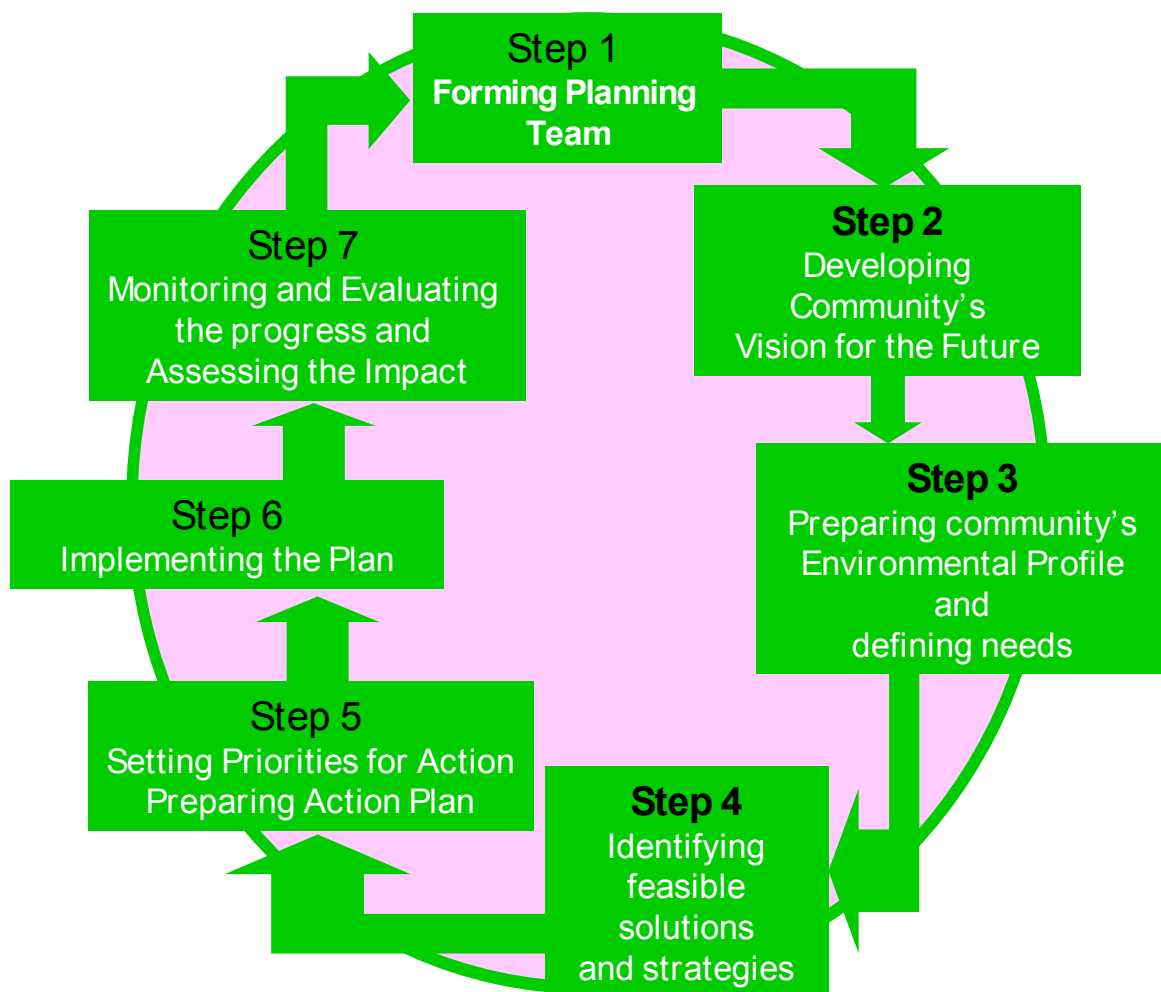


Part Two

The Cycle for integrating Environmental concerns into community Development Process



Introduction

Environmental Planning for Small Communities

As a leader in a small community, the Field Worker of a development and environmental conservation programme or a social organisers from any other community development programme interested in integrating environmental concerns into their programme may face difficult challenges in managing environmental issues. They must juggle many issues at once, including how to provide safe drinking water, how to manage wastewater from homes and businesses, and how to manage the community's solid waste. The list seems endless, and the resources available are all too limited and continue to dwindle. Not only that, but they have many other responsibilities besides environmental protection, such as schools, roads, and public safety. How would they do it all?

This book offers tools to help the Field Workers meet these challenges—a process for developing a **community environmental plan**. The goals of creating this plan and putting it into action are to:

- Provide a sensible way for the community to **set priorities** and **decide how to make the best use of the resources** to protect people's health and the environment.
- Help the community **save money**—by dealing with issues before they become big problems, by making sure that environmental services are provided in the most efficient way possible, by planning to use the right combination of environmental programs and services, by working with other communities where possible, and by making use of local talent and resources. A plan also will help the Field Workers take advantage of opportunities to **prevent pollution**, the cheapest and most effective solution of all.
- Empower the community to **take charge of its own destiny** by charting its best course.
- **Build community awareness and support** for actions that they, the decision-maker, must take to protect public health and the quality of the environment.
- Help **promote the economic health and well-being of the community** by providing the environment, infrastructure, and quality of life

Integrated Approach to Protecting Environment

that make the community a good place to live and to do business.

In the past, people tended to look at the environment in pieces: how to protect the air, how to protect the water, how to protect the land. Today we know that environmental protection won't really work unless we treat the environment as an integrated whole. We also know that local governments can't carry out their environmental protection responsibilities without considering the community as a whole: its resources, its economy, public opinion, and all its other needs. With a comprehensive environmental plan, the Field Workers can create an integrated approach to protecting the environment and meeting the community's needs.

The environmental plan described in this book is like a road map that shows the Field Workers where they are and where they are going, and provides some ideas of how to get there. Without a plan for the community's environment, the Field Workers are likely to waste a lot of time and money. They also might lose valuable natural resources, as well as community support, that can never be replaced.

Developing a plan and putting it into action, on the other hand, can help put the Field Workers "in the driver's seat." Planning ahead to solve environmental problems can especially help small communities that do not have the resources to meet all of the requirements for environmental management at once. The environmental plan will help the community prioritize solutions to environmental problems and develop a strategy for proper management. This approach lets the community decide how best to use its resources.

This guidebook presents some ideas and approaches to creating and implementing a community environmental plan. The Field Workers shall adapt them to the local needs as they see fit:

- Step 1 helps the Field Workers build a **planning team** that can lead the community in creating its environmental plan.
- Step 2 helps them develop a shared **vision** for the community's future—that is, decide what they want the community to be like in 10 or 20 years.
- Step 3 shows them how to prepare community's environmental profile and define the community's **needs** by determining the greatest problems facing the community's public health, environment, and quality of life; by evaluating the effectiveness of the environmental facilities.
- Step 4 explains how to identify feasible solutions to the identified problems and figuring which **technologies and strategies** can work in the community.
- Step 5 discusses how to weigh the community's needs and possible ways of meeting those needs to set **priorities** for action. Here, they will put all the

work together into the plan.

- Step 6 help the Field Workers and the community **implement** the plan.
- Step 7 highlights the use of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the whole process from planing to implementation and its results and impacts.

Throughout the planning process, the Field Workers will discover many people outside the community, who can give they assistance and advice. Ultimately, however, the residents of the community are responsible for making decisions that reflect the community's history, values, resources, and vision for the future. **It's up to they and the community to decide how best to handle its environmental challenges.** No other community faces exactly the same environmental issues, with the same constraints and the same resources. No one outside the community knows what is best for them. Local talent and energy are needed to develop the plan that's right for **the** specific community. The tools in this guidebook, adapted for the situation, can help the community turn its environmental challenges into a positive force for the future.

Major Environmental Responsibilities of Small Communities

Part of creating a comprehensive environmental plan is identifying the environmental issues facing the community.

If they don't recognize the problems, they can't figure out the solutions. Although each small community is unique, nearly all have responsibilities in the following areas:

- Drinking water quality.
 - Wastewater management.
 - Solid waste management.
 - Ground-water protection.
- Some environmental issues affect some communities more than other communities, including:
- Air pollution.
 - Industrial wastewater management.
 - Nonpoint source pollution (pollution carried by storm-water runoff, etc.).
 - Floodplain zoning.