Session 1: Agile Project Execution & Digital Collaboration Tools (09:30–11:00)

Objective

Enhance project execution skills by comparing Agile vs. traditional management and discovering digital tools that support effective teamwork and adaptive management in agroforestry projects. Participants will experience an Agile-style simulation to practice responding to changes during project implementation.

Key Topics

Agile vs. Traditional (Waterfall) Management

Description	Traditional (waterfall) **Well-suited for projects with clearly defined steps and outcomes (we plan everything, then execute).**	Agile **Suited for projects where learning and change are expected (we plan in smaller increments, deliver in iterations, and adjust as we go).**
Pros	Thorough upfront planning Clear sequence	Flexible High stakeholder involvement Continuous improvement
Cons	Inflexible to change May be slow to adjust	Needs disciplined communication Not all tasks can be easily iterative *(e.g., tree planting is seasonal – you can't iterate planting off-season!)*

- **Application to Agroforestry:** Many agroforestry projects benefit from a *hybrid approach*. For example, overall design and planting schedule might be planned (waterfall), but how training is delivered or how maintenance is adapted might use agile cycles (learn and adapt each season). Emphasize that we can use agile principles (like regular reflections, iterative improvements) even within a long-term project.

- Introduce the concept of the **Agile Sprint Cycle:** Plan → Execute → Review → Improve. In agroforestry, a "sprint" could be a growing season or a quarter. After each, the team reviews progress (e.g., survival rate of trees, community feedback) and tweaks the plan for the next season. This is analogous to adaptive management in ecological projects.

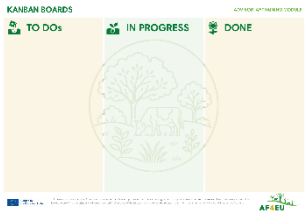
Team Communication & Cadence

Agile emphasizes frequent communication (daily stand-ups, bi-weekly sprint reviews). While daily meetings may not be feasible in extension work, the idea of regular check-ins is valuable. Recommend establishing a consistent meeting schedule for the project team (e.g., monthly coordination calls, weekly brief updates). This keeps everyone aligned and issues surfaced early. **"Regular check-ins help resolve issues early."** (Tip).

- Also mention communication tools: for example, WhatsApp or Signal groups for quick team updates in rural projects, or an email newsletter for stakeholders. The key is transparency and frequent touch-points.

Kanban Boards & Trello

Introduce **Kanban** as a visual workflow management method, often implemented with tools like **Trello** or **Asana**. Show a simple Kanban board: columns labeled *To Do, In Progress, Done* (and maybe *Blocked*). Each task from the WBS is a card that moves across as work progresses. This provides at-a-glance status.



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Trello Demo: If internet or a projector is available, quickly demonstrate a Trello board https://trello.com/ for an agroforestry project. For example, *To Do:* "Buy seedlings," "Prepare training materials"; *In Progress:* "Fence construction"; *Done:* "Site survey completed." Team members can be assigned to cards with due dates, and you can attach files (like a field report PDF) or checklists to each task.

- Emphasize how this encourages an Agile mindset: the board is updated continuously, and in weekly meetings the team can review what's stuck (cards not moving) and adjust.
- Mention Trello is free for basic use and accessible via phone – useful for field teams. Asana is similar, and both integrate with calendars, etc.

GIS and Mapping Tools

Highlight that agroforestry projects also benefit from spatial planning tools. A quick mention of **GIS (Geographic Information Systems)** for mapping project sites (e.g., QGIS, or simpler tools like Google Earth). GIS can be used to plan tree layouts, monitor land-use changes, and communicate visually with stakeholders. Also, remote sensing or drones can provide data for monitoring (which ties to MEL session later, but worth foreshadowing as a digital tool).

- If relevant, mention specialized tools like the **FarmTree** tool (an online tool to design agroforestry scenarios and project outcomes) as emerging digital support for agroforestry planning. FarmTree Tool - Reforest project

Adaptive Management

Stress that no matter how good the plan, reality will bring surprises (weather events, new ideas from farmers, etc.). Agile execution means being willing to **pivot** – change project tactics while staying true to overall goals. Cultivate a mindset in the team of continuous learning: treat your project as a "living process" that you periodically adjust. This might mean re-scoping some tasks or adding new ones based on feedback.

Activity – Agile Project Simulation (45 min)

This interactive game lets participants practice responding to project changes:

1. **Setup:** Each group from yesterday continues with their project scenario (or you can shuffle groups for variety). Tell them we fast-forward to the **execution phase** of their agroforestry project. They have a project plan, and now things are happening.
2. **Sprint Planning:** Ask each team to identify what their focus would be for the **first 1-2 months** of implementation – i.e., set a short-term milestone (sprint goal). For example, "*complete site preparation on two farms and plant 1000 trees by end of Month 2.*" (They mostly did this in Session 3, so it is a quick recap.)
3. **Inject a Challenge:** Hand each team a card or paper with a surprise scenario (prepared in advance). For example:
    - "Unseasonal drought hits early – water sources are low."
    - "Half of the required tree seedlings are delayed due to a nursery issue."
    - "A key stakeholder (e.g., a village leader or a funding agency rep) suddenly opposes part of the project."
    - "Community interest is higher than expected – 20 new farmers want to join the project (but budget is fixed)."
    - Each scenario should pose a problem or an opportunity requiring a change in plan.

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4. **Team Discussion:** Give teams ~15 minutes to discuss how they will adapt their project for the next sprint given this development:
    - What immediate steps will they take in the next 2 weeks? (e.g., find emergency water trucking, reschedule planting, hold a community meeting to address concerns, prioritize who gets resources, etc.)
    - What changes to their project plan or timeline will they make if this persists? (Reallocate budget, seek extra funding, adjust targets?)
    - Emphasize they should keep the overall goal in mind but be flexible on methods. They should write down their revised short-term plan or draw adjustments on their Kanban/Gantt if they had one.
5. **Review:** Each team shares their scenario and response (about 3 minutes each). Encourage quick, focused reports: *"Our challenge: drought. Our adaptation: we decided to delay planting to next season and instead focus this sprint on training farmers in water conservation. Also, we are securing water tanks as a contingency."*

Discuss as a group: Do these reactions embody good project management? Are they being **proactive** and **solution-oriented**? Offer praise for creative solutions, and add any additional ideas. For instance, if a group did not mention it, you might add "*Perhaps also document the drought impact to inform future grant proposals for water infrastructure – turning a crisis into a learning.*"

Tip for Success: *"Be prepared to pivot – adaptation is key."* Plans are guidelines, not gospel. Encourage a culture where the team is not afraid to say "this isn't working, let's try something else". The best project managers monitor conditions closely and adjust course **proactively** rather than waiting for failures.

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