HOLISTIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR
CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF FARMING

# Consultation Material - Module 3
## ClimateFarming

2022-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000090163

Provided by: CEFE International
Date: September 2023

# Contents

# Module 3: What it means to be a successful consultant

## Tasks of a Consultant

Consultants play a vital role in the success of businesses in common and here in farming by providing expert advice, analysis, and solutions to various problems and challenges. The role of a consultant varies depending on the specific needs of the client, but some of the key responsibilities and tasks include:

1. Assessing the situation: A consultant's first task is to understand the client's needs, goals, and challenges. This involves gathering data, analyzing processes, and identifying areas for improvement or growth.
2. Developing a plan: Once the consultant has a clear understanding of the client's needs, they develop a strategic plan to achieve the desired outcomes. This may involve recommending changes to operations, policies, or procedures, developing new strategies, or implementing new technology.
3. Implementing the plan: Consultants often work with clients to implement the recommendations they have made. This may involve working with internal teams or external partners, such as vendors or contractors, to execute the plan.
4. Monitoring progress: Consultants monitor the progress of the plan to ensure that it is achieving the desired outcomes. This involves measuring results, analyzing data, and making adjustments as needed
5. Providing ongoing support: Some consultants provide ongoing support to clients, helping them to maintain and improve their operations over time. This may involve providing training, coaching, and sometimes even mediating.

Following the last point we see, that it is necessary to differentiate training, coaching, and mentoring from consulting.

## Different roles of a consultant

### Trainer
A trainer deliberately transfers knowledge and skills to groups or individuals in an official setting. In the role of a trainer you are both didactically fit and socially competent. Most of the added value lies in the design, delivery and evaluation of training. You make sure that skill goals are achieved. You can train (almost) everything at all levels of the company.

### Coach
The main focus of the coach is the further development of individuals and entire teams. In this role, you act as a 'sparring partner' for the client, reflecting together and at eye level on hard and soft challenges in the company. Coaches are connoisseurs of human nature, somewhere between a technical expert and a project psychologist. With their questioning and listening techniques, they help clients achieve organisational and individual goals. Their portfolio consists of the common methods of people diagnosis and personality development.

**Mediator**

The positive shaping of internal and external company relationships is the mediator's bread and butter business. In business mediation, it is often a matter of resolving a conflict, for example between a superior and an employee or a client and a supplier. As a mediator you are sensitive and know about the people. You usually make sure that the organisation solves internal problems and can help itself in the future.

**"Scapegoat"**

If the consulting project gets into trouble or the hoped-for success fails to materialise, you sometimes find yourself unintentionally in the role of scapegoat, as the reason for failure & lightning rod. Why not? After all, the client wanted to use the external force to prevent the project from failing. The fact that the final decision was made internally and that the consultant only accompanied it is pushed into the background. In fact, as a consultant, it is difficult to shed this role.

As we can see, the counsellor is in the tension between knowledge transfer (hard skills) and soft skills transfer. He supports his client in what to do and enables him to do it on his own.

**Skills required for a successful consultant.**

The role of a consultant requires a diverse set of skills and expertise, including:

**Analytical skills**

Consultants need to be able to gather and analyze data to identify problems and develop solutions. Analytical skills refer to the ability to collect, analyze, interpret, and draw meaningful conclusions from data and information. Individuals with strong analytical skills are able to break down complex problems or situations into their component parts, understand the relationships between these parts, and develop logical and data-driven solutions. Analytical skills involve critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making, and often involve the use of quantitative methods, statistical analysis, and other data-driven techniques to evaluate and interpret information.

**Communication skills**

Consultants need to be able to communicate effectively with clients, stakeholders, and team members to build rapport, explain complex ideas, and present recommendations. Communication skills refer to the ability to convey and exchange information and ideas effectively through various modes of communication, including verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual communication. Individuals with strong communication skills are able to express their thoughts clearly, listen actively and attentively to others, and adapt their communication style to different audiences and situations. Effective communication also involves using appropriate tone, body language, and context-specific terminology to ensure that the message is received and understood by the intended audience.

**Sector knowledge**

Consultants need to have a deep understanding of the sector, here agriculture and stay up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices.

**Project management skills**

Consultants often work on complex projects with multiple stakeholders and need to be able to manage timelines, budgets, and resources effectively. Project management skills refer to the ability to plan, organize, execute, and close projects effectively and efficiently. Individuals with strong project management skills are able to define project goals and objectives, develop a detailed project plan with timelines, budgets, and resource allocations, communicate project status and progress to stakeholders, monitor and control project risks and issues, and deliver high-quality results on time and within budget. Effective project management also involves managing project teams, including assigning tasks, managing team dynamics, and providing feedback and support to team members.

**Problem-solving skills**

Consultants need to be able to think critically and creatively to develop innovative solutions to complex problems. Problem-solving skills refer to the ability to identify, analyze, and develop effective solutions to complex or challenging problems. Individuals with strong problem-solving skills are able to approach problems in a systematic and logical manner, using critical thinking, creativity, and analytical skills to evaluate information, identify root causes, and develop and implement solutions.

## Toolbox for consultants

**Counselling contract**

It is advisable to conclude a counselling contract with the client. This contract contains the status quo before the consultation, the main points, why the client is asking for support. Furthermore, goals should be formulated, and these should be in the form of SMART goals.

Here's what each letter of SMART stands for:

- Specific: Objectives should be clearly defined and specific, outlining exactly what you want to achieve. This means being clear about the who, what, where, when, and why of your goal.
- Measurable: Objectives should be quantifiable and include specific metrics or measurements to track progress and determine when you have achieved your goal.
- Achievable: Objectives should be realistic and feasible, taking into account available resources, skills, and time constraints.
- Relevant: Objectives should be relevant to your overall goals and objectives, contributing to a larger purpose or mission.
- Time-bound: Objectives should have a clear deadline or timeline for completion, helping you stay focused and accountable.

**Project Management Models and Gantt Chart**

The general project management model should be described in the contract, possibly methods like scrum. A roadmap with estimated resource input (time and financial resources) should be agreed upon. And finally, the description of possible risks and how these can be managed. These points can be visualized in a Gantt chart.

A Gantt chart is a visual tool used in project management to represent a project schedule. Gantt charts typically consist of horizontal bars representing individual tasks that are arranged along a horizontal time axis. The bars are color-coded to indicate their status (e.g., completed, in progress, not started) and show the duration of each task. The chart also shows the dependencies between tasks, with arrows connecting tasks that are dependent on each other.

Sample of a Gantt Chart: (M = month)

| ACTIVITIES | Who | M 1 | M 2 | M 3 | M 4 | M 5 | M 6 | M 7 | M 8 | M 9 | M 10 | M 11 | M 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initial inquiry, Soil Analysis | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| Vulnearability Analysis | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| Farm Assessment | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | |
| Practical implementation meassure 1 | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| Practical implementation meassure 2 | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| Practical implementation meassure 3 | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| Evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| Report | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |

**Communication**

All communication theories assume that the message passes through a channel, a medium, on its way from the sender to the receiver and is thereby changed. This "noise in the channel" is the cause of misunderstandings that can only be mitigated by both partners being aware of this fact and both making an effort to understand better by asking questions.

The Four Ears Model or Four Eared Listener Model, was developed by Friedemann Schulz von Thun, a German psychologist and expert in communication. This model is designed to help individuals understand the various levels of communication that occur during interpersonal interactions.

The Four Ears Model or Four Eared Listener Model suggests that there are four levels of listening that take place in communication. These levels are:

- The factual level (content): This level is concerned with the literal meaning of what is being said. It includes the facts, data, and information being communicated.

- The self-revealing level (self-disclosure): This level is concerned with what the speaker is revealing about themselves through their communication. It includes their thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

- The relationship level (relationship): This level is concerned with the nature of the relationship between the speaker and listener. It includes the emotional tone of the communication, the level of trust and respect between the individuals, and the power dynamic at play.

- The appeal level (action): This level is concerned with what the speaker is asking the listener to do or not to do. It includes requests, commands, suggestions, and advice.

According to the model, effective communication requires that all four levels are addressed by the speaker and understood by the listener. It also suggests that each level of communication can be perceived and responded to differently by different individuals, depending on their own background, experiences, and preferences.

**Conflict Management**

Friedrich Glasl is an Austrian conflict researcher who developed a model for conflict escalation. The Glasl's model of conflict escalation provides a useful framework for understanding the different stages of conflict and for developing effective conflict management strategies. It emphasizes the importance of de-escalation and dialogue in resolving conflicts and highlights the need for ongoing efforts to build trust and cooperation between the parties involved.

Stage 1: Latent conflict. In this stage, there are underlying tensions or issues that have not yet surfaced, but which may become a source of conflict in the future.

Stage 2: Manifest conflict. In this stage, the conflict becomes evident and is openly expressed. The parties involved begin to take sides and positions become more entrenched.

Stage 3: Conflict escalation. In this stage, the conflict intensifies and emotions become more heated. Communication becomes more difficult, and the parties involved become more aggressive and defensive.

Stage 4: Stalemate. In this stage, the conflict becomes deadlocked and progress towards resolution becomes difficult. The parties involved may become more entrenched in their positions and are less willing to listen to each other.

Stage 5: De-escalation. In this stage, the parties involved start to look for ways to reduce tensions and to move towards a more constructive dialogue.

Stage 6: Settlement/agreement. In this stage, the parties involved reach a resolution or agreement that is acceptable to all parties.

Stage 7: Consolidation. In this stage, the parties involved work to maintain the agreement and to build trust and cooperation.

Stage 8: Reconciliation. In this stage, the parties involved work to repair relationships and restore mutual respect and trust.

Stage 9: Peacebuilding. In this stage, the parties involved work to address the underlying causes of the conflict and to prevent future conflicts from arising.

In order to avoid conflicts, Marshall B. Rosenberg developed non-violent communication. The approach is based on the principle of empathy and focuses on creating understanding, mutual respect, and compassionate relationships. NVC is widely used in conflict resolution, personal growth, and organizational development.

According to NVC, communication involves four basic components: observation, feeling, need, and request. The approach encourages individuals to communicate these four elements in a way that promotes understanding and connection with others.

- Observation: The first step in NVC is to describe the situation or behavior in a neutral and objective manner, without judgment or interpretation.
- Feeling: The second step is to express how the situation or behavior makes you feel, using a vocabulary of emotions that accurately reflects your experience.
-

- Need: The third step is to identify the underlying need or desire that is driving your feelings. Needs are seen as universal and fundamental to human nature, and are distinct from specific strategies or actions.
- Request: The fourth step is to make a request for action or change that is concrete, specific, and respectful of the other person's autonomy.

The aim of NVC is to foster empathy and mutual understanding by encouraging individuals to express themselves honestly and empathetically, and to listen with empathy and respect.

**Creativity methods**

The Six Hats tool is a creativity tool developed by Edward de Bono that is designed to help individuals think more effectively and creatively by exploring multiple perspectives on a given problem or issue. There are six different colored "hats" in the Six Hats tool, each representing a different type of thinking:

- White Hat: This hat represents the collection of objective information and facts. In this mode, the focus is on analyzing data and information that is available and making logical deductions.
- Red Hat: This hat represents emotions and feelings. In this mode, the focus is on understanding and expressing the feelings, hunches, and intuitions that arise when considering a problem.
- Black Hat: This hat represents the critical and cautious thinking. In this mode, the focus is on identifying the potential problems, drawbacks, and obstacles to a given solution.
- Yellow Hat: This hat represents the optimistic and positive thinking. In this mode, the focus is on identifying the potential benefits, opportunities, and advantages of a given solution.
- Green Hat: This hat represents the creative and imaginative thinking. In this mode, the focus is on generating new and innovative ideas, and on considering alternative approaches to the problem.
- Blue Hat: This hat represents the reflective and procedural thinking. In this mode, the focus is on reviewing and evaluating the thinking process and deciding on the next steps.

The Six Hats tool encourages individuals to wear different hats at different times during the problem-solving process, in order to explore different perspectives and generate more creative solutions. By switching hats, individuals can break free from their habitual ways of thinking and consider new and different approaches to the problem at hand.

**Visualizing causes of problems**

An Ishikawa diagram, also known as a fishbone diagram or cause-and-effect diagram, is a tool used for identifying and organizing the possible causes of a problem or issue. It was developed by Kaoru Ishikawa, a Japanese quality control expert.

The Ishikawa diagram is based on the idea that there are several possible causes of a problem, and that these causes can be grouped into several major categories. The diagram is constructed as follows:

- Start by defining the problem or issue you want to investigate and write it at the head of the diagram.
- Draw a horizontal arrow pointing to the right from the head of the diagram.
- Draw a vertical arrow pointing downwards from the horizontal arrow to create the spine of the fishbone.
- Identify the major categories of possible causes for the problem, such as people, process, equipment, materials, and environment, and draw diagonal arrows from the spine to these categories.
- Identify the specific causes within each category and draw diagonal arrows from the major categories to the specific causes.
- Identify the root cause(s) of the problem by analyzing the specific causes.

The Ishikawa diagram is a visual tool that helps to identify the different factors that may be contributing to a problem. By breaking down the problem into different categories and specific causes, it becomes easier to understand the root cause of the problem and to develop a solution.

**Methods for creating new businesses**
Design thinking is an approach that puts human needs and experiences at the center of the design process. It is a methodology that is used to create innovative and effective solutions, especially very useful, when creating new business ideas. The design thinking process is often broken down into five stages: empathy, definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing.
- Empathy: The first stage of the design thinking process is to develop empathy for the people who are affected by the idea. This involves observing and understanding their needs, wants, and behaviors, and developing insights into their experiences.
- Definition: The next stage is to define the problem or business idea that needs to be addressed. This involves synthesizing the insights gathered during the empathy stage and defining the idea in a way that is meaningful and actionable.
- Ideation: In this stage, designers brainstorm and generate a wide range of ideas for possible business. The emphasis is on quantity rather than quality, and designers are encouraged to think creatively and unconventionally.
- Prototyping: The fourth stage involves building rough, low-fidelity prototypes / product of the most promising ideas. These prototypes can take many forms, from sketches and diagrams to physical models and mockups.
- Testing: In the final stage, designers test the prototypes with the target audience to gain feedback and insights into the effectiveness of the solutions. Based on the feedback, designers refine and iterate their ideas until they arrive at a solution that meets the needs of the users.

**Risk management**

As a first step for risk management, it is important to know the risks that could happen. For that a SWOT analysis is a useful tool to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a project. The goal of a SWOT analysis is to help organizations make better decisions by identifying factors that may affect their success or failure.

The acronym SWOT stands for the following:

- Strengths: Internal factors of the farm that give an advantage concerning a special project
- Weaknesses: Internal factors of the farm that give an disadvantage concerning a special project
- Opportunities: External factors that can be leveraged to benefit the organization, such as market trends, changes in regulations, or emerging technologies.
- Threats: External factors that can negatively impact the organization, such as increased competition, economic downturns, or changing customer preferences.

The SWOT analysis process typically involves the following steps:

- Identify the objective: The first step in a SWOT analysis is to define the objective, such as evaluating a new product or assessing the performance of an existing business.
- Conduct internal analysis: Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization by analyzing its resources, capabilities, and internal processes.
- Conduct external analysis: Identify the opportunities and threats by analyzing the external environment, including competitors, customers, and market trends.
- Develop an action plan: Based on the analysis, develop an action plan that leverages the organization's strengths and opportunities while addressing weaknesses and threats.

## What this means for consultants in agriculture

Climate change has a significant impact on agriculture, and consultants in agriculture must be able to assess the situation of a farm considering the effects of climate change. Here are some ways a consultant in agriculture can assess the situation of a farm in light of climate change:

**Analyze** historical climate data: The consultant can analyze historical climate data for the region and farm to determine if there have been any trends in temperature, precipitation, or other climate variables that could impact the farm.

**Identify risks**: The consultant can identify the specific risks that climate change poses to the farm. These could include changes in water availability, increased frequency or severity of extreme weather events, or changes in pest or disease pressure.

**Evaluate soil quality**: Climate change can impact soil quality, and a consultant can assess the health of the soil and determine if any remediation is needed.

**Assess crop and livestock performance**: The consultant can evaluate the performance of crops and livestock on the farm to determine if any changes are needed to adapt to the changing climate.

**Develop a climate adaptation plan**: Based on the assessment, the consultant can develop a climate adaptation plan that identifies specific actions the farm can take to reduce risks and adapt to the changing climate. This may include changes to cropping practices, changes to irrigation systems, or other adjustments.

**Provide ongoing support**: The consultant can provide ongoing support to the farm to ensure the climate adaptation plan is implemented successfully and adapted as needed over time.

**Reading list:**

**Coaching**
- Starr, The Coaching Manual.

**Communication**
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four-sides_model. Download: 26.02.2023
- Friedemann Schulz von Thun: Miteinandner reden. Bd. 1-3. Rowohlt 2008
- What Is Nonviolent Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg? (insightfulcounselling.com) Download: 26.02.2023
- Marshall B. Rosenberg: Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life (Nonviolent Communication Guides). PuddleDancer Press; 3rd ed. Edition (2015)

**Conflict Management**
- 9 Stages of Conflict Escalation according to Friedrich Glasl | projectmanagement.guide. Download 26.02.2023

**Leading groups**
- Lawson, *The Trainer's Handbook*.

**Problem Solving**
- 35 problem-solving techniques and methods for solving complex problems. https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/problem-solving-techniques/#problem-solving-techniques-for-developing-solutions. Download 26.02.2023

**Project Management**
- Scrum - what it is, how it works, and why it's awesome (atlassian.com). Download 27.02.2023
- Free Gantt Chart Maker - Create a Gantt Chart Online | Canva. Download 27.02.2023

**Starting a new business**
- https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/design-thinking-explained. Download 26.02.2023