Government of Malawi

THE DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES SYSTEM

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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ACRONYMS

ADC	Area Development Committee
AEDC	Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CF	Commercial Farmers
DA	District Assembly
DAC	District Agriculture Committee
DADO	District Agricultural Development Officer
DAES	Department of Agricultural Extension Services
DAESS	District Agricultural Extension Services System
DARTS	Department of Agricultural Research and Technical Services
DC	District Commissioner
Dev. C	Development Committee
DDF	District Development Fund
DEC	District Executive Committee
EU	European Union
FIDP	Farm Income Diversification Project
FO	Farmer Organisation
IDAF	Institutional Development across Agri-Food Sector
IRLADP	Irrigation Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture Development Project
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OD	Organisational Development
SHFSF	Smallholder Food Security Farmer
SP	Stakeholder Panel
SSCF	Small-Scale Commercial Farmer
TOT	Transfer of Technology
VDC	Village Development Committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The agriculture sector continues to contribute to the overall economic growth of the country. This requires policies that will have positive impact on the sector. One of such policies is the Agriculture Extension Policy that promotes pluralistic and demand-driven agricultural extension services provision. The new agricultural extension policy was developed to respond to numerous challenges faced by farmers in Malawi. These challenges include dwindling land holding sizes, declining soil fertility, HIV/AIDS crisis, market liberalisation, decentralisation, low literacy levels among farmers, decentralisation and shrinking public sector resources. The policy is being implemented under the District Agricultural Extension Services System (DAESS) that is in line with the decentralisation policy and the Local Government decentralisation structures.

The District Agricultural Extension Services System (DAESS) introduces a new approach to agricultural extension services provision at decentralised levels. In this agricultural extension system farmers will be enabled, using participatory tools, to identify and organise their agricultural felt needs for appropriate action to be made. When the farmers have clearly expressed their demands the agricultural extension service providers will be organised to respond to such farmers' demands. The new agricultural extension system recognises that in the districts, there is a broad diversity of service providers in the agricultural sector. These service providers have different mandates, roles and responsibilities, as such, there is need to have a good coordinating mechanism among all service providers in order to, among other things, avoid duplication and overlap and also to explore possible alliances among various service providers. The district agricultural extension services system can only work properly if adequate funds are made available for the agricultural sector in the district. The system will be relying on the capabilities of the district assemblies to finance the agricultural extension services from various sources. The District Agricultural Extension Service System is integrated into the District Assembly system through two structures known as the Stakeholder Panels and the District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee.

The objective of the DAESS is to empower farmers to demand high quality services from those that are best able to provide them. In order to facilitate implementation of DAESS, this guide has been written for all agricultural extension service providers including public and private sectors, Non Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations, Faith Based Organisations, and Farmer Based Organisations. This guide will also be beneficial to the district administrators, traditional, political and religious leaders that are key to the implementation of the DAESS. The objective of the DAESS guidelines is to provide stakeholders with information that will facilitate the implementation of the DAESS.

The guide includes the four pillars upon which the DAESS is built, tools for facilitating farmers' demands, the DAESS implementation structure, its functions and its relationship to the Local Government structure.

It must be pointed out that this guide replaces the previous District Agricultural Extension Services System Implementation Guide, and the District Agricultural Extension Services System Implementation Manual both of which were produced by the Ministry of Agriculture. It is important that this guide be used together with the National Agricultural Extension Policy, the New District Agricultural Extension Services System for Malawi – Concept and Operational Guidelines for Practitioners, the Farmer Organisation Development Guide as well as the Guide to Agri-business Development.

1.0   BACKGROUND

The Agriculture Sector plays a very important role in the overall economic growth of the country. It contributes to about 40% of the GDP, accounts for more than 90% of export earnings, offers employment to more than 80% of the population and supplies over 90% of the food consumed in the country. In order to achieve economic growth, there is need to increase agricultural productivity at household level. One of the factors that contribute to increase agricultural productivity is provision of quality agricultural extension services.

Previously agricultural services were provided using a Transfer of Technology Model with the Government as a sole service provider. In this model, researchers developed technologies after which extension workers passed on/trained farmers in a top-down, teacher-pupil mode of interaction (Refer to Figure 1). The farmers were passive recipients of technical recipes in a top-down flow of information. This type of relationship is no longer in line with the democratic principles that give people the freedom to express their felt needs.

Figure 1: Transfer of Technology Model
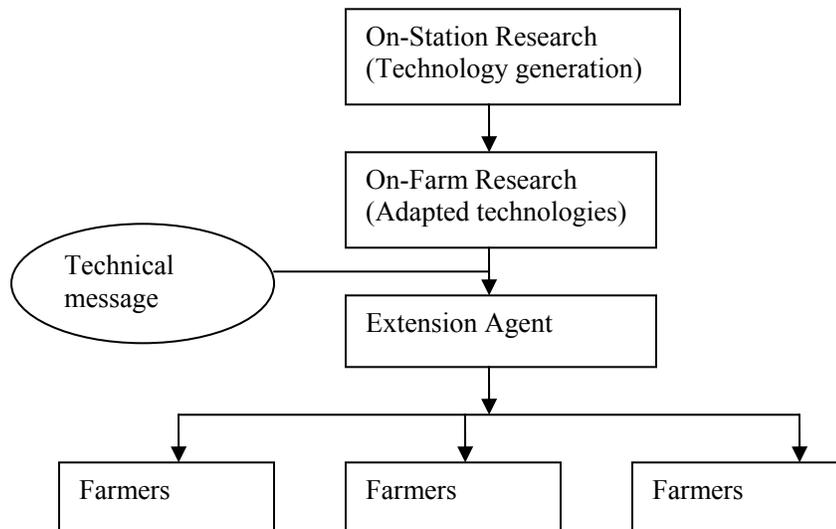
The extension approaches that have been used over the years include:

- Coercion – where farmers were forced to follow recommended practices, otherwise those that did not comply were either fined or jailed.

- Individual approach – this included use of master farmers and extension agents through individual visits.

- Group approach – that included use of farmer clubs and cooperatives for input supply, commercial crop production, dairying and marketing.

To enhance group approach, the Block Extension System (BES) that is a modification of the Training and Visit (T & V) System was put in place in order to cover a wider range of farmers. However, with the Block Extension System it was observed that the majority of resource poor farmers were not reached with agricultural messages and technologies because the mode of interaction did not encourage them and the technologies were not demand driven. As a result, agricultural production did not significantly improve. This therefore necessitated the development of a new agriculture extension policy.

The policy promotes pluralism (having a variety and choice service providers) in the provision of agricultural extension services. It also promotes demand-driven service provision that will make sure that clients have a clear idea of standards and quality of services to be provided and therefore the clients will request for the services that they need. This builds empowerment of farmers to express their demands. In addition to the above, the extension policy also promotes decentralised coordination that allows for decisions to be made at lower levels so as to harmonise plans or activities of various service providers. Decentralised coordination has been enabled through the decentralisation process of the Local Government. The main aim of decentralisation is to improve service delivery to the people and strengthen democracy at the grassroots level. Democracy encourages people to participate in social, political and economical issues that directly affect them.

In order to make the new agricultural policy operational, a District Agricultural Extension Services System (DAESS) was initiated.

2. THE DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES SYSTEM

2.1 Definition of the District Agricultural Extension Services System

The District Agricultural Extension Services System is a mechanism for enabling farmers to identify and organise their agricultural felt needs for appropriate action by relevant stakeholders. The system is thus, bottom up or demand driven.

2.2 Objective of the District Agricultural Extension Services System

The overall objective of the District Agricultural Extension Services System (DAESS) is to empower farmers to demand high quality services from those that are best able to provide them. The specific objectives of the DAESS include the following:

- To organise farmers agricultural needs.
- To pool service providers and related resources in order to address prioritised farmers agricultural needs.
- To instil sense of ownership and self reliance in agricultural programmes among farmers.
- To foster coordination among stakeholders in service provision

2.3 Main Focal Areas of DAESS

The District Agricultural Extension Services System has four main areas of focus as follows:

(i) ***Organisation of farmers demands:***

This is a process of enabling farmers in their wealth categories to identify their agriculture felt needs.

(ii) ***Organising service providers' response to farmers needs:***

This is a process of identifying and engaging service providers that would respond to farmers needs.

(iii) **Stakeholders Coordination:**

All the stakeholders will have to cooperate, coordinate and plan together at the district level for the system to be effective.

(iv) **Funding acquisition:**

The district assembly will have to find ways of financing agricultural extension services from a diverse base of sources. The assemblies have to explore sources of finances (see section on Financing of Services).

3   ESTABLISHING THE DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES SYSTEM

Considering that the Ministry of Agriculture has a new agricultural extension policy that has to be operationalised by all stakeholders, new committees at both district and area levels are required to be established. When the new committees are established and are working they will constitute the District Agricultural Extension Services System that will be responsible for organising farmers' demands, facilitating service providers' response, coordinating agricultural strategy development and arranging for funding acquisition.

The committees at the district level will include:

- District Agricultural Committee
- District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee and
- District Stakeholder Panel

The committee at the lower level is the Area Stakeholder Panel. These institutions will form a platform for the various stakeholders to meet and discuss agricultural related issues at various levels so that stakeholders' participation is promoted in the district. It is therefore necessary that the DADO should take a leading role with the support of the DC to facilitate establishment of these institutions.

3.1   Lobbying for Support

The District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) should conduct briefing sessions to lobby for support from key people and institutions in the district. The areas to be covered in the briefing sessions should include explaining institutions that will be established and how the DAESS will operate. The following people and institutions will be briefed:

- The DC and DPD – in order to lobby for support
- The District Chairperson of the Assembly for support

- The District Assembly – in order to lobby for support and establishment of a District Agriculture Committee
- The District Executive Committee – in order to establish the district Agriculture Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC), identify service providers and nominate persons that will be in the District Stakeholder Panel.
- The Area Development Committee – in order to establish Area Stakeholder Panel.

3.2 Establishment of Service Provider Inventories and Profiles

Some District Assemblies do not have comprehensive knowledge of the activities of various service providers in their respective districts. This limits effective coordination of wider services provision. As part of its functions, the DAECC shall establish a register of all service providers in the district detailing their service profile in terms of:

- What services they offer
- Where these services are offered
- Which delivery system they use
- Which farmers they target
- What their capacity (human and physical resource) is
- The calibre and expertise of their staff
- The syllabi and duration of training programmes
- Their sources of funding and conditions attached to any loans/financing
- Their long term plans within the district

This information will enable the DAECC to identify gaps in service provision and therefore plan corrective action. In order to come up with this information, DAECC will perform the following activities:

- Review a questionnaire for district service providers inventory and profiles

- Administer the questionnaire to the service providers

- Analyse the questionnaires to establish the service providers location, target group, interventions implemented, resources available and capacity levels

- Establish a data bank of service providers for reference

3.3   Establishment of Committees

3.3.1 Establishment of the District Agriculture Committee (DAC)

The District Commissioner and the District Agricultural Development Officer should call on the chairperson of the District Assembly to explain the new arrangements and propose that a full assembly meeting be convened to sensitise them on the new agricultural extension policy and the District Agricultural Extension Services System and lobby for a special committee that will deal with agriculture issues. Currently, the Local Government Act (1998) requires Assemblies to establish the following service committees:

(a) Finance Committee
(b) Development Committee
(c) Education Committee
(d) Works Committee
(e) Health and Environment Committee and
(f) Appointments and Disciplinary Committee

It is understood that the assembly may also establish other committees as deemed necessary, hence the need to lobby for an Agriculture Committee (District Agriculture Committee). The Chairman of the District Assembly shall facilitate the election of members of the District Agriculture Committee.

3.3.2   Composition of the District Agriculture Committee

The composition of the District Agriculture Committee will be elected members of the Assembly with District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) providing secretarial services. The DADO shall explain the importance of the District Agriculture Committee and District Agricultural Extension Services System.

3.3.3 *Functions of the District Agriculture Committee*

The DADO shall explain the functions and Terms of Reference (TOR) for the District Agriculture Committee that are as follows:

- Recommend to the District Assembly on policy making decisions regarding the governance and agricultural extension services delivery in the district

- Support the District Assembly in consolidating and promoting local agricultural institutions and public participation

- Promote infrastructural and economic development through the formulation, approval and execution of local agricultural development plans

- Assist the District Assembly in mobilisation of resources for governance and agricultural development

- Recommend to the District Assembly in making of bye-laws for the good governance of agricultural activities in the district

- Ensure that there is equity in the district agricultural extension service provision

- Supervise, monitor and evaluate the implementation of agricultural development activities in the district

- Initiate locally funded agricultural self-help activities

- Encourage communities to participate in agricultural self-help activities

3.4 Establishment of a District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC)

The District Commissioner will convene a meeting of the full District Executive Committee (DEC) and sensitise the members with the assistance of the DADO on the

new arrangements on agricultural extension service provision. The main topics to be discussed will include:

- – The New Agriculture Extension Policy
- – The District Agricultural Extension Services System (DAESS)

The meeting should establish a District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC) that will coordinate service providers that will respond to farmers' demands.

3.4.1 Setting up of the DAECC

The members of District Executive Committee are requested to nominate names of persons or institutions that will constitute District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee. The setting up of the District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee will be to minimise conflicts of interest among various service providers as well as to avoid duplication of efforts by them.

3.4.2 Composition of DAECC

The District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) should outline the composition of District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee (DADO to act as interim chairperson). The District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee will be composed of all heads of agriculture technical departments at the district level, representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that provide services, micro-financing institutions, private sector, input suppliers, and Farmer Organisations (that provide services e.g. farmer associations). Members of the District Executive Committee should propose the names of persons to be in the District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC). The stakeholders that are to be part of DAECC should be those that provide services at the district level. The stakeholder membership should be reviewed every two years because of high staff turnover.

3.4.3   Functions of DAECC

The District Agricultural Development Officer in his presentation should also outline the functions of District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC) and show how it is linked to the District Assembly. The functions of the DAECC are as follows but not limited to:

- Set up standards for the delivery of services

- Ensure that quality services are provided

- Facilitate the processing of Memoranda of Understanding and Service Charters

- Register service providers

- Liaise with and advise the District Agriculture Committee on matters relating to agricultural development

- Plan agricultural extension service at the district level

- Ensure equity in service provision

- Coordinate provision of agricultural extension services at the district level

- Harmonise approaches in service provision and delivery

- Receive and provide feedback on service delivery

- Monitor and evaluate agricultural development activities

- Lobby for agricultural extension services within and outside the District Assembly

- Link agricultural extension service providers and farmers to the District Assembly

The newly formed District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee should then be allowed to propose date of their first meeting. At that meeting the District Agricultural Development Officer shall explain DAECC in detail in terms of their functions, roles and responsibilities and the linkages with other district institutions. They will also discuss how to source funding for the operations of District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee. The DAECC should draw up a schedule of meetings (monthly / bimonthly / quarterly / half-yearly).

3.5 Establishment of District Stakeholder Panel

The Stakeholder Panel is a platform where service providers and farmers can plan and coordinate their activities. The purpose of stakeholder panel therefore, is to act as a forum for dialogue among all stakeholder thus providing agenda for demand and feed-back to which the services system as a whole has to respond.

3.5.1 Composition of the District Stakeholder Panel

The District Stakeholder Panel will represent all actors in the agricultural sector at their respective levels in a district. This panel will be composed of heads of agriculture technical departments at the district level, representatives of Smallholder Food Security Farmers (who should form 50% of the total membership), Semi-Commercial and Commercial Farmers, Farmer Organisations (FOs), NGOs, agribusiness groups, community-based organisations and a member of a relevant service committee of the assembly. It is suggested that each Stakeholder Panel should have not more than 20 persons for effective management. It is further recommended that in the spirit of equalisation, marginalised sectors of the community should have good representation in the Stakeholder Panel.

Figure 2: The Stakeholder Panel
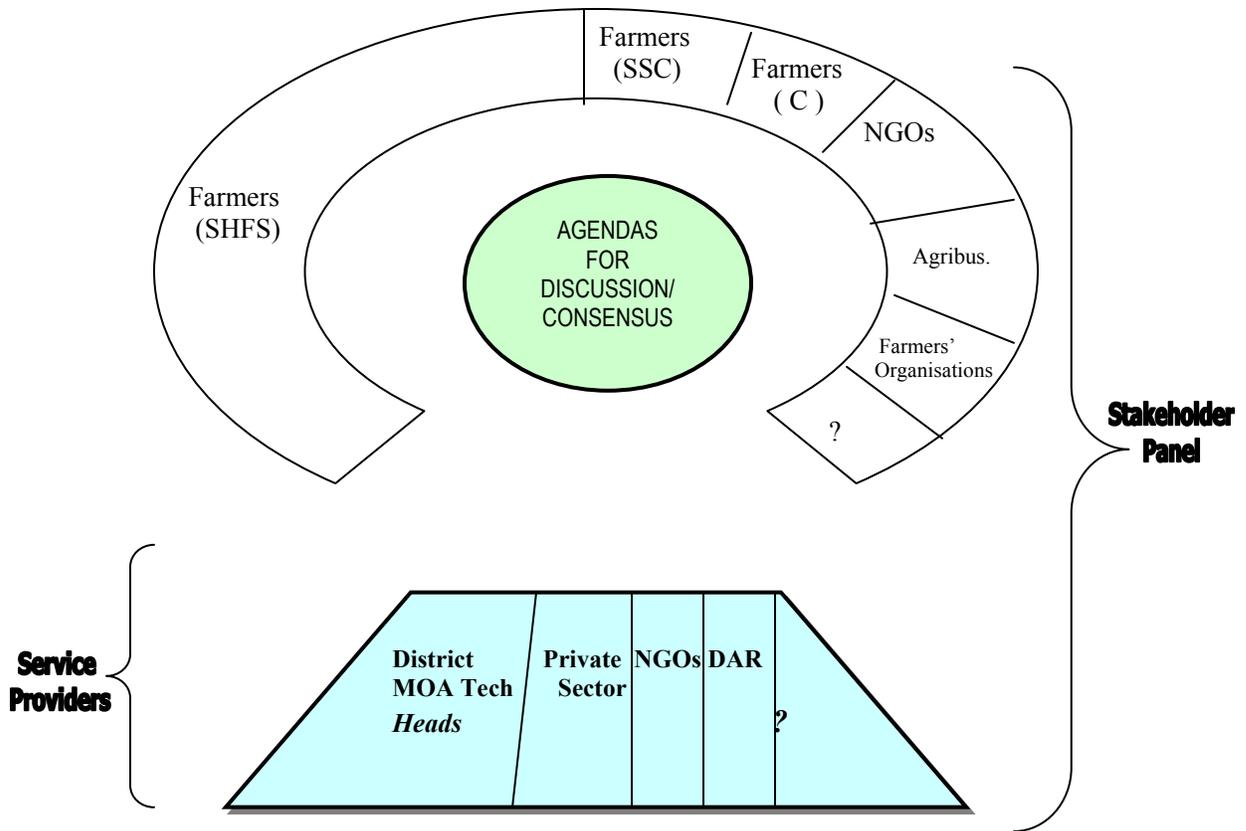
3.5.2   Functions of the District Stakeholder Panel

The District Agricultural Development Officer shall clarify the functions of the District Stakeholder Panel. The following are some of the main functions of the Stakeholder Panel:

- Provide a forum for the farmers to express their demands

- Ensure right representation of all stakeholders and that each group is heard

- Ensure that the village demands are articulated and aggregated

- Ensure that respective service providers provide quality responses to the farmers' demands.

3.6 Establishment Area Stakeholder Panels

The chairperson of the Area Development Committee will have been already exposed to the new arrangements to the decentralised extension service provision such that it will be easier to organise and sensitise the full Area Development Committee with support from the District Agricultural Development Officer.

Similar to the District Assembly sensitisation meetings, the Area Development Committee meeting will dwell on the following topics:

- Briefing on the Agriculture Extension Policy

- Briefing on the District Agricultural Extension Services System

The output of this meeting will be to establish an Area Stakeholder Panel.

3.6.1 Composition of the Area Stakeholder Panel

Similar to the District Stakeholder Panel the Area Stakeholder Panel will represent all actors in the agricultural sector at their respective levels. The panel will be composed of all members of staff of the Ministry of Agriculture in the area, representatives of Smallholder Food Security Farmers (who should form 50% of the total membership), Semi-Commercial and Commercial Farmers, Farmers Organisations, NGOs, agribusiness groups, community-based groups and relevant committees of the assembly. The Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator (AEDC) will provide secretarial services.

3.6.2 Functions of the Area Stakeholder Panel

The chairperson of the Area Development Committee assisted by the Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator should explain the functions of the Area Stakeholder Panel and its link to the District Stakeholder Panel, the District Agricultural Extension Coordination Committee, the District Agriculture Committee and the District Assembly. Some of the functions of the Area Stakeholder Panel are to:

- Provide a forum for the farmers through the villages to express their demands

- Ensure right representation of all stakeholders and that each group is heard

- Aggregate the villages' demands that have been articulated

- Ensure that quality response to demands is provided and maintained by the respective service providers

The Area Stakeholder Panel should propose a name for representation at the District Stakeholder Panel. The members of the Area Stakeholder Panel should discuss ways of sourcing funding for the operations of their institution and draw up a schedule for their meetings.

3.7 THE LINKAGES OF DAESS STRUCTURE WITH THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

In the new decentralised extension system the District Assembly will play a very important role of overseeing agricultural extension service provision through the District Agriculture Committee (a new Service Committee). The District Stakeholder Panel will be reporting directly to the District Agriculture Committee, however, the District Agricultural Development Officer will regularly be briefing the District Executive Committee on the progress. The demands from the farming communities will be passed on to the District Stakeholder Panel through the Area Stakeholder panels, while the other development issues will be sent to the District Assembly through the Area Development Committee (ADC) (Refer to Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: **The DAESS Structure Linkage to Institutions in a District**
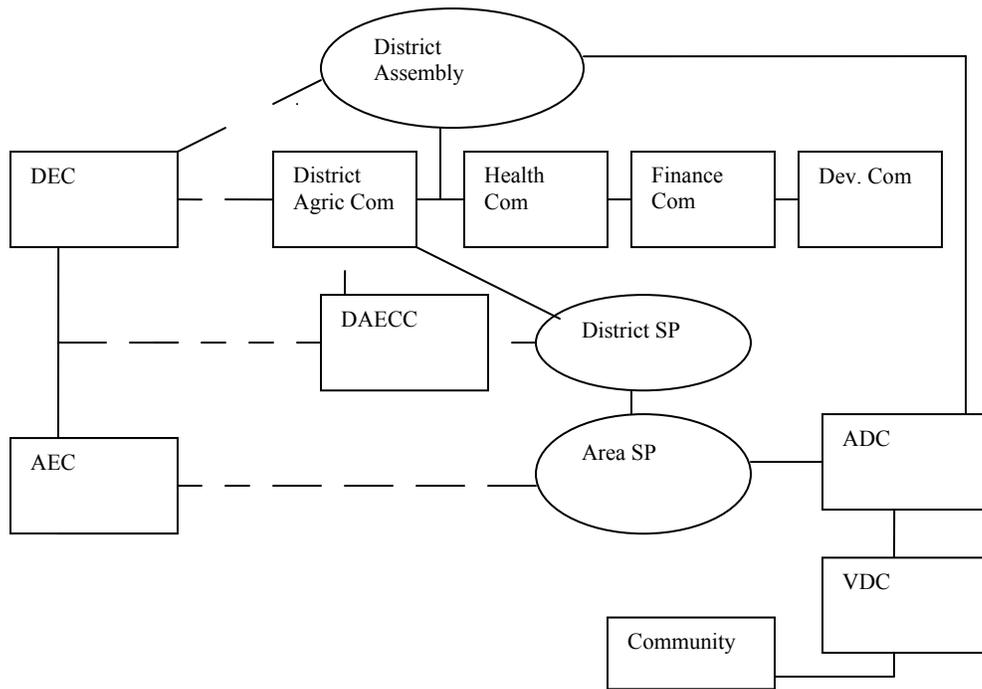
4   FACILITATION OF FARMERS' DEMANDS

Organising and interpreting demand from farmers for service provision depends critically on competent and quality facilitation by change agents. It is expected that service providers will facilitate articulation of farmer demands at the village level using various participatory tools and approaches. The norm will be to go from needs assessment all the way to joint action planning after which project proposals will be developed. In this guide, the starting point has been suggested to categorise the farmers into three groups, namely, Smallholder Food Security Farmers (SHFSF), Smallholder Semi-Commercial Farmers (SSCF) and Commercial Farmers (CF).

Farmers expressing their needs at a meeting

4.1   Categorisation of Farmers

The categorisation of farmers will be used to identify the target group before the main activity is launched. The following are some of the factors that may be used for categorisation of farmers:

Smallholder Food Security Farmers
- Aims at food security from own farm
- Limited resource endowments (land, labour, capital)
- Unlikely to produce surplus for the market

- Usually provides own farm labour
- No own security to access loans
- Needs support to access goods and services
- Usually have no bargaining power
- Have very limited assets

Smallholder Semi-Commercial Farmers (SSCF)
- Usually attain food security
- Skilled in specialised enterprises such as dairying, tobacco, paprika, piggery, broiler production etc.
- Possess commercial and market orientation
- Have limited assets
- Easy to mobilise
- Able to demand services and pay for certain services

Commercial Farmers (CF)
- Operate on a large scale
- Self sustaining
- Can hire goods and services
- Can access both local and export markets
- Have tangible assets
- Have entrepreneurial skills
- Market-oriented production

The facilitating team will identify a particular target beneficially group that they will interact with using various participatory tools such as the Venn Diagram, the Road to Progress, the Problem Tree, the Seasonal Calendar, the Joint Action Planning. These tools have been described below. However, the stakeholders may also use any other additional tools that the team deems necessary.

4.2   The Venn Diagram

In any community, there exist groups or organisations that have an influence on the development of the community. These groups may be formed within the community or from outside. There is need to learn about the services they offer, how they interrelate and link or collaborate with one another. A quick way to learn about such organisations and their interactions in the village is through a Venn Diagram.

A Venn Diagram is a tool that is useful in clarifying the roles and identifying the potential linkage and conflicts between various organisations in a given community. It is specifically used to:

- Establish and analyse the development in the community

- Identify key organisations that have or should have contact with the community

- Clarify the roles of various organisations in the village development

- Visualise and analyse the relationships, linkages (both real and potential) between the services offered by the different organisations

- Clarify the people's perception of the degree of importance and usefulness of each group or organisation to the community

Steps

1. Introduce the subject and clarify the objectives of the Venn Diagram
2. Explain the procedure for developing the Venn Diagram
3. Divide the large group into social interest groups
4. In their sub-groups, they should identify and list the internal and external groups or organisations that are important to them
5. They should then decide the degree of importance by representing organisation by a small, medium or large circle.
6. The group should draw a big circle to represent the village.

7. Then they should draw circles inside this big circle to represent the various groups or actors according to degree of importance, and how active they are in the village (the more active the organisation, the bigger the circle).

8. The circles representing actors that work together should overlap.

9. The external organisations should have their circles drawn outside the village circle.

10. Arrows from the outside circles into the village circle will indicate the extent to which an organisation or individual is active in the village. The longer the arrow extends into the village circle, the more contacts it has.

11. Each group should debate the positioning of the circles and arrows until consensus is reached.

12. Ask the sub-groups to describe their diagrams to the other groups.

13. Ask a volunteer to consolidate into one Venn Diagram, then transfer on to a paper for storage.

14. Facilitate discussion to identify possibilities for access and linkages between service providers.

15. Wrap up the exercise by drawing out lessons, problems and possible solutions to the identified problems.

Tips

- Internal actors or groups would include Village Headman, Farmers' Clubs, committees elected in the village, religious organisations etc.

- External organisations would include government agencies and agents, NGOs, Members of Parliament, etc.

- Facilitators should only provide guidance and not direct people on what to say.

- The circles should be placed as follows:
    - Separate circles = no contact
    - Touching circles = information passes between the two organisations
    - Small overlap = some co-operation exists
    - Large overlap = a lot of co-operation exists

Figure 4: **The Venn Diagram of Kabamila Village**

1 Health committee
2 Water committee
3 Maize club
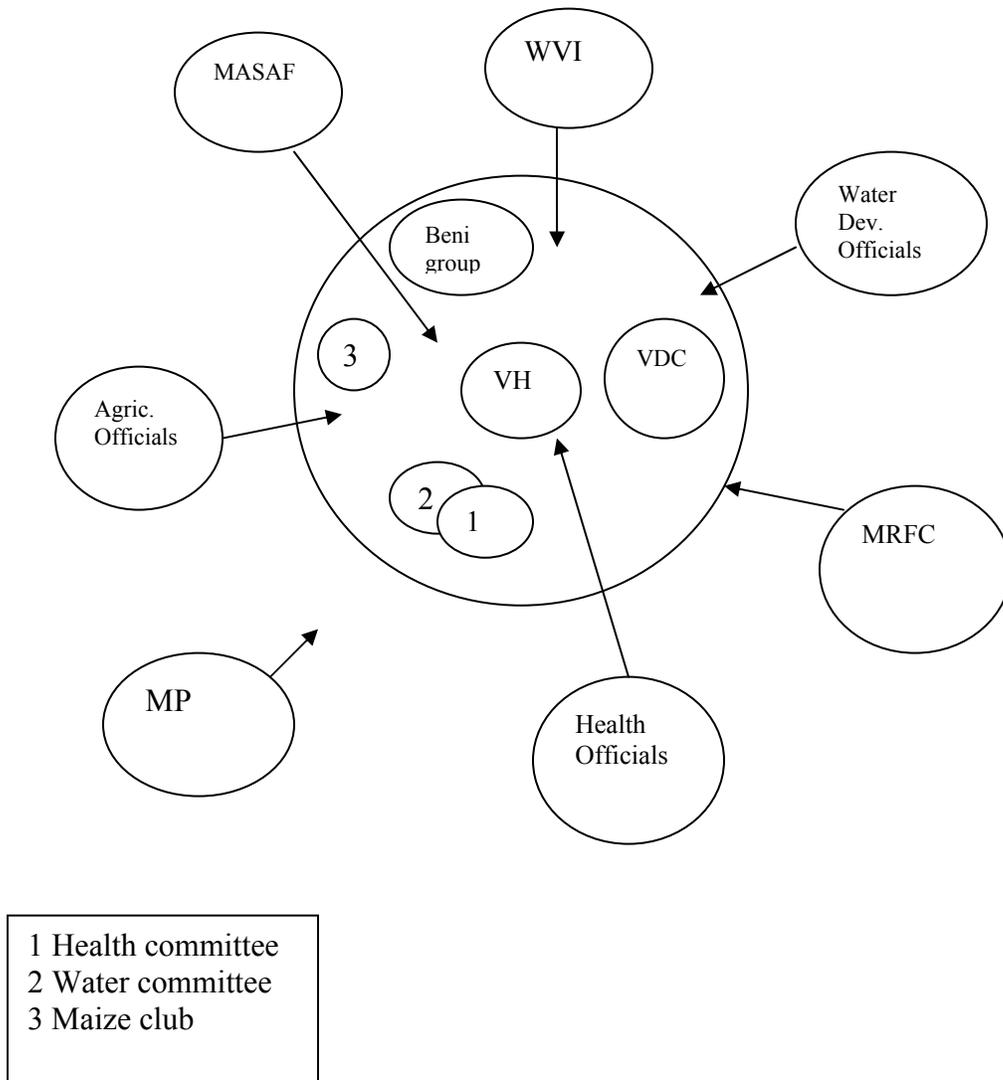
4.3 The Road to Progress

This is a method of participatory community needs assessment and problem analysis. It utilises the principles of adult learning to achieve community agreement on a course of action to be embarked upon.

It uses the illustration of a rough road. The progress in the village is like travelling on a rough road. The road is not so good and there are many holes, rocks and fallen trees

which mean we cannot move along fast. In the same way the village has many problems with its activities that hinder their progress.

The meeting is designed to find out more about all the things we enjoy, and particularly see what are the things hindering our progress in the village.

Materials

No materials will be required in advance, although the participants will be asked to gather symbols of the issues and voting materials (stones, leaves, maize grains etc.) during the meeting. The process should also be documented in a notebook or a case file.

Procedure

Step 1

After introductions and welcome remarks (the protocol), briefly give the introduction to the purpose of the meeting: that we want to discuss with them about the issues which prevent agricultural development process in the village and what can be done to improve the situation. During the discussions it should become clear what the villagers can do and what the extension worker can contribute to this improvement.

Step 2

Then to further get the meeting started, we tell them that we would like to consider two questions (**these questions should be with respect to agriculture**):

- What are the activities in our village that we enjoy?
- What are the activities in our village that we are suffering from?

Make sure that all members of the community, including women understand the two questions. Have the questions repeated by the community members, both men and women.

Ask the community members to break into natural groups, perhaps according to age, e.g. Young, old men, old women, elders etc).

The subgroups should appoint a spokes person for reporting when we come back together again.

For every activity they enjoy, a symbol should be found (e.g. if they enjoy 3 activities, they should have 3 symbols), an object that represents the activity or issues they have discussed. They should also have a symbol for each of the activities or issues they suffer from.

During subgroup discussions, the facilitator moves around to each group making sure that the task is understood and the discussion goes on lively. The facilitator should not lead the discussion.

Step 4

After a good time of discussion, the subgroups get back together. Each group gives its report (start with one of the more shy groups, usually the women). Then continue according to the community hierarchy with the headman and his elders being the last to report.

Firstly, all groups report about the activities they enjoy and put down their symbols for each (arranged in a block or cluster). Reflect briefly on why we enjoy these activities.

Step 5

Next briefly tell the story about progress in the village being like progress along a rough road where it is difficult to move. We sometimes have to remove obstacles in order to move forward more easily. So there are activities, which we suffer from that hinder the progress to our agricultural development. Have all groups report about the activities which they are suffering from and place the symbols in line (like obstacles on a rough road).

Step 6

Ranking of the Problems: One of the ways of prioritisation the problems is done through voting. This forms the key part of the exercise.

- Explain the purpose of the voting. The idea of voting is to have consensus about the problems that they feel is most pressing to them. It is therefore important that the process is done in a transparent manner without some members influencing or forcing others.

- Distribute three voting materials (stones, seed, etc) to each of the villagers. If you need to know the difference in the priorities between men and women, you can differentiate the type of voting materials and make counts, but remember to aggregate the scores later.

- Starting with the shy group, and using one problem one vote, let each person vote for three most pressing problems. Do not make the voting process completely orderly because that can make some get influenced by what others are doing. If it is the women's turn, let them all stand up and start moving in a line.

- Get two or three volunteers to count, record and announce the votes for each problem

- Let one volunteer record on flip chart paper and later announce the problems by priority (according to votes). The problem with the highest number of votes is the problem that they feel if dealt with, their food security will immediately start being addressed.

Step 7

At this stage introduce the **Problem Tree.** A problem tree is an effective problem solving technique, which helps to analyse causes and effects of an identified problem. It is a graphic presentation that highlights problems as perceived by the community. The strength of this tool is its ability to involve the villagers in critical thinking through visualisation and analysis. Through this analysis and visualisation, people are able to see the relationship among different problems.

A problem is like a tree that bears bad fruits. In most communities, when you talk of a problem tree, you mean the trunk. We can therefore liken the problem to the trunk of the tree. A tree has the visible part, the vegetative part (leaves, flowers, fruits). A problem too has its visible part – its consequences or effects. The consequences of a problem can be seen, felt, heard or touched. You can see that the person is weak or pale, you can hear people crying – all signifying that there is a problem. What may not be clear about a problem is its cause(s), the roots of the tree. You have to dig deep to know what caused a particular problem. Unfortunately, not all development workers have the patience to dig the problems down to their root causes, either because they feel they do not have enough time, or because they want to achieve immediate goals, or because they do not know how to do it. As a result of this, they have ended up with wrong solutions.

The biggest problem to solve a problem is defining it. Wrong definition of a problem makes the analysis tool ineffective. When using the problem tree, start with one solvable problem

For each of the problems prioritised, define it in a clear and precise manner. Using analogy of a tree, explain the problem and reflect on:

- What are the consequences (and the consequences of the consequences)?
- How was it before?
- Who suffers
- What are the causes (and the causes of the causes)?

Divide the people into sub-groups for more interaction and effective participation.

With the help of facilitators, let each sub-group construct a Problem Tree, building from the problem to the consequences down to the causes using locally available and familiar symbols. An example of a Problem Tree is given in Figure 4 below.

Figure 5: **The Problem Tree**
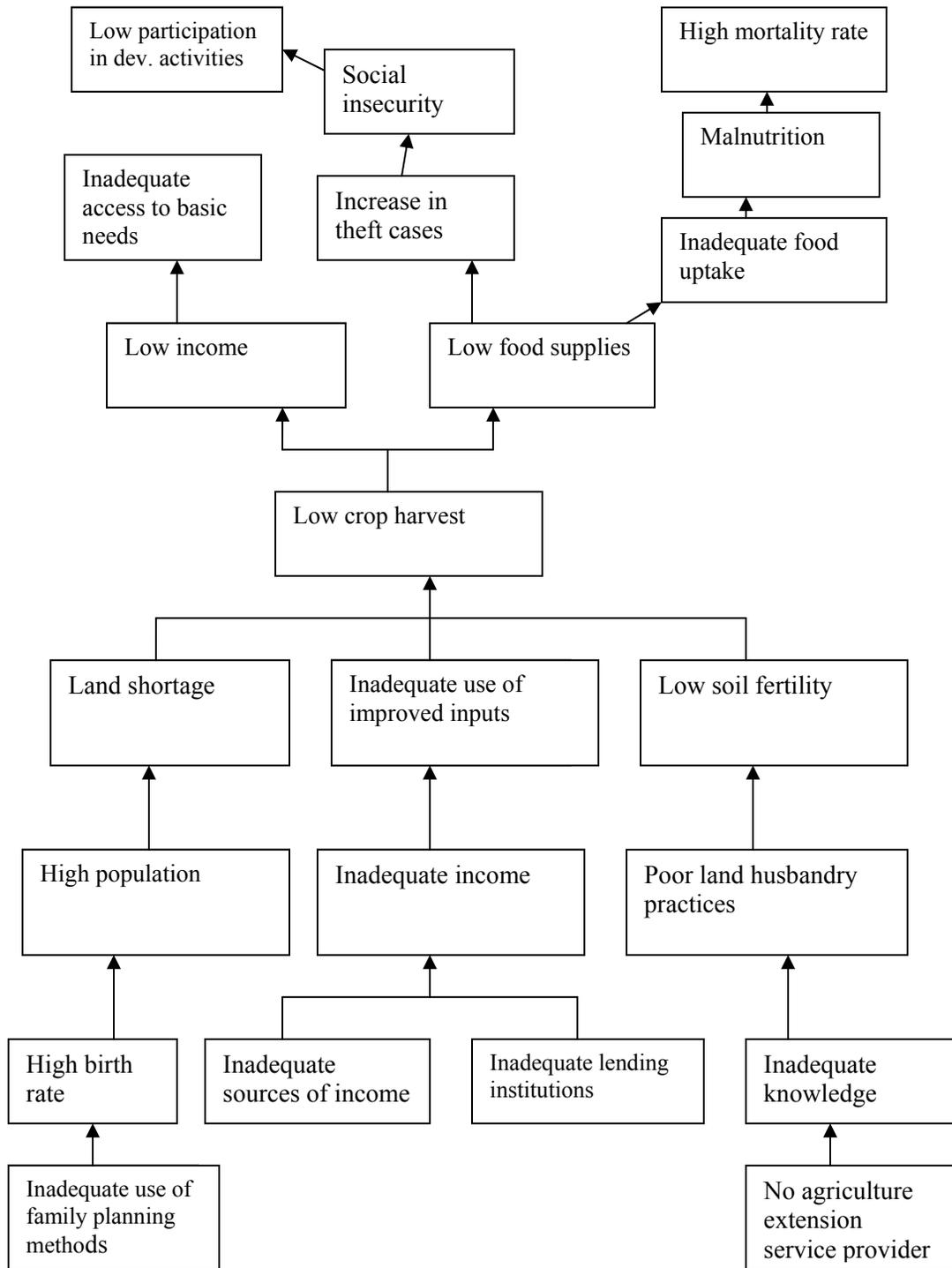
Within each sub-group, get one or two volunteers to review the entire Problem Tree.

Get all the groups around each problem tree in turn for presentation by the owners of the tree.

The main facilitator should lead the discussion to identify common consequences and causes and the relationship between the various problems.

The group leader or secretary should record the agreed causes and consequences.

Step 8

Reflect on options to these problems. What have we tried in the past and what was the outcome? What have we seen done elsewhere (other communities, regions)? Be aware that experience of previous community development work, and other important points, may be illustrated in the enjoyment cluster and can provide some useful insights; refer back to the symbols whenever appropriate.

Step 9

Steps 8 and 9 are done in plenary and not in too much detail. Agree with the people on a date for the next meeting to discuss in more detail about these problems, their consequences, causes and options for improvement.

4.4 The Joint Seasonal Calendar

Seasonal Calendars are tools that help us to explore changes that take place over the period of a year. Calendars can be used to study many things such as how much work people have at different times of the year, or how their incomes change in different periods. It can also be used to show the seasonality of other important aspects of livelihoods such as food and water availability. This tool helps the planning group to recognise periods of the year when they can synchronise activities.

The joint seasonal calendar session should be conducted after the "Road to Progress" is finalised. The discussion should focus on such issues as: "what options are available?", "who can tackle them?", "what are the major aspects involved?", "what kind of and when is the assistance from the extension service provider required?"

Materials

No materials will be required, although during the meeting the participants will gather symbols for the options and the aspects. The process should also be documented in a notebook or case file.

Procedure

Step 1.
After protocol open the meeting with a suitable starter and process it in plenary.

Step 2.
Ask the farmers to review in short the Road to Progress in plenary.

- What activities do they enjoy?
- What activities are they suffering from?
- Which are the priority problems

Step 3.
Ask farmers to elaborate a problem tree showing the consequences, (consequences of consequences) and the causes (causes of causes) of the problems by using symbols in subgroups

Step 4.

Ask farmers to identify options to overcome the problems. Ask probing questions like;

- Do they address the problems?
- Are they realistic?

- Are they short or long term?
- Who benefits?
- When are the first results to be achieved?

Encourage the farmers to add/cancel/change options, if necessary. Options should be visualised by using symbols in subgroups.

Step 6.

Each subgroup should present its problem tree to the other subgroups by walking around.

Step 7.

Each subgroup should take its symbols for the options to the plenary and present them. Start with the women's group (in case duplications on the symbols occur, then they should be clustered.

Step 8.

In case you and the extension agent have a feasible option in mind that the farmers did not mention, propose it to them.

Step 9.

Ask farmers to classify the options according to the three categories:
  i) Options that the farmers can do among themselves without any outside assistance

  ii) Options that farmers can do but require the assistance of the extension agent

  iii) Options that are beyond the scope of both farmers and the extension agent

Step 10.

Explain that all the options cannot be dealt with in this meeting, but can be addressed throughout the year. Ask the farmers to draw the months of the year on the ground in plenary.

Step 11.

In plenary ask farmers to choose one option out of the first category.

Step 12.

Ask farmers to identify major aspects of this option and to place symbols on the respective months when the aspect is carried out.

Step 13.

Ask the farmers if they need any assistance from the extension service provider to tackle any of the aspects. If "yes" ask the farmers what kind of assistance they need and when the service provider should assist them. Let the farmers place a symbol on the respective month. If necessary ask farmers probing questions like:

- Do you have enough time in this month to attend a training session?

Step 14.

Continue in the same way with all the other options of category 1, 2, and 3 in plenary.

Step 15.

At the end check together with the farmers whether the calendar is feasible (do the farmers have enough time, do you as the extension service provider have enough time. This should be done in plenary.

Step 16

Agree with the farmers on which of the immediate aspects visualised on the calendar should be discussed during next meeting as well as the date of the next meeting. Prepare yourself accordingly before hand.

Step 17.

Make sure that the group's secretary and you have an identical copy of the meeting.

SEASONAL CALENDAR

Activity	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Garden Preparation												
Maize	X	X	X									
Beans			X	X	X							
Planting												
Maize					X	X						
Beans					X	X						
Weeding												
Maize						X	X	X				
Beans						X	X	X				
Harvesting												
Maize	X	X									X	X
Beans								X	X	X		

4.5 The Joint Action Plan

The Action Plan is a tool that helps to make concrete and realistic strategies for implementation of priority development activities. The Joint Action Planning is thus a series of steps by which the community plans how best the information at hand can be used transformed into use. The action plan that is done together with the community makes the members committed to the activities assigned to them.

The action planning session should be conducted after the "Joint Seasonal Calendar" is finalised. The discussion should focus on the elaboration of a detailed plan of action for an immediate major aspect of any option identified during the elaboration of the block calendar. In case a small technical aspect was identified as a topic of the meeting, it should be tackled during this session without a plan of action.

Materials
No materials will be required, although during the session the participants will gather symbols for the options, the aspects and the activities. The process should also be documented in a notebook or case file.

Procedure

Step 1.

After the protocol open the meeting with a suitable starter and process it in plenary.

Step 2.

In plenary ask the farmers to re-do and review the joint seasonal calendar with the aspects as well as whether and when assistance from the side of the extension service provider is required.

Step 3.

Ask the farmers to select an immediate aspect of any option they want tackle in more detail. This should be done in plenary.

Step 4.

a) In case of implementation of an aspect that is new to the farmers and/or has a lot of details involved and/or requires the involvement of many people ask the farmers to list all the activities that are needed to achieve the aspect. In plenary visualise the activities as a column.

b) In case the aspect is small and it can be discussed on the spot, do it! Ask the farmers which immediate aspect should be discussed next. If it is not a small one, continue step 4a.

Step 5.

Ask the farmers to identify for each activity:

- When it should be carried out?
- Who should do it?
- How it should be done?
- What resources are needed?

Discuss thoroughly the feasibility of the activities and the 4 questions.

Step 6.

At the end, review the plan of action together with the farmers – whether it is feasible or not. In case the farmers are changing the plan of action at one point, check whether this particular change affects the plan at another point.

Step 7.

Agree with the farmers on the topic and the date of the next meeting. Use the plan of action and the village calendar as a basis for discussion.

Step 8.

Make sure that both village secretary and you have an identical copy of the action plan.

Example of a Village Action Plan

Activity		By Whom	When	Resources	Source	Cost
A. Done by farmers themselves.	1.					
	2.					
	3.					
	4.					
	etc.					
B. Done with the Extension worker	1.					
	2.					
	3.					
	4.					
	etc.					
C. Requiring outside assistance	1.					
	2.					
	3.					
	4.					
	etc.					

4.6 Development of a Project Proposal

A project proposal is basically a request for resources assistance (material, human and especially financial) to undertake a project by the community or individual). After the joint action plan is produced the farmers are expected to express their demand through a

project proposal. It must be mentioned that each donor or funding agency has its own format of how a project proposal should be prepared. For the project proposal format refer to Agri-business Development Manual.

Farmers making an action plan

4.7 Handling of Project Proposals

The different project proposals that the farmers' groups that the farmers prepare will be sent to service providers through Area or District stakeholder panels at area or district levels, respectively. The service providers will have to look at these proposals before responding. Some of the issues to be considered are presented in the table below.

Grouping of proposals	• Categories – some of the proposals might be similar hence may be grouped together	Remarks
Scrutinising of projects	• Immediate response • Higher consideration- some of the proposals may not be handled at Area level, thus, may require to be referred to the district • Requiring further refinement – where the	

	proposal is not very clear it will have to be refined.	
Identification of service providers	• Either at Area or District level service providers will be identified according to the respective proposal	

An example of a broiler project that is being implemented

4.8   Memorandum of Understanding

Once the relevant service provider has been identified and has accepted to provide the service, a memorandum of understanding will have to be signed containing such information as:

- Names of parties entering an agreement
- Activities which each of the parties will undertake
- Breach of agreement - what happens

5 MANAGEMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE SYSTEM

There is a broad diversity of stakeholders in the new district agricultural extension system. These stakeholders will have different roles and responsibilities, as such it is important that good cooperation exists among various stakeholders. There is also need to increase levels of capacity and commitment from the same institutions for them to be able to implement the DAESS.

5.1 Organisational Development Issues

The district assemblies will be going into new agricultural extension arrangements, as such the District Assemblies will have to adapt and organise organisational development (OD) workshops for various stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The suggested topics to be covered in the OD training for district staff will be in the field of:

- Team Building
- Coordination
- Strategic Planning
- Effective Group Leadership
- Lobbying and Advocacy
- Negotiation Skills
- Networking
- Essential Management Skills

5.2 Resource Mobilization for Extension Services

The financial situation at the district level is a crucial catalyst that determines the success in the implementation of the District Agricultural Extension Services System. The Local government Act of 1998 mandates the districts to collect revenue to fund their activities. The districts will need adequate and dependable sources of finance for the new District Agricultural Extension Services System to function effectively. The districts will have to be pro-active in sourcing funds. The districts may wish to consider, where applicable, short and long term strategies of accessing finances.

The following are the sources of income for the districts:

5.2.1 *Locally Generated Revenue:*

This is income from within their area of administration. These revenues come from property rates, ground rents, fees and licences, business-related activities and service charges.

5.2.2 *Money Transferred By the Central Government:*

This is the money that the central government or its agencies collects and then transfers a certain proportion to the assemblies. These monies include the General Resource Fund, Sector Funds and Ceded Revenue.

5.2.3 *Resources Provided by Donors and NGOs:*

This is revenue obtained from donors or NGOs. Some of the grants are usually tied to activities in a certain field. Two examples of institutions funded by donors/NGOs are the District Development Fund (DDF) and Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF). There are also some donor-funded projects/programmes in some districts of the country. These include the following among others:

(a) Institutional Development across the Agri-Food Sector (IDAF)

(b) Irrigation Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP)

(c) Farm Income Diversification Programme (FIDP)

5.2.4 *Loans and Overdraft from within Malawi:*

Districts have the mandate to borrow money and take overdrafts from local financial institutions subject to conditions of the Finance and Audit Act and approval of the minister responsible for Local Government in consultation with the minister of Finance.

5.3   Procedure for Accessing Funds

The procedure for the District Assemblies to access the funds from various sources depends on the guidelines that are provided by each institution.

5.3.1   Accessing Donor Funds

The districts that have donor projects in their areas are urged to familiarise themselves with procedures that are specific to those projects. For instance, IDAF, FIDP and IRLADP have their own procedures that the clients have to use to access the funds.

5.4   Financial Management

The districts will have to put in place a strong financial management system in order for the funds to be used for the intended purpose. Staff capacity building is a must to ensure availability of skilled personnel for budget planning, administration of disbursements, procurement, monitoring of assets and monthly financial reporting.

5.5   Monitoring

The term "Monitoring" means following up on implementation of activities, keeping regular records of decisions, actions, results/outputs, resources/inputs, and checking that the activities are done according to the plan that was made. It is a continuous activity from the onset of the project to the end of the project. In the district agricultural extension services system the whole process and activities will have to be monitored by the District Agricultural Development Officer.

The Table below highlights some elements of monitoring.

What to monitor	How to monitor	Remarks
Process of formulation of demand	Village project proposals	
Contribution and commitment of farmers	What the farmers have actually done	
Response of service providers to farmer proposals	Memorandum of Understanding	
Collaboration among service providers	Attendance to meetings Meaningful contributions	

How the system fits in the decentralisation process	Support by the assembly	
Setting up of Area Stakeholder Panels	The presence of the Area Stakeholder Panels	
Setting up of District Stakeholder Panel	The presence of the District Stakeholder Panel	
Establishment of DAECC	The presence of the DAECC	

Annex 1:QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DISTRICT SERVICE PROVIDER
INVENTORIES AND PROFILES

INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is being administered to assist the future planning and implementation of agricultural development activities. It is meant to serve and achieve results for the people of Malawi. Extension service providers shall be assisted to become more effective and efficient in implementing agricultural activities under the decentralisation programme.

All service providers are requested to cooperate in providing accurate information to the questions that are posed in the questionnaire so that appropriate interventions can be put in place.

The information provided will be for the consumption of the District Assembly's top officials and the management of the Ministry of Agriculture. It will be kept strictly confidential and shall not be unnecessarily divulged to other people outside the two institutions.

Thank you very much in anticipation.

…………………………………….   *………………………………*

    DISTRICT COMMISSIONER   *DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL*

                                          DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

ANNEX 1 (Continued):

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DISTRICT SERVICE PROVIDER
INVENTORIES AND PROFILES

District …………………………………………………………………………………….

Name of organization …………………………………………………………………...

Name of respondent …………………………………………….Date………………….

Table 1:   TYPE OF ORGANISATION

	National/Local	**International**
Government organization		
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)		
Statutory organization		
Community-based organization (CBO)		
Church/Religious		
Farmer organization		
Other (specify)		

Membership/Affiliation? e.g CONGOMA etc.

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………….

What is the mission statement of the organization?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

Has the organization signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of

Agriculture and Food Security? …………………………………………………………

40

Table 2:   CONTACT DETAILS

	Head Office	District Office
Contact persons:		
Name and title		
Name and title		
Postal address		
E-mail		
Physical address		
Telephone		
Fax		

When did the organization start its operations in Malawi?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

When did the organization start its operations in the district?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Where else in the country is the organization operating?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………

What services is it providing in those other districts?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………….

Table 3:   HUMAN RESOURCES (at district level)

Levels of training and professional Education	Number of personnel	Level of Education		Areas of expertise (as much as possible described as per Table 5.)
		JC	MSCE	
None				
Technical Certificate (e.g, . NRC) TA level				
Technical Certificate (e.g .NRC) TO level				
Diploma				
Bachelors Degree				
Masters Degree				
PhD				
Accountant				
Other (specify)				

Table 4:   OTHER PHYSICAL RESOURCES IN THE DISTRICT (e.g. warehouses, cars, motorcycles, computers and accessories, printing facilities, book binding facilities etc)

RESOURCE	NUMBER/QUANTITY

FUNDING

What are the sources of funding?

……………………………………………………………………………………………What is

the budget for current year for the district?

……………………………………………………………………………………

Field operations   …………………………………………………………………….

Capital costs   …………………………………………………………………….

Administrative overheads   ……………………………………………………………………

What is the total budget for current programme/project in the district?

Field operations   …………………………………………………………………….

Capital costs   …………………………………………………………………….

Administrative overheads   ……………………………………………………………………

Which areas of agricultural extension is the organization focusing on in the district?

Table 5:   AREAS OF FOCUS IN THE DISTRICT (services)

Extension	Promotion of use of chemical	Agribusiness
Message development	fertilizers	Farmer organization/
Farmer group	Promotion of use of organic	mobilization
organization/mobilization	fertilizers	Agribusiness extension
Farmer training	Promotion of agroforestry	Marketing
Agricultural communication	Inputs for work	Inputs
equipment provision	Nutrition training	- Credit
Provision of agricultural	Food processing and storage	- Sales
information services	Promotion of horticulture	
Gender mainstreaming		Livestock
HIV/AIDS mainstreaming	Irrigation	Livestock extension
	Irrigation agronomy	Provision of stock
Crop production & Utilization	Irrigation engineering	Disease control
Crop diversification		
Seed multiplication	Land resources conservation	Fisheries extension
Horticulture	Soil and water conservation	Relief and rehabilitation
	Forestry	

Services Provided	Traditional Authority	No. of Villages (please list the villages overleaf)

Type of farmers targeting e.g. youth, physically challenged, orphans, orphan caregivers, the aged etc	Male	Female

How many beneficiaries is the organization targeting in the district?
…………………………..

What support does the organization require from other service providers in the district?
……………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………….
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

How much longer does the organization plan to stay in the district?
…………………………………………………………..

Do you know some informal service providers e.g. individuals existing in the district? If so who are they and what services are they providing?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

Glossary of Terms

Note: This glossary includes terms used in the concept paper; many terms are expanded on in the body of the text and readers should note that other important terms are more fully explained in the boxes inserted throughout the document.

Advocacy is the process through which farmers as individuals, groups or organisations lobby key government authorities, decision-making bodies and stakeholders in pursuit of their interests and needs *vis-à-vis* policy, programme, trade, marketing or administrative issues that affect them and /or their members.

Agribusiness includes all business activities generated along the food chain from agri-inputs supply for agricultural production through processing, storage and marketing of produce/products. All farm enterprises and their operations are viewed in a business context to optimise added value, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, profitability and viability for owners/shareholders.

Capability is the collective competence and means or wherewithal of individuals/groups/ teams/organisations to perform given assignments; it implies a potential talent to take on challenges and accomplish beyond existing proven abilities or limits.

Capacity is all the faculties (skills and knowledge) of capability with the crucial addition of resources that enable potentials to be realised in practice; it implies the power to bring the promise of capability / talent to fruition.

Capacity building builds on a pre-existing base of capacity.

Capacity development is the process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and countries develop their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives. Capacity building is distinguished from capacity development in that it builds on a pre-existing base of capacity. The aim of capacity development and building is to help governments, organisations and people attain a level of self-sufficiency that enables them to manage their own affairs effectively.

Change Teams are dedicated small teams comprising public and private sector personnel that lead change processes and accomplish tasks in strategically important areas for the overall programme e.g. development of new extension policy, core functions analysis, development of concepts and strategies to operationalise the new district system for extension services delivery etc.

Commercial Farmers (CF) are farmers that have enterprises on a large scale such as tobacco, maize (seed and food), tea, coffee and dairying.

Competence is the proficiency with which individuals or teams perform a given task through demonstrable knowledge and know-how in its accomplishment.

Core Functions Analysis is a process that identifies the core functions of a public services department and also identifies functions that should be shed by the public sector and transferred to the non-governmental or private sector.

Decentralisation involves a mix of four reform strategies:
- *Administrative* – involves the transfer of authority over regional staff from central government to regional or local governments.
- *Political (democratic)* – the selection of local government officials by local election rather than by central government appointment.
- *Fiscal* – the transfer of responsibility for raising and spending programme funds to local level government units.
- *Programme* – the transfer of authority and responsibility for programme planning, technical contents and implementation modalities for services provision to relevant local administrative and operational levels of government.

De-concentration involves central government dispersing staff responsibilities to regional offices without changing the basis of authority and control. This is not true decentralisation and can actually increase central control and influence.

Delegation is the transfer of responsibility for public functions to local levels of government or to other organisations, which implement programmes on behalf of central government.

Demand represents the need articulated for services (e.g. training, farmer organisation development) by farmers and/or their organisations. The better the quality of articulated demand by farmers, the more responsive service systems and providers need to be; hence the use of terms such as demand-led (more appropriate than demand-driven), client orientation and customer satisfaction. The more informed and emancipated farmers are in relation to their rights and farming problems, the more capable they are to demand the specific responses or services they need. Among rural communities that have not benefited from sound basic or civic education, there is a special need to foster and develop their abilities to voice and assert their demands as empowered individuals or groups.

District Assemblies are a decision-making bodies at local government level that comprise elected members, traditional leaders as ex-officio members and public service staff headed by a district commissioner.

Effectiveness is *doing the right thing* through critically assessing what is the most appropriate action to take in respect of a given need or problem, irrespective of constraining procedures that may preclude timely and effective action e.g. taking action where there is scope rather than merely writing reports about urgent problems requiring immediate attention. Organisations with advanced and dynamic customer-orientation are often exponents of high-level effectiveness in services provision**.**

Efficiency is *doing things right* i.e. following procedures copiously, compliantly and passively often without reflecting on or assessing alternative options that may be more appropriate at the time e.g. deciding to write a report rather than take action on an urgent problem affecting farmers. Bureaucracies are often more concerned with self-serving, time-wasting procedural activities than responding to their customers' needs i.e. poor customer orientation.

Financing involves the provision of funds for programmes or services through the generation of funds via charges or fees for such services, either totally or partially through cost recovery mechanisms. The aim is to foster self-reliance and autonomy in funding arrangements by departments or service units of organisations. It may also involve the setting up of revolving funds to finance critical or new service areas independent of the *fiscus* and the funding vagaries of public sector budgets and allocation systems.

Funding is the provision of funds from the *fiscus*, donors or development agencies to service organisations or constituent units for spending on dedicated programmes/ projects or budget line votes/items. Such funds are normally allocated and disbursed without any elements of cost recovery or strategic re-financing mechanisms for programmes or services.

Organisation Development (OD) is the conscious process through which organisations cope with and adapt to change. It involves a critical review of roles, responsibilities and relationships across the organisation involving teams and individuals. The emphasis on performance improvement through increased openness, transparency and accountability in how people within the organisation behave and operate in their relationships with each other and clients.

Participatory Extension Approaches (PEAs) are approaches to facilitation and interaction with farmers that involve them fully as partners in determining demand and agendas for response by extension service providers. Through such approaches, farmers take increasing ownership for their production systems and livelihoods and become more independent and self-reliant in problem solving and innovation appropriate to their needs and resource endowments. PEAs are especially relevant for the development of SH-FS farmers.

Pluralism means that there is scope for variety and choice of service providers in response to the diversity of demand coming from clients who are informed about what services they need and to what standard / quality. In recent years, reduced levels of funding and staffing for most public extension service systems in African countries have prompted the need for a broader variety of actors in services provision – mainly from the non-governmental and private sectors

Privatisation is the transfer by government to the private sector of managerial, fiscal and decision-making control (e.g. for delivery of specific extension services) while retaining normal regulatory authority.

Services Analysis involves the identification of deliverables (products or services) provided by an organisation for clients under each designated function and estimation of the actual costs of each deliverable. It normally includes all costs and all deliverables and costs are linked to each deliverable. The exercise provides an overall picture of how resources are currently being used by the organisation and gives some preliminary indication of the effectiveness and efficiency with which the organisation performs its functions.

Services Charter – a written, publicly available (often displayed) commitment that enshrines and elaborates the responsibilities of organisations involved in the regulation, coordination, quality assurance or provision of services for farmers or their organisations. It articulates the rights of clients obtaining services, the standards to which services should be provided and the obligations of organisations/companies across the services system in meeting specified standards. Standards include ethical practices in the services chain as well as quality of deliverables in technical/professional areas. Such charters demonstrate pro-active and transparent commitments to clients' rights and satisfaction – as contrasted with the often reactive and negative experiences encountered with bureaucracies involved in services regulation or provision.

Service Deliverers are organisations (or sometimes individuals) that deliver training or services to farmers or their organisations. They may be contracted by organisations with responsibility for service provision to deliver services to specific farmers or groups of farmers

Service Providers are organisations that have direct responsibility to ensure that specific services are provided for farmer client categories (e.g. DAES has responsibility for the provision of extension training services for SH-FS farmers in Malawi).

Smallholder Farmers – Food Security (SH-FS) are farmers who possess the potential to achieve household food security from agricultural production on their farms, but arising from limitations of land, labour, capital etc are unlikely to produce a surplus for the market.

Small-Scale Commercial Farmers (SSC) have attained food security, possess commercial and market orientation and are skilled in the specialist enterprises such as tobacco, horticultural crops, rice, paprika, spices and dairying.

Stakeholders are groups or individuals who are deemed to have a vital interest or stake in extension service systems. They are categorised into two broad groups – primary stakeholders who are farmers and secondary stakeholders such as agribusiness, farming unions, rural development and service agencies, and parastatal organisations.