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**General Operational Guidelines**

**for Agricultural Extension Service Providers**

**for Small-Scale Farmers in Zambia**

**Department of Agriculture**

**Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock**

**October 2012**

**(Draft Version 5)**

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# Background

Agricultural Extension Services in Zambia have been delivered through a number of approaches and providers over the years. During the pre independence era, a command type of military approach to extension delivery was used to target specific individual farmers who were told which crops to grow, and advisory services were accordingly provided. After independence in 1964, the Government policies to increase agricultural output and to ensure national food self sufficiency necessitated the move by the Government to improve on the colonial individualized farm visits extension approach by establishing Farmer Training Centers (FTCs) and Farm Training Institutes (FTIs).

In early 1980s, Zambia became one of the countries that promoted the Training and Visit (T and V) Approach to extension with support from the World Bank, which aimed at revitalizing the underperforming agricultural extension services. At the same time as T and V was being implemented, the Farming Systems Research (FSR) approach was introduced as a holistic diagnostic process for researchers to elicit a better understanding of farm households and their decision making processes.

By early 1990s the Zambian extension service realities pointed to the fact that agricultural challenges transcended the levels of individual farms or farm households. Extension Service had to face such issues as management of collective natural resources, value chain management, collective input supply and marketing. These new issues typically required new forms of coordinated action and cooperation among farmers and between farmers and stakeholders.

In the year 2000, Participatory Extension Approach (PEA) was proclaimed as the main vehicle for delivery of extension services following a Government study with World Bank Support to look at ways of revitalizing agriculture extension services delivery.

During those changes in the Government extension service approaches and strategies over the past decades as mentioned above, a number of various stakeholders from Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Private Sectors had also emerged to provide extension services to small scale farmers. The primary objectives of these organizations were to improve agricultural production, productivity through the introduction of new varieties and technologies so as to enhance food security and livelihoods of rural farmers. However, during the course of proliferation of such extension service providers to small scale farmers, it had become apparent that information and technologies delivered by various stakeholders to the same target small scale farmers/groups were sometimes contradictory and confusing.

It is against this background that in 2011, the then Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO) realized the need for agricultural extension service providers in Zambia to harmonize their approaches to extension services delivery and use common language to the target group to be in line with the Government Extension Service. The Department of Agriculture being one of the key stakeholders and custodian of public extension services thus organized a one day workshop on 22nd March 2011 in Lusaka. Various key extension service providers from the Government Ministries, NGOs, Private Sector and Development Partners therefore met and shared the common good to harmonize the different approaches and methodologies in extension service delivery. This Workshop acknowledged the problems in extension service delivery in the areas of 1) policy/planning, 2) collaboration/linkages, and 3) Qualification/Competencies, and agreed to work more closely by establishing a working committee comprised of the representatives from the Government, NGOs and Private Sector to harmonize extension approaches effectively to provide better extension service to small scale farmers.

## Pluralism of Extension Services and Need for Coordination

Currently, there are numerous extension service providers in Zambia which are government organizations including research institutions, NGOs, Private Sector organizations, which also include but not limited to agrochemical input suppliers, seed companies, farmers organizations, Public-Private funded organizations, and others. While the Government/public extension service providers are represented by extension officers who are mandated to provide broad aspects of extension services to as many small scale farmers as possible throughout the country with limited financial resources, NGOs and Private Sector organizations often have better financial resources but with a limited number of beneficiaries and the targeted commodities or preferred extension methodologies.

Pluralism in extension service is generally welcome as it provides farmers with more opportunities to choose among different alternatives as the various extension service providers may offer different services. However, proliferation of such extension service providers without any coordination at farmer/village level does not necessarily bring positive impacts on production and productivity but could lower production and create confusion at the cost of farmers.

Thus, it is necessary that the Government (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock) facilitates coordination and collaboration among various extension service providers/stakeholders in Public, Private and NGOs sectors so that a unified service to farmers in ensured and duplication of services which lead to inefficient use of resources is avoided.

## Government Extension Service Strategy for Small-Scale Farmers

## 3.1 Government Vision, Policy and Programmes

The Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP), in its Agricultural, Livestock and Fisheries Chapter, elaborates important issues on policy and reforms in the sector. (SNDP 12.4, Page 124). It says “Efforts will be made to improve productivity in the sector focusing on the development of human capacity through training, research and extension services”.

Among the Objectives, Strategies and Programmes for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries sector, Extension Service Enhancement Sub-Programme is stipulated under the Crop Production and Productivity Improvement Programme. The strategy under this Sub-Programme includes “1) the establishment of mechanisms for regular stakeholder consultations in research and extension; 2) Promote PPPs in research, infrastructure development and programmes; 3) Promote participation of farming communities in the uptake of proven agricultural practices such as conservation farming through enhanced extension services; and 4) Enhance the capacity of Drought Risk Management (DRM) in the sector.

## 3.2 Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

Public extension services delivery by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) currently accounts for the largest coverage of small scale farmers. The Ministry has a total of 346 Agricultural Blocks, which are demarcated into 1,757 Agricultural Camps around the country, which are currently at Seventy-Six (76) percent staffing level. Under the SNDP, the Government plans to employ a further 4,965 agricultural extension officers and 2,611 livestock extension officers by 2015.

In order to provide advisory/extension services to farmers in a cost effective way, agricultural camps are organized into zones, and agricultural camps have an average of four to six zones. Farmers are further grouped into commodity study groups or interest groups where farmers are interested in forming such groups. Extension Officers regularly meet these groups and occasionally visit households to make follow-ups for specific farmer problems. Lead farmers or early innovators are also identified and demonstration plots are established at their farm. These demonstrations when done hands-on throuout the crop/livestock cycle are known as Farmer Field Schools (FFS).

The extension service delivery by the MAL covers not only crops related issues but also livestock and fisheries development. Extension services rendered to small-scale farmers with livestock and fisheries also aims at facilitating and supporting the development of sustainable livestock and fisheries sub-sectors in partnership with the private sector and NGOs.

## 3.3 The Four Pillars of Extension Service

The outcome of Agricultural Extension is capacity building in individual farmers and farming/rural communities. Extension Services delivery provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock aims at achieving capacity building among target farmers based on four main paradigms as follows:

## Technology Transfer

Extension is a means of proactively changing voluntary behavior in the form of the adoption/adaption of new (externally developed, already available and tested) technology or management practice. The manner of achieving this is convincing people of the value of adoption by the use of extension materials, presentations, demonstrations etc.

## Problem solving

Extension is a means of assisting individuals to find solutions to technological or management problems which arise and are inhibiting their desired unit performance.

## Education

Extension is a means of proactive informal education which seeks to assist individuals and groups to better understand their situations, and so be able to make choices and take actions to improve their situations.

## Human Development

Extension is a means to facilitate and stimulate individuals and communities to take the initiative in problem definition and seeking solutions to individual and societal concerns. The assumption is that given an opportunity and interactive framework, individuals and communities will best improve their situation. It encourages people to govern themselves.

**Figure 1. Four Pillars of Extension Service**

The different paradigms are complementary rather than in conflict, each relevant to different needs and situations. Extension under each of the paradigms is currently used to assist change in a number of areas such as production, food quality, product development, rural development or social improvement.

## 3.4 Participatory Extension Approach (PEA)

## 3.4.1 Salient Features of PEA

Participatory Extension Approach (PEA) is a defined methodology and systematic learning process focusing on cumulative joint learning using both indigenous and modern knowledge systems. Participatory Extension focuses on the full involvement and participation of entire communities or farmer groups in the development process. It recognizes that farmer communities are heterogeneous and that farmer problems are multidisciplinary and need to be addressed in a holistic manner. The emphasis is on facilitation rather than teaching of the communities so that communities understand the real source of their challenges. This is characterized by seeing community members doing more organized experiments concerning their developmental challenges and finding solutions.

## 3.4.2 PEA Cycle and the Key Stages

The participatory process involves logical sequences of stages as follows:

1. Preparation
2. Diagnosis
3. Needs assessment
4. Training and exposure
5. Action planning
6. Resource mobilization
7. Implementation
8. Monitoring and Evaluation



PREPARATION



ACTION PLANNING



DIAGONOSIS

MONITORING AND

EVALUATION

IMPLEMENTATION



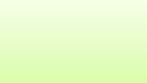
NEEDS

ASSESSMENT



TRAINING AND

EXPOSURE



RESOURCE

MOBILIZATION



**Figure 2. PEA Cycle**

PEA has been used as an official extension tool by Camp/Block Extension Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to mobilize and empower the rural population by involving them in every step of the planning and implementation of Community Action Plan (CAP), and the monitoring and evaluation activities.

A facilitation cycle has also been developed for the PEA with specific stages and activities. Furthermore, each stage has specific tools and techniques that are recommended to apply.

## NGOs Extension Services

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are very active in providing extension services to small-scale farmers in Zambia. The sizes of NGOs, operation areas and activities vary from one NGO to another. Some are international NGOs which operate in various Provinces and Districts while local NGOs often limit their operations within a particular District.

However there are several common features among those NGOs in delivering their services to small scale farmers. Some of these common features include:

NGOs usually have a specific interest or a target group with specific approach to deliver their extension services such as crop specific, promotion of a particular farming method, a small live stock, fish pond, marketing, empowerment of women etc.

Large NGOs often have their own extension staff operating with specific objectives in parallel to the services rendered by the Government extension officers.

Many NGOs also work closely with Government Extension Officers who actually deliver specific services designed and funded by NGOs. While some local NGOs are area based and operate in the same areas for a long period, others are project type intervention with fixed duration of the implementation period (typically 3 to 5 years period.

Many NGOs are funded by Development partners such as EU, USAiD, World Bank etc.

In terms of extension methodology, many NGOs apply Participatory Extension Approach (PEA) to mobilize and empower the small scale farmers to improve their farming practices, production and productivity in a sustainable manner. Farmer Field School, Lead Farmers, Farmer to Farmer Study Group are among some of the common extension delivery methodologies by NGOs.

## Private Sector Extension Services

Companies which provide agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, animal feeds, pesticides, agricultural implements are very active extension service providers with their simple objective of promotion of their products.

Many seed companies closely work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock especially with Camp/Block Extension Officers and Farmer Training Centres(FTCs)/Farm Institutes (FIs) through Provincial and District Officers to set up demonstration sites for their new varieties. They assist Camp/Block Extension Officers or FTCs/FIs with provision of new varieties, inputs and logistic support to set up demonstrations and also organize farmer field days. Other agricultural input suppliers also assist Camp/Block Extension Officers, fisheries/livestock officers by providing logistical support to promote their products through field days and other activities. Private Sector with NGOs also play an important role to promote innovative and affordable technologies to small scale farmers to increase their production and productivities.

In Zambia, the privatization of extension services is not strongly persued like some other countries. This is based on the fact that the majority of small scale farmers are in remote areas and it is not commercially viable to reach those small scale farmers. There are private extension service providers which assist farmers in agricultural input and marketing. Tobacco, sugar cane and cotton companies are such organizations which provide extension services under their out-grower schemes.

There are also several companies which are active in providing small scale farmers with market access and extension services to improve the quality of agricultural products for better market under their brand of products such as honey, rice and peanut butter.

## 6. Harmonization Approaches with Pluralistic Extension Services

At the Extension Approaches Harmonization workshop in March 2011, it was unanimously agreed by the stakeholders that all service providers need to work more closely to deliver extension services effectively to small scale farmers. This does not necessarily call for a strict control and regulation by the Government but rather for an effective coordination among various stakeholders and joint supervision to make sure that services delivered by various players do not confuse target farmers.

With the recent on-going process of decentralization of the Government function and services, it would be more useful and practical to coordinate different extension services provided by various stakeholders at District level while Provincial Agricultural Coordinator’s (PACO) Offices will provide back-up support to District Agricultural Coordinator’s (DACO) Offices. While the coordination of extension services is undertaken at District level with participation of various stakeholders under the leading role of the DACO’s Office, it should not limit opportunities for farmers to decide which approach and service would be of best interest and benefit to them. All these initiatives, however, should primarily provide farmers an enabling environment to try their initiative, make their own decision to select their own choices.

Figure 3. Different Services to Farmers

***Small Scale Farmers***

Figure 4 More Integrated/Harmonized Services

## 7. Operational Guidelines

As suggested above, the process of coordination and harmonization of extension services would be more practical and appropriate at district level. The following mechanism and procedures will be introduced and implemented.

## 7.1 Profiles of Service Providers

There is an urgent need to collate information on organizations/institutions which provide various forms of extension services in all the Districts. This exercise would help the EHC to better understand the types of organizations and services currently in existence. Inventory/Profile Format has been developed and introduced by the Extension Harmonization Committee to collect information on service providers. This Inventory should fully be utilized at District level with back-up support of Provincial Office. (Attachment 1: Inventory/Profile Template).

This information will provide the stakeholders operating in a certain area with useful information and coordination to maximize sustainable and effective impact of service rendered by the respective service providers individually or collectively.

## 7.2 Entry to Province and District

1. Once an extension service provider intends to provide intervention among farmers with specific objectives/approaches and inputs, such an organization will be required to notify the Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) of their intention. Entry to the Province should be through the Office of Provincial Agricultural Coordinator (PACO) while entry to the District should be through the Office of the District Agricultural Coordinator (DACO). While this requirement may not be seen as a “must” procedure prior to the commencement of their activities, it should rather be acknowledged by the service providers as an advantage so that they would not need to use resources ineffectively with duplication or in conflict with other service providers. Instead extension service providers could complement each other to multiply outputs of different interventions
2. All information provided by the service providers should be entered into a data base with the MAL Headquarters or with the respective PACO’s or DACO’s offices where the extension service provider will be operating.
3. District and Provincial Offices through the Senior Agricultural officers (SAOs) and Principal Agricultural Officers (PAOs) will furnish the DOA HQ with updated information on new service providers regularly.

## 7.3 COLLABORATION AND OPERATION

1. The extension service providers are free to work with extension officers as long as they notify and confirm their activities with the Offices of DACOs or the Offices of PACOs.
2. The extension service providers are expected to meet the Government conditions of service with regards to allowances for extension officers where and when applicable.
3. Reports and Work Plans of the Extension Service Providers should be availed to the Office of DACO or PACO in the area of operation. This is to avoid duplication of activities, coinciding of meetings with the same farmers/farmer groups and conflicting of reports coming from the same District.
4. Considering that most programmes and projects of the extension service providers have a specific period of intervention, the government should be prepared to take over such activities. The phase out strategy of the

**Figure 5. Function and Roles of MAL Offices at Different Levels**

extension service provider should be a well documented process and inclusive of the collaborating partners to ensure the sustainability of the interventions.

1. The method of extension service delivery should be Participatory Extension Approach being mindful of the four (4) extension pillars of Technology Transfer, Problem Solving, Education and Human Development.
2. The use of lead farmers and demonstration plots should be encouraged and the incentives provided to these lead farmers but such incentives should not be excessive or full time pay as this will create problems for other extension service providers including the government who may not provide the same level of incentives and future interventions by other organizations.
3. The involvement of farmers in the activities and programmes should not be based on handouts and excessive rewards as its not sustainable but be based on the four (4) pillars mentioned earlier
4. International, Local and Regional exposure visits should be encouraged to be provided by extension service providers.
5. The SAOs and PAOs through the Offices of DACOs and PAOs will convene regular meetings with extension service providers at least semi-annually at district and provincial levels where topical issues on agriculture can be discussed, and basic agricultural practices and definitions can also be shared among the extension service providers.
6. The extension service providers are expected to work closely with the Office of DACO and PACO to achieve the objectives of District and Provincial Agricultural Plans.

## 7.4 QUALIFICATION AND COMPETENCES

1. All agriculture extension service providers should employ qualified extension officers from the recognized Agriculture institutions or other government recognized institutions with the relevant qualifications to job positions.
2. Hiring of personnel to conduct inservice training should be restricted to those who are well qualified in the field of Agriculture and other relevant topics/issues. It is desirable that the details of qualification of trainers should be known to the Offices of DACOs and PACOs.

## 7.5 Planning and Working Together under the Common Strategy and Plan in District and Province

The District Agricultural Office is expected to broaden their scope of extension service plan beyond the programmes and activities which are implemented by the MAL, other Government organizations/institutions including research institutions.

The District Agricultural Office (DACO/SAO) will arrange a forum for stakeholders to get together to develop a consolidated plan with clear vision, strategies, and activities, which are to be implemented by all of extension service providers together to achieve the selected priority objectives. The District Office will also establish a coordination committee comprising of the representatives from Government/Public, NGOs and Private Sector to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the outputs of various activities.

**Figure 6. Working towards the common goals and targets**

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Pluralistic Extension Approach makes collective monitoring and evaluation of various extension services more challenging and time consuming if the intention is to capture the details of activities and impacts on project basis or activity basis. Nevertheless, it would still be desirable to document the current status of all extension services provided by various stakeholders by utilizing the aggregated data from inventory/profiles of stakeholders and regular reporting from the extension service providers.

At the same time, the ultimate goals of extension services are to improve production and productivity of small scale farmers, hence to improve their sustainable rural livelihood including food security. In this regard, the newly introduced monthly reporting format for the District Agricultural Office (Appendix 2) should be fully utilized as the trends in output indicators in terms of the improvement of agriculture to which extension service (input) should be attributed as one of importance and essential factors.

In addition to these indicators included in District Reporting format, other output indicators can also be considered as below. Some of these indicators are for medium to long-term evaluation to determine the changes in achieving the set macro objectives.

1. Use of PEA
2. Strengthening of linkage between Research and Extension
3. Improvement of Profile/Inventory Data
4. Increase in production and productivity
5. Changes in Crop Diversification
6. Changes in Farming Practices
7. Improvement in skills, knowledge and attitudes of extension officers

These indicators will be captured periodically by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in partnership with Central Statistical Office and other partners.

Annex 1. Profile Sheet for Service Provider





Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

Department of Agriculture

**DISTRICT QUARTERLY/ANNUAL REPORT**

1. **Executive Summary** *(Not more than half page*)
2. **Introduction***( Not more than half page*)
3. **Agricultural Conditions**

**3.1 Weather**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Block** | **Month** | **Rainfall days** | **Amount** | **Temperature** | |
| **Min** | **Max** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Crop Condition**

(*Brief description of general crops condition)*

* 1. **Pest and Diseases Observed**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pest/Diseases Observed | Action Taken | Comment |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **Inputs Supply**

*(brief description in terms of timeliness and availability)*

1. **Activities and outputs**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Branch | Section | Activity | Objective | Location | Activity  Target | Beneficiary  Target | | | Activity  Actual | | Beneficiary  Actual | | | | Remarks |
| M | F | T | |  | | M | F | T |  |
| AAS | Extension |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  | Farm mgt |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  | Food & nut. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
| Crops | Field crops |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  | Veg & Flo |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  | Tree Crops |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
| TSB | FP&M |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  | LH |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  | IRRIG |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |

1. **Collaboration with other Institutions**

*( Name Institution and briefly describe nature of collaboration*)

1. **Administrative issues**

*(Brief description*)

1. **General Comments**
2. **Recommendations**

*(Numbered and Summarised*)

1. **Appendices**
   1. Staffing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Position | Establishment (Number) | Filled (Number) | Vacant (Number) | Comment |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

* 1. Transport

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mode of Transport | Number of Runners | Number of non runners | Total | Comment |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

* 1. Funding

11.3.1 GRZ

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Amount budgeted | Amount received | Amount Spent | Comment |
| e.g PEA Training |  |  |  |  |