Appendix F – Frequently asked questions and 'how to' examples

The basic methodology of FMNR is outlined in the LEISA and the Agnotes articles. Those who are new to FMNR often become concerned with one specific technique or species of tree, so this additional note is provided to encourage thinking in context-appropriate and flexible lines.

It is very important to note that there is no one right way of practicing FMNR. FMNR is being introduced into many different contexts where the environment and species mix, the specific land use (crop land, pasture or forest) and farmer needs, vary from region to region and even from farm to farm.

FMNR is designed to be extremely flexible, giving farmers considerable freedom of individual choice on how to meet their own specific needs, using the free materials at hand (species mix), responding to the specific climate, soils, crop mix, and their own understanding, at the time of implementation.

Ultimately it is the mix of objectives a farmer has in practicing FMNR that will determine how they practice it. To date, FMNR has been successfully practiced in a variety of locally adapted ways such as:

- By individual farmers on their own land
- By communities on communal lands and in degraded forests
- By leaving very few trees (10 - 20 / ha), or by leaving very many (150 trees/ ha).
- By focusing on tree species predominantly used to provide firewood and building poles, or on species that have nutritious leaves that feed families or animals. Some use trees that fix nitrogen and can therefore increase the soil fertility for crops.
- Leaving a single stem to grow from a stump (and harvesting when larger), or by leaving multiple stems, successively harvesting one each year.
- Allowing a single stem to grow into a permanent tree, and then harvesting 1/2 to 1/3rd of the branches per year (such as pollarding).. Pollarding provides larger wood harvests and more rapid re-growth.
- Allowing tree re-growth only on farm borders. The trees are allowed to grow close to each other and are pruned high up the trunk. As need arises whole trees are harvested and re-growth is allowed to replace the tree that was harvested.
- Leaving only trees which are growing approximately in straight lines and moving self sown seedlings and re-planting them within these lines. Within the rows the trees are grown as bushes which are slashed to ground level during the rainy season, except for single stems that are allowed to grow about every 12 meters. This is done to avoid interference with ploughing and because soil infertility is a major issue, addressed by mulching with pruned branches

Some common questions when people are first learning about FMNR:

- ***How can I possibly leave trees on my field since they will shade the food crops and reduce the yields?*** It is helpful if staff are knowledgeable and can explain that some trees may contribute to productivity. However, staff must also explain that the farmers themselves are the 'experts', and that they will know, through experimentation, which trees to leave and how to prune. The farmer will make the choices about how to apply FMNR.

- ***Is FMNR going to work for me if my objective is ___?*** (Might include: soil fertility, wind break, fire wood and building poles - for home consumption and sale, fruits, edible leaves, fodder, erosion control, reversal of land degradation, aesthetics, medicines, income generation, social acceptance.) Ultimately it is the mix of objectives a farmer has in practicing FMNR, that will determine the type of FMNR practiced, so staff should be able provide some information from the resources in this model, or their own experience or consultation with experienced FMNR promoters or practitioners on the ways FMNR may contribute to the objectives mentioned.

- ***How do I know 'the right' species to select, when to prune, how to prune and how often?*** It is very important to note that there is no one right way of practicing FMNR and staff need to emphasise that the farmer (or herder, coop member, etc. as appropriate) is the only person who can decide what species fit their needs and are readily available, how many trees will be needed, and how they will prune them. FMNR practitioners from around the world have found an enormous variety of 'right ways' to practice, through experimenting with FMNR to find what works best for them.

- ***What if we do not have land of our own?*** FMNR has been successfully practiced on commonly held lands and may be used on communal pastures and farmland, degraded forests, etc. Enabling policies, a very broad base of stakeholders excellent communication and reaching agreement on rules and bylaws will all be needed.