

# Innovation Histories



## A step-by-step summary of the method

as conceived by Douthwaite and Ashby (2005), and as adapted in the Pro-poor Low Carbon Development project

### Douthwaite & Ashby's suggested key steps:

1. Clarify the objectives and expectations of stakeholders
2. Define the innovation
3. Construct innovation timelines and actor network maps
4. Write up the learning history
5. Use the innovation history as a catalyst for change via a follow up workshop that uses it to discuss shared visions
6. Write up the publishable innovation history to share learning with broader audiences

### Key steps as applied in this project:

1. Define and specify the innovation
2. Circulate background information and examples of what participants will be asked to do
3. Clarify aims and expectations of stakeholders via introductory discussion
4. Individual work to construct personal timelines reflecting actors' individual experiences
5. Group work to construct timelines of key events, actors, roles, significance and potential available documentation – here actors are asked to think more broadly about key events of significance beyond their own personal experiences
6. Group work seeking participatory review of overall timeline from participants
7. Post workshop, write up information into an Innovation History and circulate to participants for further feedback
8. Follow up with detailed, semi-structured interviews with relevant participants
9. Triangulate via interviews with other actors identified during the workshop, or identified during follow up interviews and wider literature review
10. Further triangulation with available published sources
11. Write up and make Innovation History available online and circulate widely throughout its development for feedback and critique
12. Publish innovation history in peer reviewed journal to articulate contribution in the context of existing academic and policy research

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## **Innovation History Workshop planning: Some key points for consideration**

In planning the workshop, these are some of the key aspects to prepare and questions that are useful to consider:

- What is the innovation under investigation? (define clearly)
- Who were the stakeholders involved in the innovation process?
- What aspects of the innovation are you trying to understand? What are the objectives of the workshop? (Do you want to focus on events, projects, products, actors?)

→ decide which stakeholders are most likely to inform this understanding and able to answer these questions

- invite stakeholders early and inform them in simple terms of the method and aims of the workshop
- Ask them to think about and possibly prepare the innovation history timeline (provide them with a template and examples to guide them)
- Organise facilitators and people to help record the information gathered during the workshop

→ Who will be helping to run the workshop on the day and what will their roles be?

- Plan the group work: How big do you want the groups to be, how will you synthesise the group work into the bigger group?
- How can you get as many people as possible to be active and to contribute?
- How can you prompt and engage shy or quiet participants?
- Prepare the materials for the timelines or actor network maps (will you be able to read participants' handwriting and will you understand the descriptions they are giving?)
- How will you react to and resolve any conflicts or tensions between stakeholders?
- How will you analyse the data you gather during the workshop?
- How will participants be able to evaluate the workshop and the conclusions drawn from it?
- How can you best channel the data collected to inform policy?
- How will it impact and benefit stakeholders and users?
- How do you intend to follow up the workshop?