

BeSAFE: Behaviours for Safer Farming

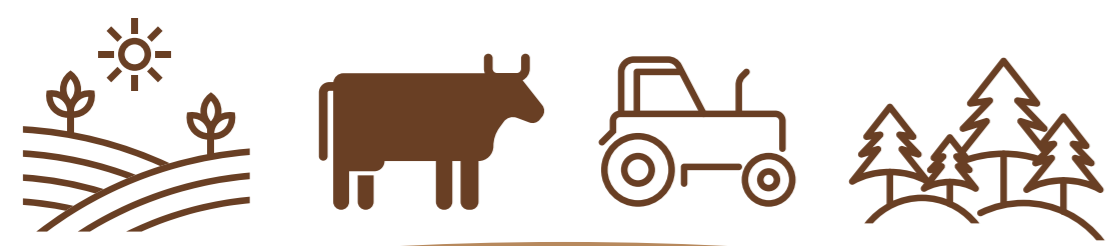
# Facilitation Method: Managing Time

This document was produced by Teagasc's Agri-Innovation and Learning (AgILe) Living Laboratory, co-designed by farmers, advisors and other actors, led by Áine Macken-Walsh, Teagasc.


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# Building Relationships with Clients:


- 'Trust' in the advisor-client relationship and the advisor 'Knowing the Family and the Farm' is identified as an important factor in research on how farmers manage their time.
- The credibility of advisors' advice in clients' eyes is enhanced when there is a good client-advisor relationship. A 'good relationship' means that: the advisor has become in tune and familiar with the client (and his/her farm family situation); and the client has belief in the knowledge of the advisor and the relevance of that knowledge to their farm.
- The process of building trust and a good relationship between an advisor and a farmers is the foundation for achieving goals on the farm.
- In the context of a pre-farm visit (prior to a farming hosting a discussion group meeting on a farm), advisors could do either of the following exercises, or combine them, to effectively enhance the adviser-client relationship: 

## MATERIALS:

Folder containing:

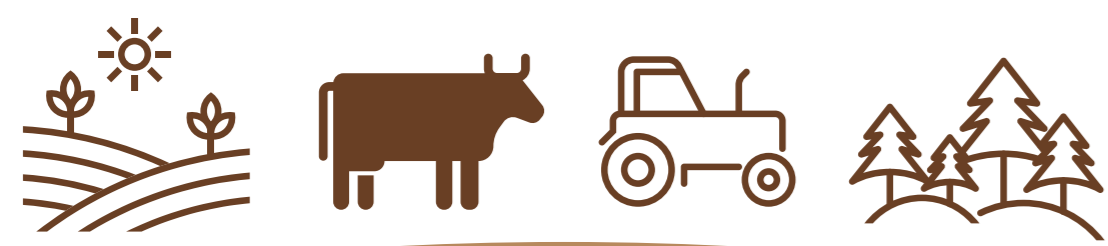
1. Flipchart paper (can be folded in advance and placed in a A4 folder) 
2. MT Picture cards (pre-supplied)
3. Black thick markers (4 as farmer(s) may wish to use)
4. Phone/camera to take photograph

## CONTEXT/ENVIRONMENT:

**Pre-farm visit** (advisory visit prior to the farm hosting a discussion group visit) 

**Walk About:** outdoor farm walk

**Goal Setting:** any building, table preferable

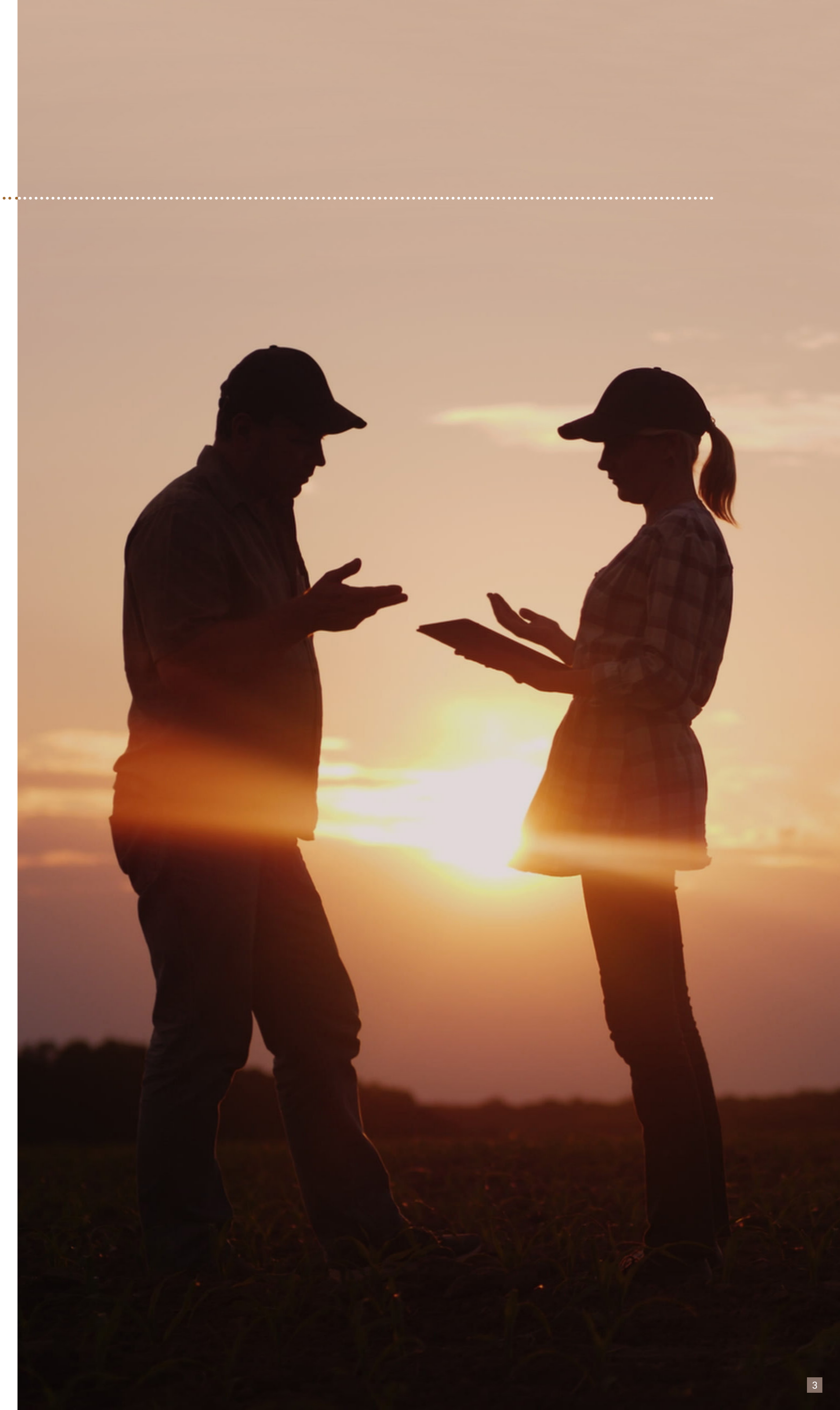


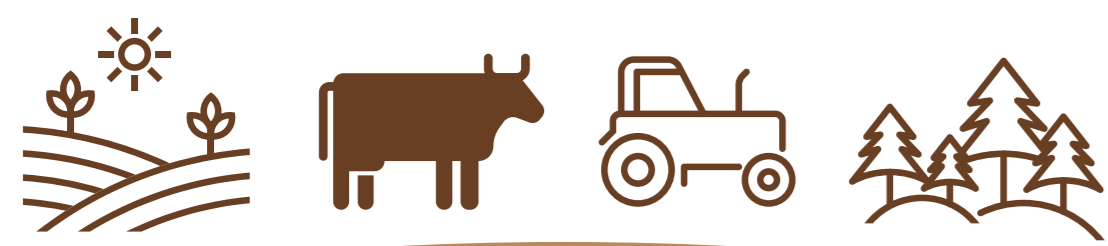
# Walk About

Go on a 'walk-about' with the farmer on the farm, or sit to have a conversation in the farm house/buildings. You can use some of the questions below to get to know and build a relationship with the farmer, in a simple conversation.

**Note:** it should be made clear to the farmer client that other members of the family involved or interested in the farm are encouraged to participate in the 'walk about' / conversation and in advisory consultations in general.

- Can we go for a short walk on the farm? Is there anyone else involved in or interested in the farm who should come along?
- Can you tell me the story of the history of this farm?
- Are there other family members involved in the farm?
- Where would you like to see your farm in the future?
- What are the main areas of focus when you want advice about farming?





# Goal Setting

**Note:** involvement of members of the family involved in the farm (e.g. spouse and future heir(s)) should be encouraged

Facilitate a conversation about goals on the farm and get to know your client better. This can take place in a farm house/building and a table would make the exercise easier:

- Use the supplied set of pre-prepared 'picture-cards' which can be used like a deck of cards spread out on a table.
- The picture-cards portray some images of scenes of regular, non-agricultural life and of farming life.
- Ask the farmer(s) this question: 'Can you tell me the story about your farming lives and goals? I'll listen I won't interrupt. You can use any of these pictures to tell your story if you want, but its not necessary'.

**Tip:** This is a social/behavioural science scientifically designed question that encourages people to speak honestly about their own experiences. If the farmer pauses in answering the question, it's important not to jump in to fill the silence. The farmer will resume speaking when ready. Farmers may just look at the images or they may pick them up and put them to one side, it doesn't matter how the cards are used at this point.

- Once the farmer(s) has/have finished 'telling their story', you can thank them and undertake Exercises A and B:





# Farm Visit Facilitation Method: Managing Time

The overall purpose of this guide is to provide a method for facilitating a productive group discussion to support farmers:

- to choose viable actions to improve how they manage time (MT actions), and
- to develop a problem-proofed plan for achieving these actions.

A suitable context for implementing this guide is a discussion group meeting held on a host farm. A building with chairs and a table is also required.



## ICE-BREAKER:

### 3 MINUTE CHAT

#### PURPOSE OF EXERCISE

- Conversation starter for the whole group.
- Focuses the group on the topic of managing time.
- Gets farmers talking to each other about the core topic.



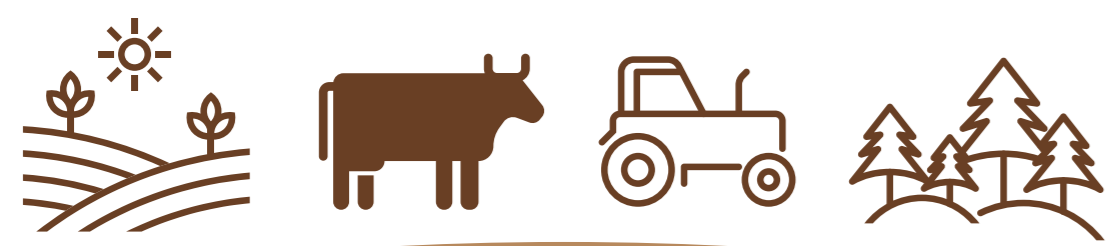
#### MATERIALS

A deck of supplied 'managing time' (MT) action cards.

## PROCESS

### FACILITATOR:

1. Spread out the full 'deck' of MT action-cards.
2. Make the following points:
  - 'Each card describes an action a farmer might take to improve time management'.
  - 'We're just going to chat about some of these for 3 minutes'.
3. 'Work together in pairs; **choose one card** you want to chat about – you have **3 minutes!**'
4. '3 minutes are up, we need to wrap up the chat. Now, keep those ideas as we'll have a chance to discuss them in a minute.'
5. Ensure all the **MT action-cards** are put back on the table/surface – they will be needed for the Flexible Brainstorming technique that immediately follows.



# FLEXIBLE BRAINSTORMING

## PURPOSE OF EXERCISE

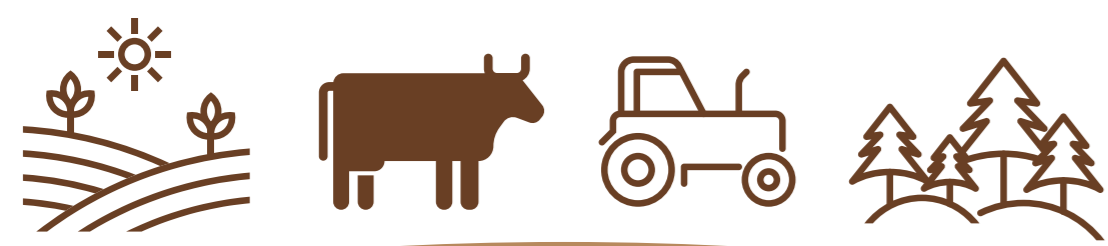


- Opportunity for farmers to generate a set of actions for improving time management
- Provides the host farmer/family with a broad range of actions to consider, including some s/he may not have previously known about or considered
- Takes into account the particular experiences of this farmer discussion group
- Helps to develop a sense of farmers' ownership of the discussion

**Tip:** The role of the host farmer. The host is a 'key expert' about what makes good sense for his or her farm and it's important they are standing up with the facilitator and taking a key role as owner of this process.

## MATERIALS

1. The deck of pre-prepared MT action cards (as above)
2. Flip chart for hanging (on which to place the cards)
3. Blank MT action cards (for new additions)
4. Post-It notes
5. Markers/pens
6. Phone/camera to take photograph of outcome of Flexible Brainstorming technique.



# FLEXIBLE BRAINSTORMING

## PROCESS

### FACILITATOR

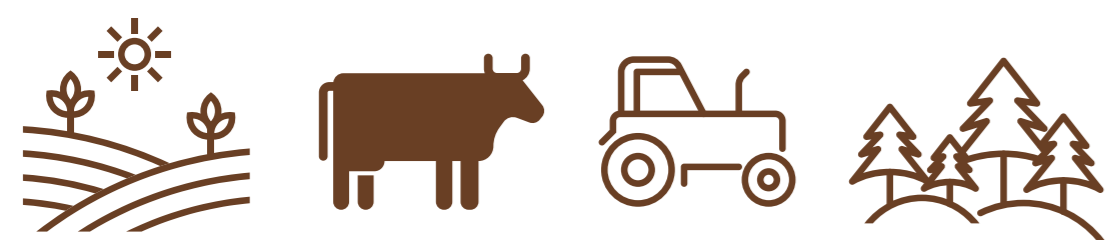
1. Make sure the full 'deck' of MT action-cards, spread out on a surface, is visible to everyone.
2. Show farmers the photo example of a completed flip chart: 'we'll discuss and sort these cards first and then we'll put them on a step by step plan, as shown here'
  - Make the following points:
  - 'We have this 'deck' of cards (that you've already seen); each one describes an action that farmers might use to improve time management on their farms'.
  - These MT actions might, or might not, make good sense for this farm.

- Go through the deck to pick out MT actions that could improve time management on this farm.
  - Set aside any action cards that do not make sense for this farm.
  - If required, turn over a MT action card, rephrase in your own words, and add it to your selection'.
3. Encourage discussion.
  4. Host farmer/family identifies actions that make good sense for their farm.
  5. Place these MT action cards in the centre of the work-surface.
  6. Make the following points:
    - Now we want to brainstorm.
    - You have selected some actions.
    - What other actions would you add that might improve time management on this farm?

7. Encourage farmers to brainstorm to generate new actions.
8. Each new action is written on a new (blank) card N.B. one MT action per card.
9. New cards are added to the previous selection.
10. Photograph the final set of action cards.

## OUTCOME:

A range of MT actions that make good sense for the host farm.



# CARD SORT

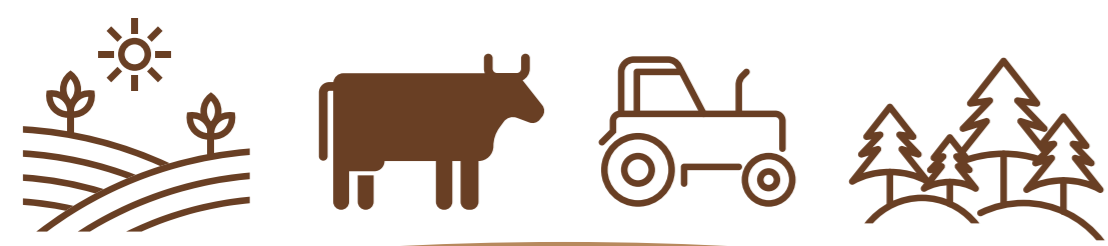
## SELECTING SHORT-TERM PRIORITY ACTIONS & PROBLEM PROOFING

### PURPOSE OF EXERCISE

- Enables host to consider key criteria that may affect her/his choice of priority actions.
- Enables host to choose 2-3 priority MT actions that are likely to be feasibly implemented on her/his farm.
- Enables host, group, and advisor to discuss priority (short-term) MT actions and problem-proof them.
- Opportunity for farmer/family to benefit from other farmers' knowledge re. MT actions.
- Opportunity for farmers to benefit from knowledge the facilitator can share re. MT actions.

### MATERIALS

1. Blank stairs chart
2. Criteria sheet (A4)
3. Post-It notes
4. Markers/pens



## PROCESS

### FACILITATOR

1. The selected 'actions' are already on the table/work-surface.
2. Now place the A4 'Selection Criteria' and blank Post-Its alongside these.
3. Make the following points:
  - Here's the full set of actions you and the group selected.
  - Now you need to choose your priority 2-3 that you can undertake in the short-term
  - But first, let's talk about what you (host) have to take into account when you think about any new action to improve time management on this farm.
  - From recent research with other farmers, we learned that farmers prefer MT actions that, for their farm, at a particular point in time are:

### SELECTION CRITERIA:

 **Cost-effective** (on that particular farm)

**Impactful** (a 'reasonable' benefit for 'reasonable' effort and investment)

**Achievable** (on this farm, considering availability of labour, infrastructure etc.).

**Note:** the A4 'Selection Criteria' sheet should be shown to the farmers

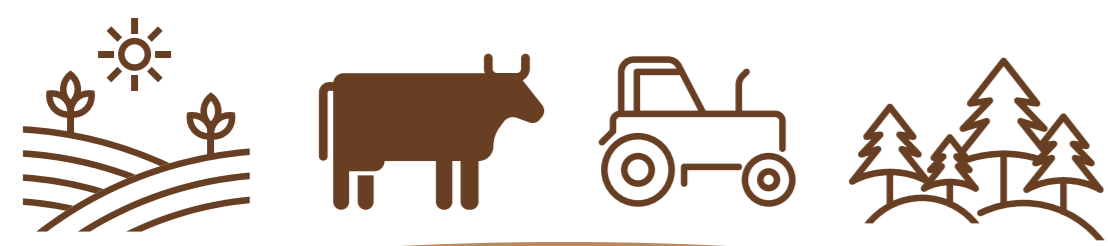
**Say to host:** 'You might want to add something else (another criterion) that's very important to you, something you have to take into account that might be very specific to this farm.'

4. Encourage host to name any other criteria s/he thinks important.
5. Record additional criteria on Post-It notes and add to the A4 criteria sheet.
6. Make sure the criteria sheet remains visible to everyone as the activity of choosing the priority 2-3 actions proceeds.

7. ASK HOST: Given you have to take these things into account, can you now choose your priority 2/3 MT ACTIONS for this farm?
8. Farmer selects her/his priority actions from set of cards (from Flexible Brainstorming result).

**Say to host:** Before we plot these actions on the flip chart paper with steps/ (STAIRS) drawn on (show chart) let's 'problem-proof' them.

9. Facilitator provides all relevant information host might need: this may include scientific or research information but also practical implementation advice from other farmers.
10. What might aid the implementation of each action?
11. What might frustrate the implementation of each action?
12. 'Now we're ready to plot these actions on the FLIP CHART STAIRS chart'.



# TIMELINE

## Staging of Actions on Stairs Chart: MT Action Plan

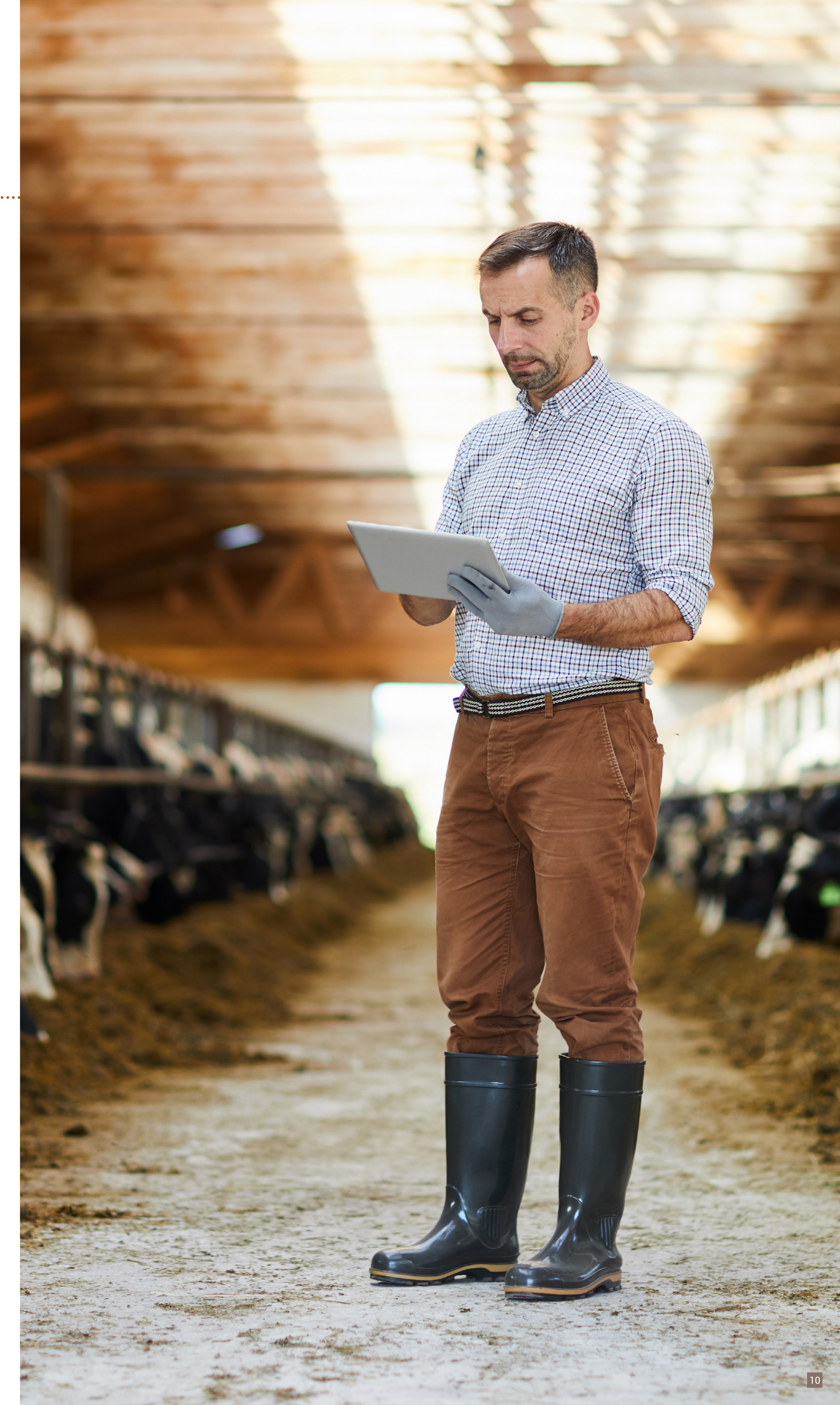
**Note to Facilitator:** The following activity may or may not be feasible, depending on unknown factors. The host may have chosen just one action, or more than three. Some actions may be implementable in a 'stand-alone' manner. Others may be interrelated and cannot be 'divided up' neatly into specific actions that can be mapped on a linear Timeline.

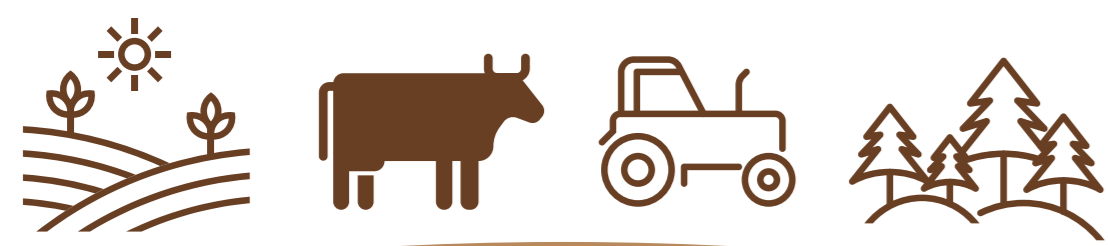
The facilitator's main task is to continue to facilitate discussion and promote confidence among the discussion group in relation to trying out actions. Concentrate on what seems to be making sense to the host at this point.

1. To host: 'Look at this Stairs on which steps are represented'.
2. 'Taking your problem-proofed 2/3 MT actions for improving time management on this farm, can you place them on the stairs? What period of time does the first step represent: 1 or 2 weeks/ months or is it longer?'
3. 'Would you choose any other MT actions for the following time period?'
4. 'Are there any other MT actions you would follow up with in the longer term? Place these on subsequent steps'
5. In what period of time will they be achievable (e.g. 2-3 years)?'

### OUTCOME:

Host has at least 2-3 first actions s/he believes are implementable and possibly more, which are placed on subsequent steps, and will be discussed a year later.





# CLOSING EXERCISE COMPLETION OF MEMBERS' STAIRS CHART/ MT ACTIONS PLANS

## PURPOSE OF EXERCISE

Enables farmers (working in pairs) to complete A4 card versions of the Stairs chart/ MT action plans (one each, applied to their own farms). Provides each visiting farmer with a concrete plan to take away with her/him.

## MATERIALS

1. Blank pre-prepared Stair charts (pre-supplied in a pad of A4 cards)
2. Markers/pens
3. Camera/phone to photograph Stairs charts

## PROCESS

### FACILITATOR

1. Invite farmers to work in pairs.
2. Each farmer writes 2-6 actions on his/her A4 Stairs chart that range from the 'easy wins' to more long-term goals.
3. While this is happening, the facilitator pairs up with the host farmer and they make an A4 version of the Stairs chart that the farmer can keep. This is also an opportunity to 'copper-fasten' the MT plan on a one-to-one basis between the farmer and the facilitator/advisor.

4. Farmers photograph each other's A4 Stairs chart. Facilitator photographs all A4 Stairs charts for printing for future meetings.

## OUTCOME:

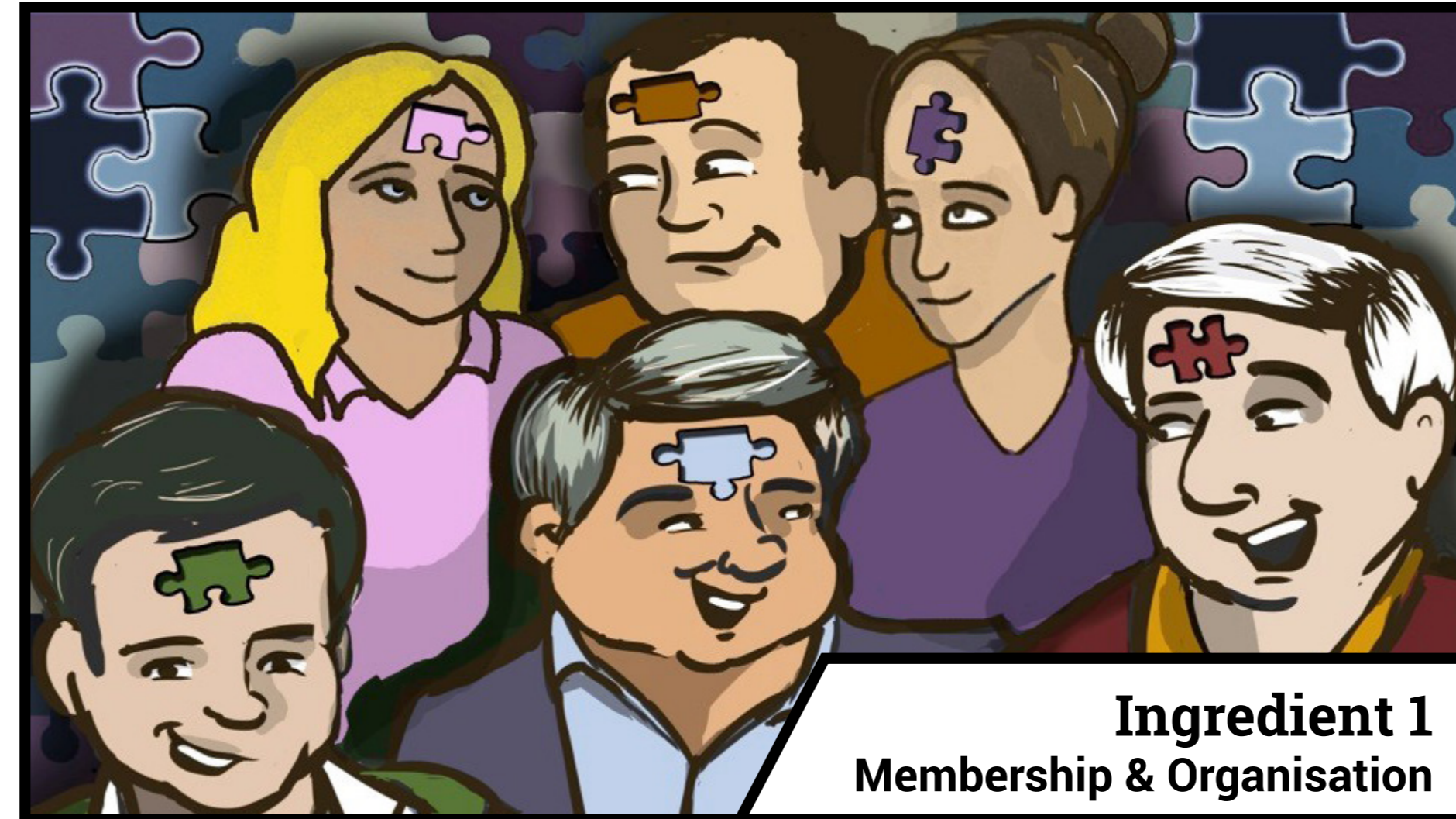
All discussion group members have generated Stairs charts/ MT action plans, which can be used in subsequent Discussion Group meetings.

Members can work in fours (i.e., two pairs together), discussing for 10-15 minutes their experiences of further considering/implementing the MT actions they identified for their farms.

With the facilitator, they can re-visit their Stairs charts/ MT action plans, and report on progress, issues experienced, etc. They are also preparing for their own discussion group meeting as a host farmer.



# Group Work: Five Ingredients for Success.



"We might all be different as individuals but our group has common goals. We as members genuinely believe in and commit to these goals. Our group is well organised and we have a clear idea about how we operate. We have our schedule of meetings well in advance so that we can plan and prepare."



"Enjoyment and fun is an important part of how our group works. It makes taking part a more positive experience. We have developed good working relationships and even some friendships. This provides an environment conducive to sharing challenges and to identifying solutions."



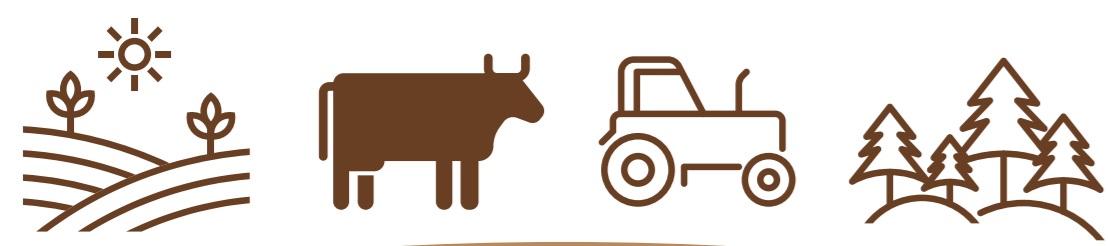
"In order for use as group to create solutions, we must feel that we can speak openly and truthfully without feeling that what we say might be irrelevant or not useful... We are all different, we speak different languages, and it's important that we show that we value each other's point of view. There's no sense that certain types of knowledge are superior in the group and people are not afraid to speak up."



"While the proverbial saying 'a rising tide lifts all boats' may not be true in many cases, it is a core principle of this group. What we do is relevant to all members and therefore is of interest (and potential benefit) to all members."



"We have access to and are exposed to different types of expertise in the group and this is a major driver of the group – it is why we want to be involved. Our group is also expertly facilitated and if we didn't have that expert facilitation, our group wouldn't operate as well as it does."



# Self-Appraisal for Groups: Guide for Facilitators

This assessment sheet is designed to assist you to facilitate a structured conversation about how the group you facilitate is functioning and how it might function better.


The sheet is divided into five components, which correspond to five key ingredients for successful groups. These key ingredients were identified through research undertaken in Ireland and are consistent with research findings internationally in relation to how groups function at their best.

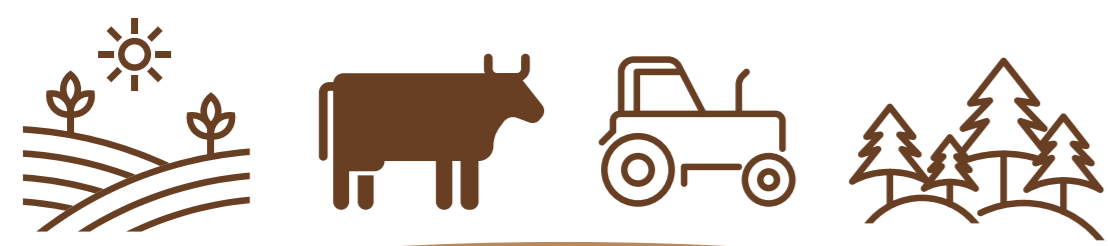
## HOW TO USE THE SHEET:

- 1.** Distribute a copy of the appraisal sheet to each of the group member present.
- 2.** Allow an appropriate time (10 minutes suggested) for each member to complete the sheet.
- 3.** Prior to the meeting, you will have placed the A0 (flip chart size) version of the appraisal sheet on a flipchart stand.
- 4.** Distribute 10 self-adhesive discs to each group member. All discs should be of the same size and colour.
- 5.** Once the allocated time has elapsed, invite each member to mark their answers onto the A0 size poster on the flipchart. In this way, each individual group member has an equal opportunity to record their views anonymously.
- 6.** Take a short break to visually review the scatter of sticky discs under each question. It is likely that the collective answer i.e. the arrangement of the adhesive discs under each answer will shed some light on group perceptions.
- 7.** Use the questions listed below to prompt further appraisal and reflection within your group. Pose the questions to the group and allow them time to respond. Make sure to acknowledge the questions where the perceptions are positive (you want more of that in the future) as well as probing how to improve the situation where perceptions are less positive/ negative (what can we do to improve?).
- 8.** Record the decisions reached and agreed actions, including the individual(s) responsible. Ideally, group members would take responsibility for many of the actions.
- 9.** At the end of the meeting, photograph the A0 worksheet.



## SELF APPRAISAL SHEET

<b>1. Do you have shared goals in this group</b>		
Members have different goals	We have some shared goals	Many shared goals
<b>2. Is the schedule of meetings clear and predictable</b>		
Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
<b>3. Do you feel comfortable talking truthfully in the group</b>		
Some people don't feel comfortable sharing	Most members feel comfortable, most of the time	Yes, we all feel comfortable sharing
<b>4. Do you think members feel comfortable <i>challenging</i> others within the group</b>		
Sometimes members feel offended by others	There's a challenging but mostly positive atmosphere	We readily  positively challenge each other
<b>5. Are the meetings enjoyable to attend?</b>		
Sometimes	Most of the time	Always very enjoyable
<b>6. In this group, are the activities relevant and interesting to all members, do you think?</b>		
Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
<b>7. If you were to pick one word to describe this group, what would it be?</b>		
Hard to pick a word	A positive word:	A not so positive word:
<b>8. Can you please comment on the facilitation of this group</b>		
<b>9. Can you give an example of a very well facilitated meeting or event that you attended</b> (Name the event, meeting, farm, etc.)		
<b>10. Are there any other issues you would like to mention /address?</b>		

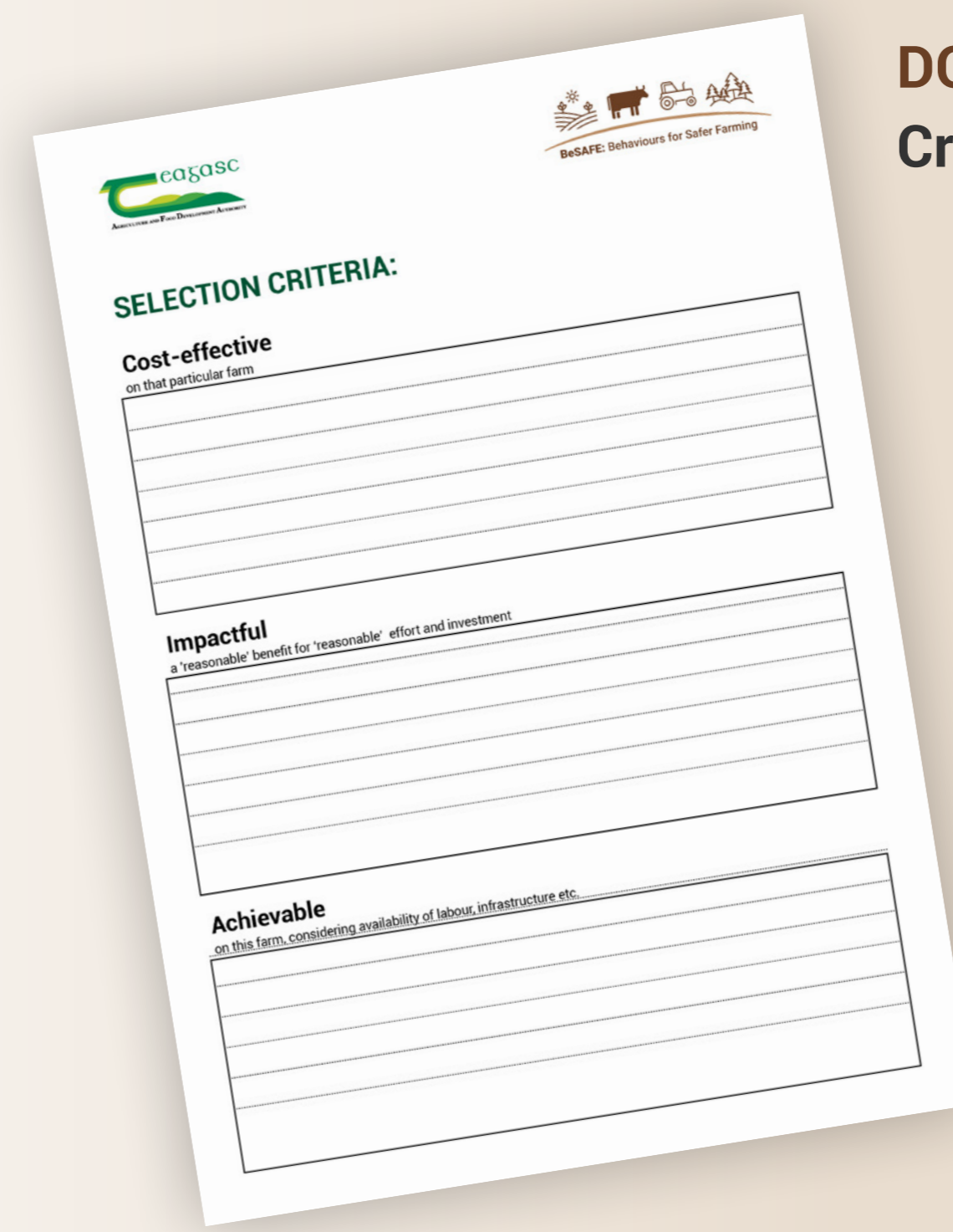


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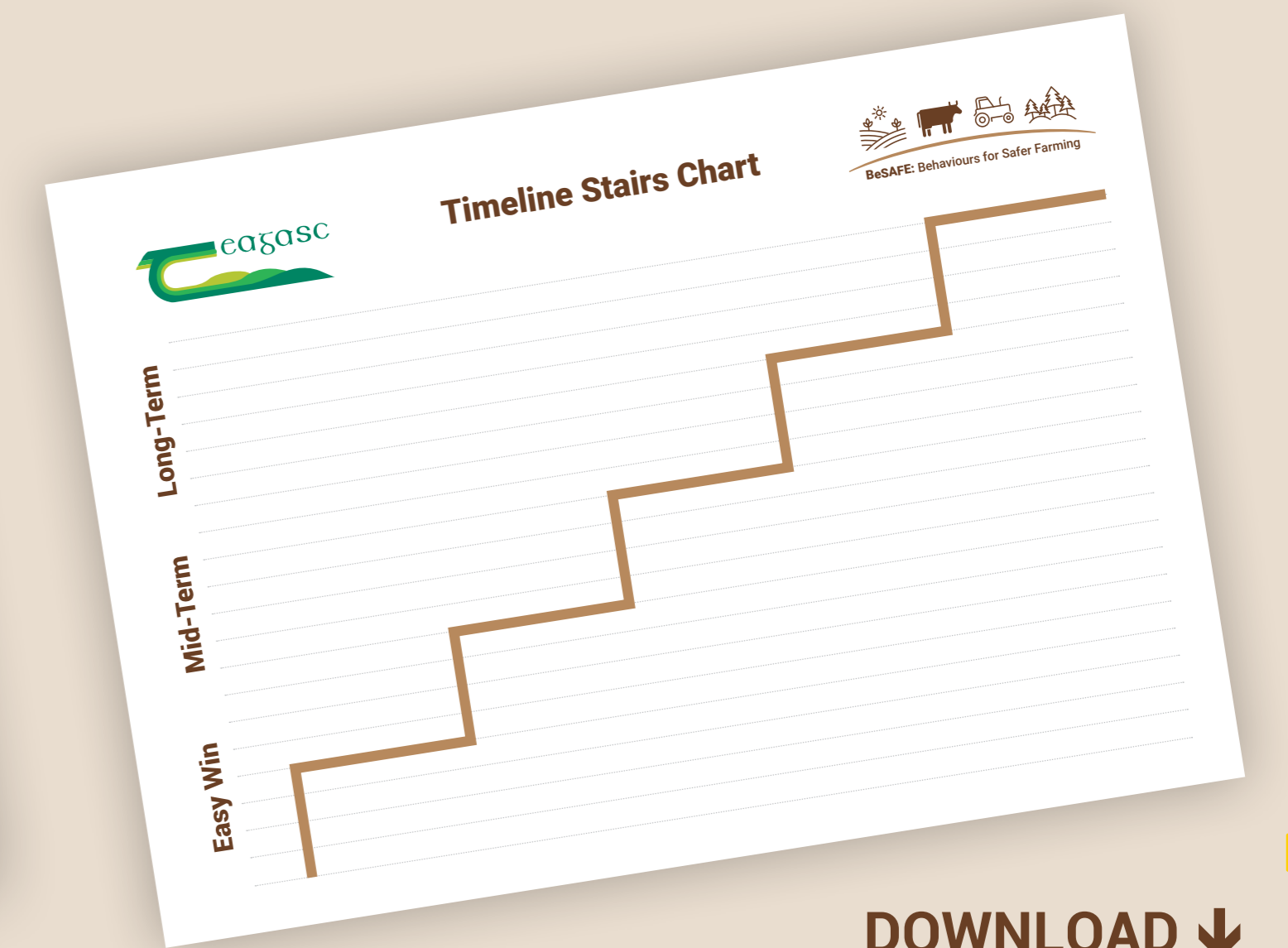
# The Time Management Action Pack



Handbook



DOWNLOAD ↓  
Criteria Sheets



DOWNLOAD ↓  
Timeline Stairs Charts



Box 1 Contents  
Picture Cards  
(One Sided)



Box 2 Contents  
Named Cards (Two Sided,  
blank on reverse)



Box 3 Contents  
Blank Cards  
(Two Sided)