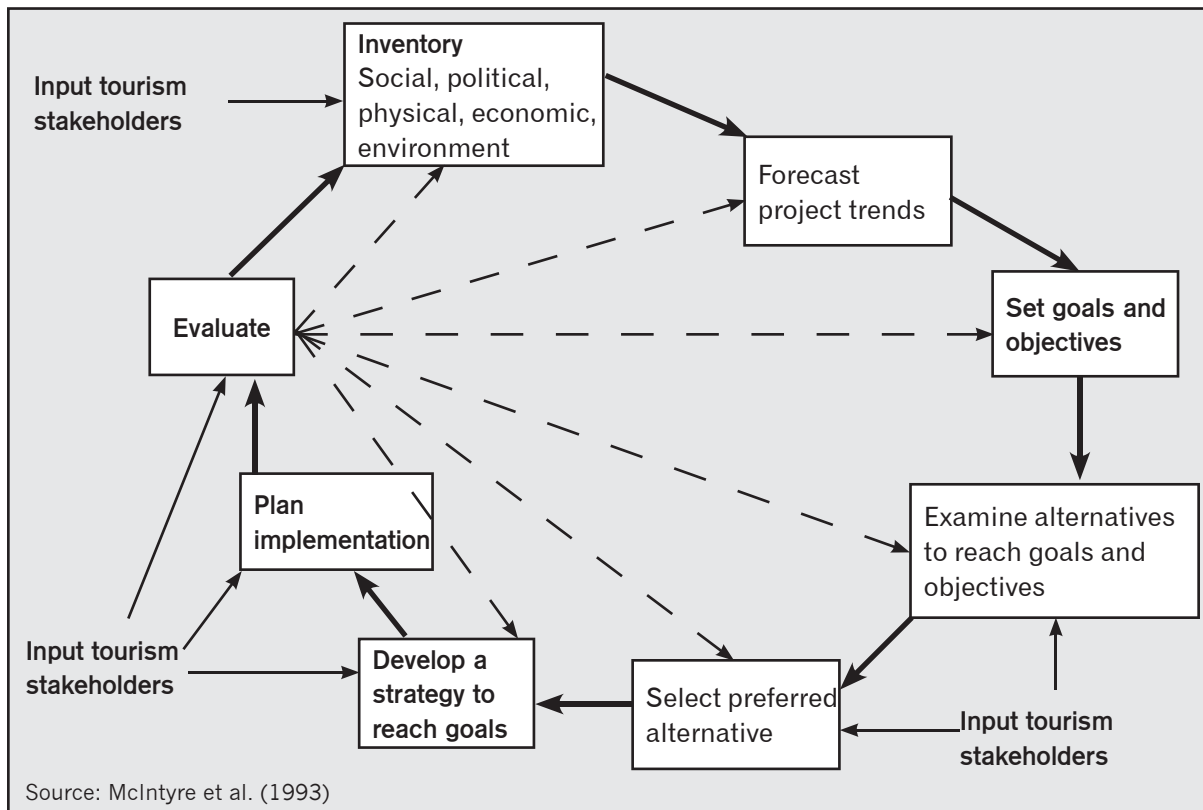


Figure 2.4: Example of a tourism strategy cycle

Triple-A in the institutional or organisational cycle

Similar cycles can be developed at the institutional or organisational level (also called the NTO level). Firstly, institutional and organisational analysis is conducted (instruments and tools for this are introduced in more detail in Chapter 13). Several documents are included in the analysis phase, including the NTO business plan, tourism planning documents, marketing strategies and plans, and the NTO capacity development plan. Action is centred on the facilitation of tourism development projects, implemented through a range of stakeholders, and capacity development of the organisation itself. Monitoring is conducted as part of action; the organisation's annual reports are important monitoring documents. During assessment, tourism projects and capacity development are reviewed together with relevant documents. A graphical summary of the different steps and phases is provided in Figure 2.5.

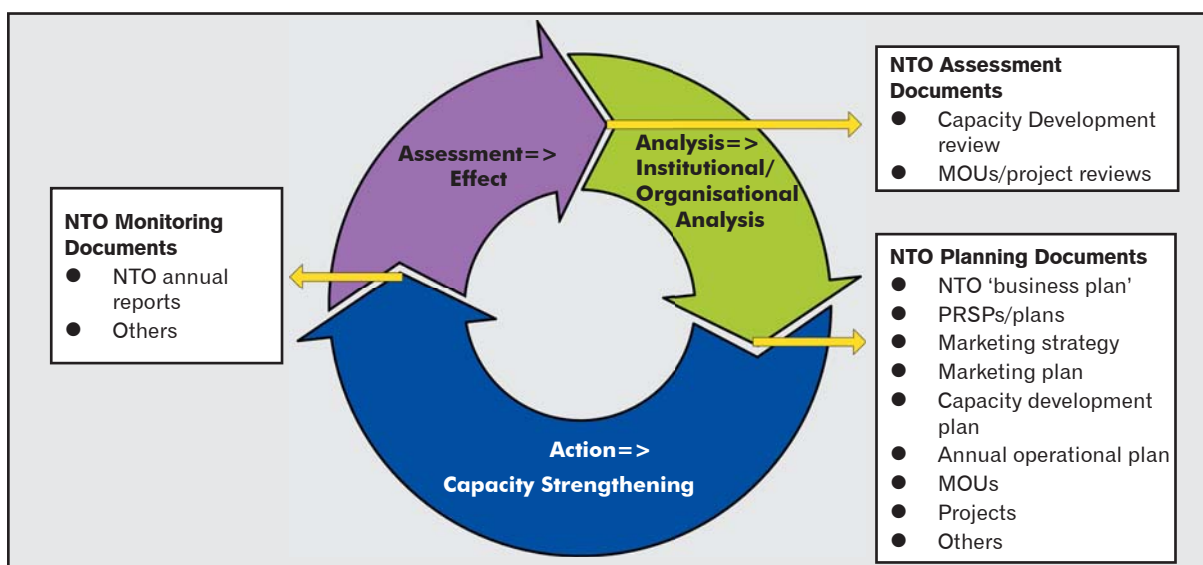


Figure 2.5: Triple-A in the institutional or organisational cycle

Triple-A in the tourism project cycle

The tourism project cycle includes an analysis of the issues and activities in the project. Action is the implementation and monitoring of the tourism project and assessment is where the tourism project is reviewed. This relationship is illustrated graphically in Figure 2.6.

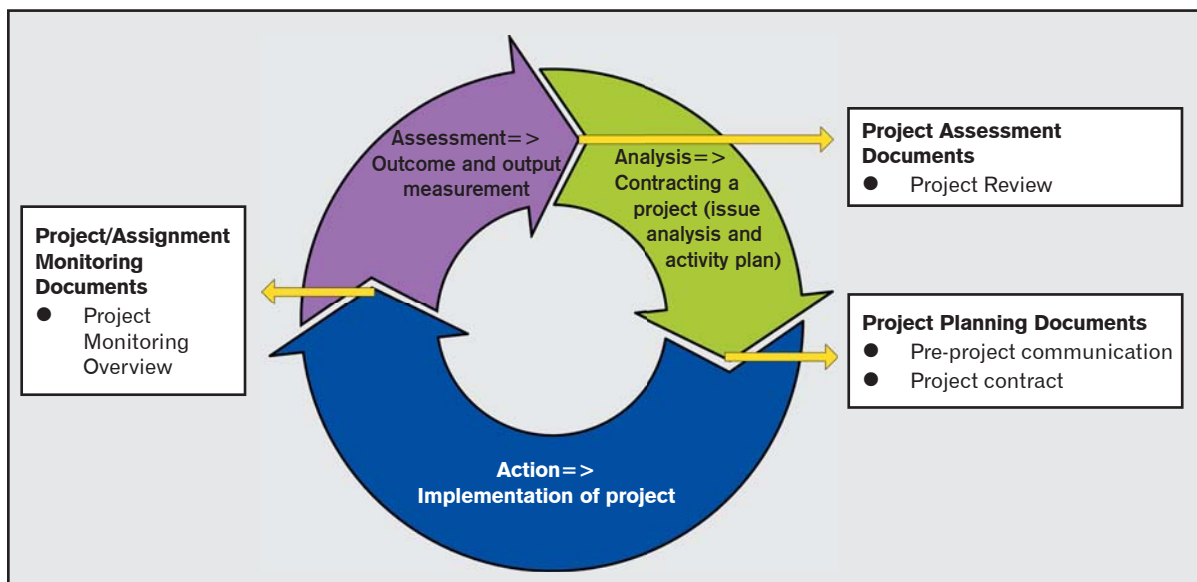


Figure 2.6: Triple-A in the tourism project cycle

Planning cycles are introduced even within tourism project activities. A good example is the appreciative participatory planning and action (APPA) process used in several projects in Bhutan, China/Tibet, India, and Nepal to involve local communities in planning mountain tourism activities in their villages. Figure 2.7 summarises the main steps of this popular participatory cycle. More details about this approach and how it is linked to the tourism project cycle and facilitation process are given in Chapter 6.

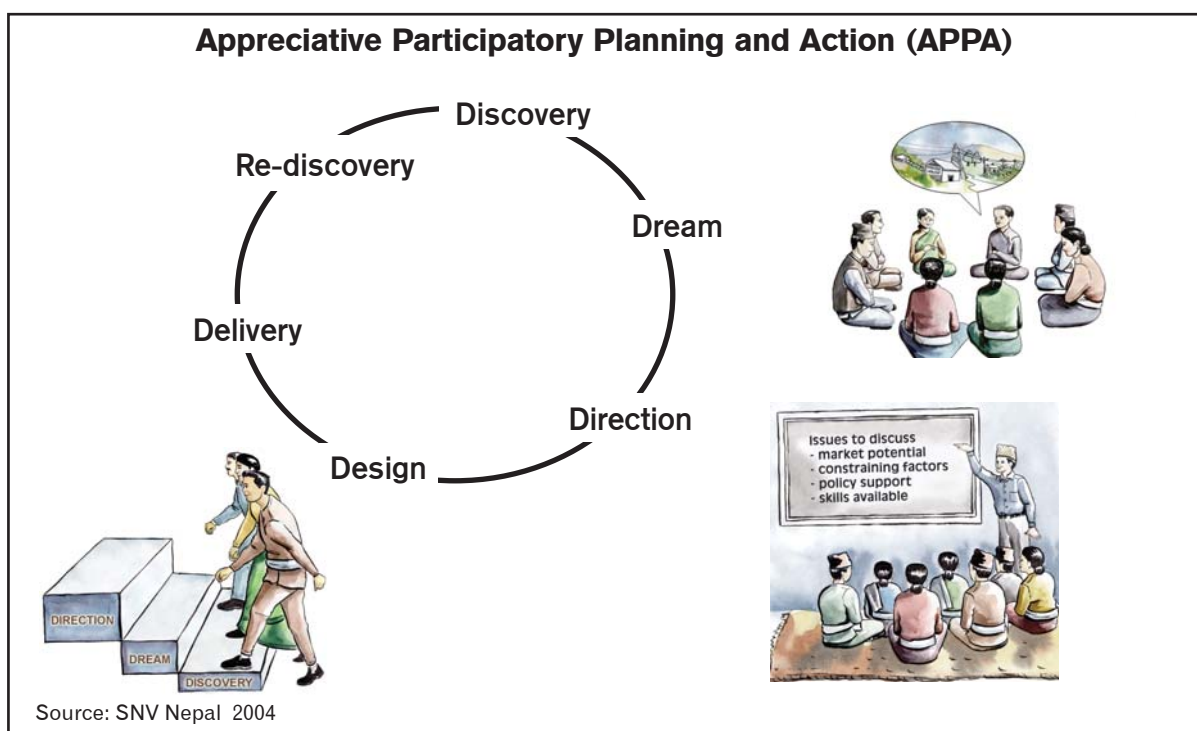


Figure 2.7: The APPA cycle

In order to make the cycles more 'lively' participatory positioning exercises can be conducted. Box 2.3 shows an example of a participatory positioning exercise.

Box 2.3: Participatory Positioning Exercise

A small exercise can be conducted to determine which of the three cycles tourism professionals are involved in during their daily work. For this exercise a poster of the three cycles is needed and some Post-it notes. Request all professionals to have a look at the three cycles on the poster and ask them two questions:

1. Where do you work most in these three levels of project cycle facilitation? At the strategic level, at the institutional or organisational (NTO/STO) level, or at the project level?
2. Are you involved in the analysis, action, or assessment stage of the cycle?



All professionals can stick a Post-it note with their name and designation on the poster at the relevant place on the three cycles. Then the trainer can emphasise those sessions in which most of the professionals are working.

For instance, in the training course that was conducted in June 2006 in Nepal (see picture above); participants were more involved in the assessment of the strategy cycle, assessment of the organisational cycle, and in the analysis, action, and assessment of project implementation. Specific emphasis was given to these aspects in the training course.