


Developing Capacity for Evaluation of Rural Extension and Advisory Services



LECTURER GUIDE

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Study unit 1: Introduction to rural advisory services (RAS) evaluation

Session 1.1: RAS in the agricultural innovation system

Activity 1.1 Individual activity: RAS in innovation system

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Give two examples of each of these items. (8)
 - Knowledge, technology, and information sharing;
 - Advice related to management of farms, organisations, and agri-business;
 - Strengthening of farmer-based organisations; and
 - Facilitation and brokerage in rural areas and value chains.

Answer: Any two of each of the following is sufficient.

Area	Example of service
<i>Knowledge, technology, and information sharing</i>	<i>Disseminating information and sharing of knowledge</i> <i>On-farm testing and practical application of new technologies and practices</i> <i>Promoting learning and innovations</i> <i>Linking farmers to research and innovation institutions</i> <i>Supporting implementation of government policies and programmes</i> <i>Nutrition education, natural resource management practices, and so on</i>

Area	Example of service
<i>Advice related to management of farms, organisations, and agribusiness</i>	<p><i>Advice on how to reach markets</i></p> <p><i>Development of business management skills</i></p> <p><i>Support to institutional development</i></p> <p><i>Legal and fiscal advice</i></p>
<i>Strengthening of farmer-based organisations</i>	<p><i>Supporting development of informal and formal farmer organisations and their empowerment</i></p> <p><i>Facilitating demand formulation</i></p> <p><i>Legal and financial advice</i></p>
<i>Facilitation and brokerage in rural areas and value chains</i>	<p><i>Brokering collaboration among actors of the innovation system and along the value chain</i></p> <p><i>Linking farmers and their organisations to institutions offering training and education</i></p> <p><i>Facilitating links between farmers, farmer organisations, and public and private sectors</i></p> <p><i>Facilitating access to rural services such as credit, insurance, phytosanitary, and certification</i></p> <p><i>Resolving conflicts over natural resources</i></p>

2. Why is it important for RAS programmes to be adaptable? (2)

Answer: Local conditions such as weather, institutional structures, security, policies, and markets vary and affect their structure and how they are carried out.

3. List the actors, systems, and elements involved in agricultural innovation. (10)

Answer:

- *Government policy, regulatory framework, and consumer demands;*
- *Agricultural education system, input, and service suppliers, agricultural advisory services and agricultural research system; and*
- *Private sector actors, producer organisations, financial service suppliers.*

Total: 20 marks

Session 1.2: Principles of modern RAS systems and interventions

Activity 1.2 Individual activity: Principles of modern RAS systems and interventions

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Match the terms in the first column with the descriptions in the second column. (3)

Term	Description
1. Pluralism	a. When stakeholders take responsibility for development and survival of the institutions as well as for the adoption and integration of approaches and results
2. Adaptability	b. There are many different types of RAS providers, as well as approaches
3. Accountability	c. The ease with which something can change or adjust in response to new conditions.

Answer: 1, b; 2, c; 3, a

2. List the factors that affect sustainability. (3)

Answer:

- *Adaptability to change;*
- *Clear and strong ownership; and*
- *Sustainable and reliable financing.*

3. List the actors in the AIS that the RAS intervention work with or have relations to. (5)

Answer:

- *Public RAS institutions;*
- *Civil society organisations;*
- *Farmer-based organisations;*
- *Private RAS providers; and*
- *Private agri-business enterprises.*

4. Why is human resource development crucial to RAS? (3)

Answer: It helps address challenges and rapid changes facing rural development. Through education and empowerment it improves living conditions of farmers. It also ensures sustainability.

Total: 14 marks

Summative assessment

Theoretical assessment

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. What is the purpose of RAS? (4)

Answer: To improve the knowledge and information and provide advice to farmers in order to increase sustainable food production, ensure food security, increase resilience to climate change and reduce poverty in rural households.

2. Provide definitions for the following terms. (10)

- a) Agriculture;
- b) Innovation;
- c) Food security;
- d) Public sector; and
- e) Primary production.

Answer:

a) Agriculture: The study and practice of farming and cultivation and ways to improve them.

b) Innovation: The process of making changes that improve a system.

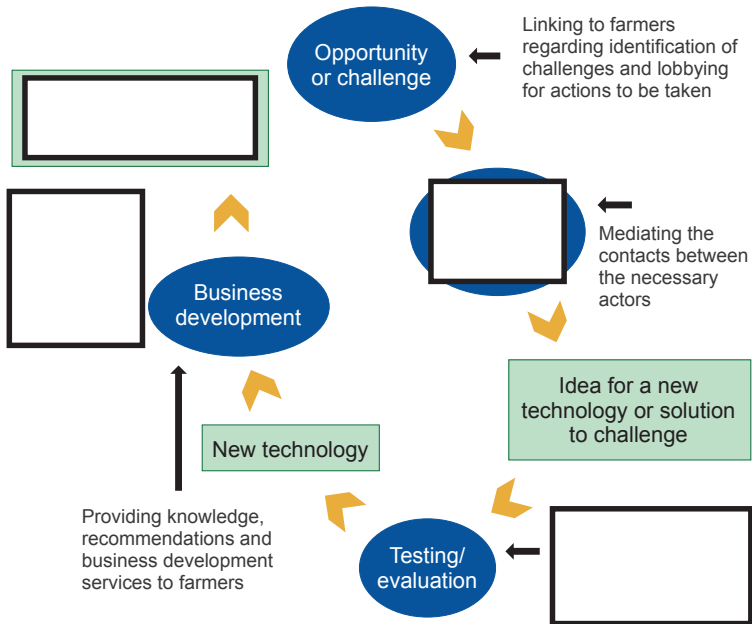
c) Food security: When there is enough food for a group of people.

d) Public sector: The government and related sections of society where public funds are used.

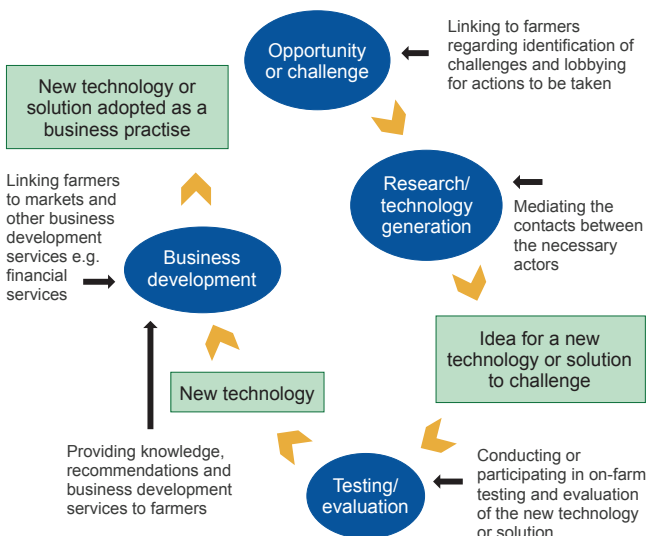
e) Primary production: The level of production where raw materials are produced and which can be used at higher levels to produce more complex products.

3. Provide the missing labels in this diagram below.

(8)



Answer:



4. Discuss how accountability to rural clients is made possible.(7)

Answer: RAS work should be driven by demand from the users so that the services are responding to demand by users and the service providers are accountable to the users. One way to enforce accountability is by involvement and empowerment of farmers through farmer organisations. It can also be through decentralising the responsibility and decision-making regarding the services to entities that the farmers have influence on. Financing mechanisms can empower farmers in terms of decision-making regarding the content of services and thus make the service providers accountable to the farmers for the quality of the services.

5. List the various actors involved in RAS. (5)

Answer:

- *Public RAS institutions;*
- *Civil society organisations;*
- *Farmer-based organisations;*
- *Private RAS providers; and*
- *Private agri-business enterprises.*

6. List and briefly discuss in three or fewer sentences the five principles of modern RAS systems. (10)

Answer:

- *Focusing on best-fit approaches: Solutions and practices need to be based on local conditions and flexible enough to deal with current and future rural development issues and crisis moulding approaches that can fit unique situations.*
- *Embracing pluralism: There are many different types of RAS providers and approaches. This pluralism provides opportunity to capitalise on the diverse competencies that these have in order to reach different types of clients.*
- *Increasing accountability to rural clients: RAS work should be*

driven by demand from the users so that the services respond to demand by users and the service providers are accountable to the users.

- *Human resource development: Agricultural education and empowerment for farmers is an important component in efforts to enhance their capacity to demand and use RAS for improving and making their livelihood more resilient.*
 - *Sustainability: Ensures that the programme is adaptable, there is clear and strong ownership of the process and it is sustainably and reliably financed.*
7. State whether the following is true or false. If false, explain why. (6)
- a) Ownership is when stakeholders buy a stake in the RAS-participating farms.

Answer: False. It is when stakeholders take responsibility for development and survival of the institutions as well as for the adoption and integration of approaches and results.

- b) The agricultural business operates at the primary production level.

Answer: True.

- c) Functional networks and links between the actors in agricultural innovation processes are important and RAS can have an important role in mediating these.

Answer: True.

Total: 50 marks

Study unit 2: Defining, monitoring and evaluation

Session 2.1: Basic principles of RBM

Activity 2.1 Individual activity: SMART

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Complete the following paragraph. (6)

_____ monitoring differs from more traditional management monitoring by not only monitoring the intervention's activities and outputs. It encourages organisations to focus on _____, even in the day-to-day monitoring. Because management monitoring goes beyond the activities and outputs, it increases the chances of _____: practices already during implementation. It is then possible to _____ and increase the chances of _____ on people's lives as intended.

Answer: Results-based monitoring differs from more traditional management monitoring by not only monitoring the intervention's activities and outputs. Result-based monitoring encourages organisations to focus on outcomes and impact, even in the day-to-day monitoring. Because management monitoring goes beyond the activities and outputs, it increases the chances of learning from experience: you see what works and what doesn't can thus adjust the practices during implementation. It is then possible to improve the performance and increase the chances of creating impact on people's lives as intended.

2. List and briefly discuss the three steps in the RBM process. (9)

Answer:

- *Planning: Designing and planning the intervention and defining the intended results. It starts with setting the vision and designing the intervention according to the vision and mission, resources available and intended results (outputs, outcomes, and impact).*
- *Monitoring: When implementation starts, monitoring is the tool to continuously track the results, reflect on them and making management decisions and adjustments; and*
- *Evaluation: Evaluation provides evidence and captures lessons learned on how the intervention performs in producing the intended results.*

3. Why are feedback loops important? (2)

Answer: They inform project implementers on how to modify interventions so that they are more effective.

4. How do you view and measure results? (2)

Answer: By defining the indicators and how to measure them.

5. List the three types of results and give one example of each. (6)

Answer:

- *Outputs: Training courses, conferences, workshops, meetings, publications, laboratories, offices, libraries, and so on.*
- *Outcomes: Increased knowledge of agricultural markets, improved management, and links to market actors or collective action by groups of farmers.*
- *Impact: Economic, social or other changes.*

Total: 25 marks

Session 2.2: The roles that M&E can play in RAS

Activity 2.2 Individual activity: Roles and purposes of M&E

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. List the three roles M&E can play in RAS. (3)

Answer:

- *Provide accountability;*
- *Support policymakers and RAS managers with evidence on how best to structure and invest in RAS; and*
- *Support internal and external learning on how to improve the performance of RAS.*

2. Whom are governments and RAS providers accountable to?(2)

Answer: Taxpayers and farmers.

3. What is the aim of the RMB approach? (2)

Answer: For the implementation of the processes to lead to greater opportunities for continuous learning from experience, which can provide for adjustment and decision-making along the way of the implementation through feedback mechanisms.

4. List three stakeholders involved in and using M&E in RAS. (3)

Answer: Any three of the following is sufficient.

- *RAS agencies and other service providers;*
- *Ministries of agriculture;*
- *Farmer organisations;*
- *Other civil society groups;*
- *Private agribusiness companies;*

- *Aid agencies; and*
- *Farmers/users.*

Total: 10 marks

Session 2.3: What is special about M&E for RAS?

Activity 2.3 Individual activity: M&E for RAS

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. List the factors that must be monitored and evaluated to improve an RAS intervention. (4)

Answer:

- *Best-fit approaches;*
- *Gender equality;*
- *Wealth; and*
- *Market orientation.*

2. What is purpose of M&E in RAS? (2)

Answer: To track efforts to overcome barriers and how the interventions manage the relationships of stakeholders involved in RAS and how they contribute.

3. Explain the best-fit approach. (2)

Answer: It is an approach based on good analyses of the conditions under which the intervention takes place and what has been learned from earlier experiences.

4. How can gender equality be realised in RAS? (2)

Answer: By applying approaches and methodologies that are suited to reach women as well as men and by considering women's needs for equal participation in employment policies, the institutional structure and governance of the services.

Total: 10 marks

Summative assessment

Theoretical assessment

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. State the two general purposes of RBM. (2)

Answer:

- *To provide a tool for learning and improving the performance of an organisation or programme; and*
- *To provide a reliable tool for accountability to the stakeholders.*

2. List and briefly discuss the processes in RBM. (6)

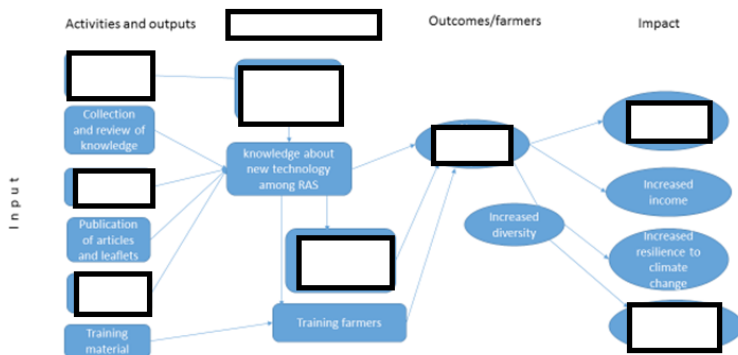
Answer:

- *Planning: Designing and planning the intervention and defining the intended results. It starts with setting the vision and designing the intervention according to the vision and mission, resources available and intended results (outputs, outcomes, and impact).*
- *Monitoring: When implementation starts, monitoring is the tool to continuously track the results, reflect on them and making management decisions and adjustments; and*
- *Evaluation: Evaluation provides evidence and captures lessons learned on how the intervention performs in producing the intended results.*

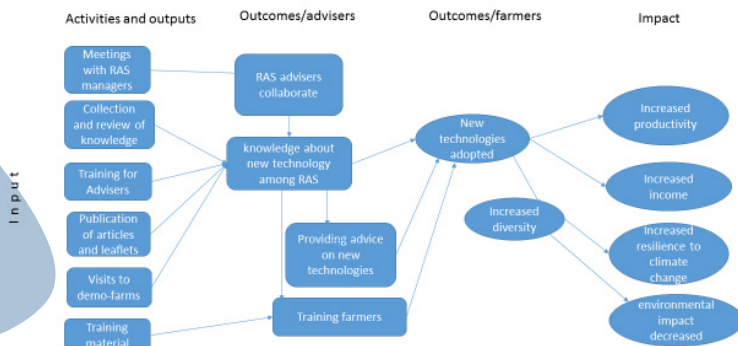
3. What is the significance of defining the intended results? (3)

Answer: It is an essential part of the strategic planning of any intervention. The more stakeholders are involved in this process, the better are the chances that the results will be relevant and that there will be ownership for the processes and results among the stakeholders.

4. Provide the missing labels in the diagram below showing a programme ToC for an RAS intervention. (9)



Answer:



5. What does SMART stand for? (5)

Answer:

- *Specific;*
- *Measurable;*
- *Attainable;*
- *Relevant; and*
- *Time-bound.*

6. How does results-based monitoring differ from more traditional management monitoring? (2)

Answer: It not only monitors the intervention's activities and outputs but also encourages organisations to focus on outcomes and impact, even in the day-to-day monitoring.

7. List and briefly discuss the five criteria of evaluation. (10)

Answer:

- *Relevance: The extent to which the objectives and practices of the intervention are consistent with the target group's priorities and the recipient and investor's policies;*
- *Effectiveness: A measure of the extent to which the intervention has achieved or is achieving its intended results;*
- *Efficiency: A measure of how economical inputs are converted into outputs;*
- *Impact: The long-term changes in the lives of the rural people as they perceive them at the time of evaluation to which the intervention has contributed. Changes can be positive or negative, intended or unintended; and*
- *Sustainability: The likelihood that the positive results of the intervention will continue long after the external assistance ends.*

8. List the three roles M&E play. (3)

Answer:

- *Provide accountability;*
- *Support policymakers and RAS managers with evidence on how best to structure and invest in RAS; and*
- *Support internal and external learning on how to improve the performance of RAS.*

9. Discuss how the need for increased accountability is addressed. (6)

Answer: Several approaches, methodologies, institutional setups and governance systems are in play worldwide to address the need for increased accountability towards the users of the services – the farmers. They include participatory RAS methods, decentralisation, and alternative service providers. The latter can, for example, be farmer-based organisations or producer cooperatives, where farmers are involved in governance. Moreover, innovative financing mechanisms that provide funding to the farmers to purchase their own services will increase accountability.

10. Are the following statements true or false? If you answer false, explain why. (8)

a) The aim of RBM is to provide a traditional way to manage projects.

Answer: False. The aim of RBM is the implementation of the process that will lead to greater opportunities for continuous learning from experiences, which can provide for adjustment and decision-making along the way of the implementation through feedback mechanisms.

b) M&E responds both to the learning need within RAS organisations and to those with broader interests in the AIS.

Answer: False. Ideally it does. It might not always.

- c) RAS interventions are essentially the same and exist at one level.

Answer: False. They vary and exist at different levels.

- d) The factors that must be monitored to improve RAS interventions are best-fit approaches, gender equality and market orientation.

Answer: False. They are best-fit approaches, gender equality, market orientation and wealth.

11. Define the following terms. (4)

- a) Agroecological
- b) Methodology

Answer:

a) Agroecological: Referring to ecological process that take place in agricultural production systems.

b) Methodology: A set of methods used in a specific way to study something or perform an activity.

12. Match the M&E approaches in the first column with the descriptions in the second column. (7)

Approach	Description
1. Outcome mapping	a) When a programme theory is developed during the planning stages of the intervention. The evaluation will review the programme theory and revise or elaborate it if necessary. The evaluation will seek to establish not only the results but also the precise link between activities and the achievement of the long-term goals (outcomes and impact)

Approach	Description
2. Theory of change evaluation	b) A less common approach that may in some cases suit extension goals. It evaluates the effect-in-practice of the intervention on clients, irrespective of the intervention's planned results.
3. Most significant change	c) Can be used to identify RAS contribution to changes in behaviour and relationships between different actors and organisations, rather than monitoring and evaluating a programme's "tangible" products (such as increased productivity).
4. Appreciative inquiry	d) An approach particularly oriented to evaluating an intervention's ability to design for and respond to a volatile context and emerging needs. It may be appropriate for M&E with a strong learning focus and a commitment to on-going development, where the monitor/evaluator is involved throughout the life of an intervention.
5. Rapid appraisal of agricultural knowledge systems	e) A methodology designed to explore the networks and relationships between stakeholders within the innovation system, facilitate participants to examine problems from multiple and alternative perspectives, and to promote joint learning.

Approach	Description
6. Goal-free evaluation	f) Collects and assesses stories by stakeholders about the changes of most significance to them; the technique is used for both monitoring and evaluating purposes and helps focus stakeholders on impact.
7. Development evaluation	g) A related set of methods for monitoring and evaluating interventions that is well suited for organisational learning purpose. It focuses on what worked, why, and how in order to take these best practices forward by building consensus for change among the participants in the M&E.

Answer:

1. c
2. a
3. f
4. g
5. e
6. b
7. d

Total: 65 marks