REFLECTIONS FROM THE USE OF THE BUILDING RESILIENCE TOOL (BR)-I

BR TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

AgriCord's Building Resilience Toolkit is designed to **assist Farmers' Organisations (FOs) in conducting climate risk assessments at both the member and organisational levels**. The toolkit offers practical, participatory sessions for climate risk analysis, enabling FOs and their members to develop effective, locally relevant responses to climate challenges.

FOs play a crucial yet often underrecognized role in helping farmers and producers adapt to climate change. The BR-Toolkit I aims to strengthen this role by enhancing their capacity for effective adaptation planning that meets the needs of both the FO and its members.

Built on the results of Part I, AgriCord Building Resilience Toolkit Part II (BR-II) is under development and will be soon release. Part I provides us the results on farmer assessment of climate risks and adaptation priorities from the producers' perspective. Part II will targets the FO staff, management, and leadership, and widens the analysis to cover FOs' services, resources, activities, and capacities.

At the moment, more than **300 facilitators** have been trained, with more than **1,700 farmers** participating in workshops. Since 2020, the Building Resilience Part I (BR-I) tool has helped farmer organisations (FOs) and agri-agencies to plan practical climate adaptation interventions.

Capitalisation workshops have gathered practitioners to share experiences, refine the tool, and grow a community of practitioners committed to continuous learning for climate action. Through this collaborative environment, participants discussed the importance of customising and contextualising the BR-I tool for diverse agricultural settings. The testing and roll-out of the tool was supported by the **AFD-SEPOP program**, **IFAD/EU**, **BMZ**, as well as the **Forest and Farm Facility** (**FAO-FFF**). This blog synthesises the insights – what has worked, where we need to improve, and what the data from 64 training and farmer-workshop reports tells us about prioritised hazards and feasible solutions.

RESULTS FROM THE CAPITALISATION

Across 2023–2024, three main feedback from participants:

- **Make it simple, visual, and local:** develop glossaries in local languages, use intuitive and locally relevant examples, and group farmers by crop or ecological zone, if possible, to increase farmers' ownership.
- **Need for continued learning:** maintain in-person workshops and complement them with active learning cycles and peer support, such as the periodic capitalisation events.
- **Simplify reporting:** making it more relevant for FOs and agri-agencies, easy to connect to existing data collection routines or capacity building plans.

Feedback indicates that **farmers appreciated the structured discussions and felt empowered to identify their climate priorities** and a sense of ownership for the process. The tool's flexibility allowed for local adaptations and encouraged participation from women and youth.

The **structured approach helped them identify climate finance priorities** and understand fundamental climate change concepts. The knowledge blending approach – bringing together farmer experience and science - builds relevance and trust.

Some Challenges

- Among challenges, time management was a recurring issue, with varying levels of understanding among participants sometimes hindering discussions and agreement.
- Identified interventions sometimes remained vague or beyond farmer capacities and the facilitators' skills become vital to develop feasible plans.
- Additionally, the reporting process was noted as cumbersome for farmer organisations.
- For long-term success, participants in the capitalisation process indicated that **it is crucial to involve local government representatives in workshops to foster ownership among farmers**
- and ensure that adaptation plans align with broader public priorities and regional environmental strategies.
- Facilitators should **also consider FO's maturity** while analysing the feasibility of resilience plans; emphasising low-cost, low-effort, easily implementable interventions can promote ownership and build momentum.

BR-I Updated Version Available

With the combined effort of **FFD, AFDI and TRIAS**, an updated version of the Building Resilience Tool -I (BR-I), was made available in June 2025, incorporating the feedback and recommendations provided during the capitalisation process. The new version is available in English, French, Spanish, and Swahili.

EXAMPLES OF AGRI-AGENCIES' FIELD EXPERIENCES AND APPROACHES

TANZANIA

In Tanzania, FFD, NADO and TTGAU **used BR-I to identify farmers-led research priorities to promote agroecology and increase the resilience** of smallholder farmers and tree growers.

Several experimental sites were established to tailor the use of biochar on different crop combinations, compare honey production for different beehives, and evaluate the impact of bylaws and awareness on the frequency and intensity of fires.

MADAGASCAR

FERT and FIFATA adapted the BR-I tool for local farmers in Madagascar by developing a shorter, more visual version. They emphasised participatory exercises such as seasonal calendars and landscape mapping (watershed thinking); these modifications allowed farmers to engage in discussions about local hazards and potential solutions.

A particular focus was placed on engaging youth, who provided unique insights into local agricultural practices. However, questions arose regarding the representativeness of individual experiences and the necessity of collective planning by farmer organisations.

THE PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, TRIAS integrated the BR-I tool with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) framework; given the increasing frequency of typhoons, this integration proved crucial.

Participatory land mapping was employed to identify vulnerabilities, facilitating discussions that enhanced farmers' understanding of adaptive actions.

TOGO

In Togo, Afdi and Ctop **conducted BR-I workshops across five agro-ecological regions**, engaging regional stakeholders in creating actionable plans that were subsequently refined at the national level.

This approach facilitated that regional differences are respected while drafting a cohesive national strategy. Other NGOs and partners were engaged to mobilise implementation funding.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTED INTERVENTIONS

HONDURAS
Strategic stakeholder mapping, launching an organic agriculture school and a women-led coffee brand.

PHILIPPINES
Community built flood barriers.

TOGO
Five Regional plans advancing toward a national synthesis.

MADAGASCAR
Facilitate FOs' access to meteorological information, introduce agroecological practices, use of living hedges and contour planting to control erosion, building of water capture infrastructure.

DRC & CAMEROON
Cocoa drying innovations to reduce wood use; valorisation of cocoa pods.

A look into the 64 BR-I reports available already

The consolidated data from 14 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America identifying the main climatic hazards by farmers, suggest a common thread: **IT IS MOSTLY ABOUT WATER!**

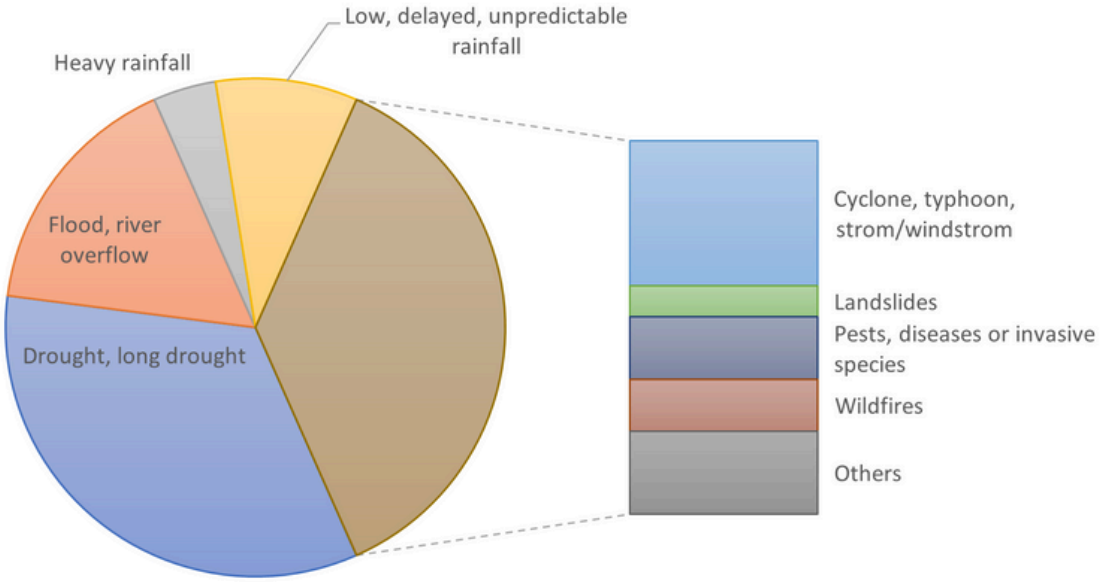

Figure 1. Main climate associated hazards identified based on 64 BR-I reports

More than 60% of the climate-associated hazards identified are directly related to either too much rain, too little rain or changes in rain patterns. **Rain-related hazards increase up to 80%** if we consider the indirect correlation with storms and landslides.

Across hazards, **vulnerable groups face recurring constraints**: limited land, cash for inputs and infrastructure, time for labor-intensive practices, and administrative access to insurance or state programs. Designing stepwise, affordable pathways – and ensuring facilitation reaches women and youth- is essential.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE INTERVENTION SUGGESTED FOR SPECIFIC CLIMATE-ASSOCIATED HAZARDS

Below are some examples of the intervention suggested for specific climate-associated hazards:

INTERVENTIONS	HAZARD	CONSTRAINTS
Water management and irrigation (from ponds and canals to solar pumps), drought tolerant or short cycle varieties, agroecology and soil cover, reforestation, diversified cropping and calendars, weather information, credit and insurance.	DROUGHT	Barriers include seed and irrigation costs, and time burdens (e.g., composting) that can disproportionately affect women
Drainage, dikes, riverbank protection, watershed reforestation, contour farming, soil cover and green manures, moving to higher ground, tolerant varieties, risk committees, and advocacy on land policy and insurance.	FLOOD AND RIVER OVERFLOW	Adoption depends on capital and coordination; inclusive capacity building helps
Wind resilient varieties and orchard shelterbelts, site selection, pruning and early harvest, resilient structures, synchronized farming, equipment storage, diversified livelihoods, and insurance.	CYCLONE/ TYPHOON/ STORM	Trade-offs include land competition (for windbreaks), upfront costs, and bureaucratic hurdles; smallholders need tailored support
Improved drainage, canopy management in cocoa, agroforestry, nurseries, quality water access, weather info.	HEAVY RAINFALL	Nurseries and drainage require funds and skills; agroforestry brings co benefits but needs training.
Integrated pest management, conservation agriculture, pest calendars, intercropping with repellent species, proper input use, hermetic storage, sanitation, frequent field inspection.	PESTS AND DISEASES	Many practices are low cost but require consistent behaviour change and extension support.

The BR-I tool represents a significant step forward in building resilience among agricultural communities facing climate challenges. As the Part I provides us the results on farmer assessment of climate risks and adaptation priorities from the producers' perspective. The Part II under development will target the FO staff, management, and leadership, and widens the analysis to cover FOs' services, resources, activities, and capacities. Continued efforts to share knowledge, adapt the tool to local contexts, and engage government stakeholders will be essential for its ongoing success. Future workshops and feedback mechanisms will help refine the tool and support broader climate adaptation efforts.

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