

Policy Advocacy for Rural Advisory Services (RAS)

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Summary

Module Overview

Globally there are few examples of specific national agricultural extension policies. Policies that effect the provision of agricultural extension and advisory services (EAS) are more typically written in the larger context of policies for the agricultural sector overall. As an extension professional, you are at the forefront of making development happen. You therefore constantly encounter situations where existing policy constrains development interventions or new policies could better support development. While policy is not your day-to-day function, you are in better position to generate evidence to inform good policies and organise the relevant stakeholders to articulate policy needs to the relevant authorities.

This learning module provides a broadly accepted definition of advocacy and underscores EAS actors' unique position and experience in policy advocacy. The module provides detailed steps, guidance, and tools for developing and implementing an advocacy strategy. It complements the *Strengthening RAS Actors' Capacity for Advocacy and Dialogue on Policy Reform and Action*; the GFRAS Policy compendium article (Mwamakamba et al., 2016). This module will help you to understand how to organise evidence for policy action and most importantly, how you can support actors (including farmers) to better input into the policy development processes.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Define policy-focused advocacy.
2. Analyse policies that lie at the root of RAS.
3. Identify the most effective way to use research and field data for policy prioritisation and policy advocacy.
4. Recognise the basic steps needed to create an advocacy strategy and the role of evidence in that process.
5. Understand and apply tools for advocacy.

Performance Outcomes

Upon completing activities within this module, you will be able to:

- Identify the components of a policy advocacy strategy.
- Develop a specific advocacy goal that is relevant to your work.
- Identify key decision makers and influencers that can make your advocacy goal a reality.
- Design strategic advocacy activities and targeted messaging to reach and influence decision makers.
- Draft a policy advocacy strategy and work plan to share and implement with colleagues.
- Effectively advocate across multiple agencies and organisations for a position on a RAS issue.

Units

Unit I: Introduction to Policy Advocacy

- Defining advocacy.
- Different approaches to policy advocacy,

- Defining advocacy for RAS.
- Rationale for advocacy.

Unit II: The Policy Development Processes

- Understanding the RAS policy environment.
- The policy making process.
- Stakeholder mapping.
- Identifying opportunities and barriers to policy development processes.
- Fundraising: Mobilizing resources.

Unit III: Mobilizing for Action - The Policy Advocacy Strategy

- Identifying policy problems, solutions, and evidence.
- Understanding your audience.
- Defining advocacy goals and objectives.
- Developing advocacy messages.
- The face of the advocacy campaign/messenger/policy champions

UNIT IV: Policy Advocacy Engagement Platforms and Tools

- Policy dialogues.
- Using the media for policy advocacy.
- Plan to measure success.