



Workshop “Professionalisation of RAS: Challenges and Ways Forward”

Skills gaps of rural advisory service (RAS) practitioners

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Objectives

- Identify the technical and occupational-psychological skills required to work as a rural extension agent in INDAP.
- Evaluate the technical and occupational-psychological skills of the current RAS practitioners of INDAP, particularly from the Local Development Program.
- Identify the gaps between the observed and required skills.
- Develop a training plan to reduce the gaps.

METHODOLOGY

STAGE 1 SKILLS DEFINITION

Team definition

Program
description

Profile definition
based on skills

- Consulting team
- Panel of experts (internal)
- Panel of experts (external)
- Methodological advisors
- General and specific objectives
- Stakeholders
- Beneficiaries (characteristics and requirements)
- Establishment and functions of RAS team

- Review of secondary information
- Stakeholders interview
- Focus groups of beneficiaries
- Validation workshops

Skills
evaluation
methodology

- Sample definition
- Assessment tool construction
- Measurement scale definition

Skills
evaluation

Case study

Results
analysis

Results
analysis
based on
assessment
guidelines

STAGE 3 TRAINING PLAN

Training Plan
design

- Review of proposals
- General program description
- Structural design of the educational program

PRODUCTS

- Skills Profile
- Performance criteria
- Indicators

Skills gaps

Training
plan

STAGE 1: SKILLS PROFILE DEFINITION

Brief description of the Local Development Program

- Largest extension program of INDAP (79.000+ beneficiaries).
- Small farmers are organized in groups of 60 to 180.
- Every group has an RAS team, who has to provide technical training to farmers.
- The program is operated by municipalities, to whom INDAP transfers monetary resources in order to hire the RAS team. They also contribute with monetary resources.
- In addition, small farmers have the opportunity to apply for funds (not reimbursable).

Secondary information: Review of international experiences

- Colombia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Argentina, México and Chile.

Primary information: Interviews and Focus groups

- INDAP: Regional manager and Local supervisor of PRODESAL.
- RAS Team: Team managers and technicians.
- Municipality: Program representative
- Program beneficiaries

Categories of analysis

Technical discipline

- Specific training needs in the agricultural and forestry area.

Systemic vision of the agricultural phenomenon

- Systemic/ integral approach of agricultural development.

Communication and interpersonal relationship

- Processes and communication strategies and ways of interacting with stakeholders involved in the RAS.

Educational process

- Teaching and learning processes with individuals, groups and communities as well as the transfer, exchange, creation of knowledge and / or experience among participants.

Content analysis

Identify common points

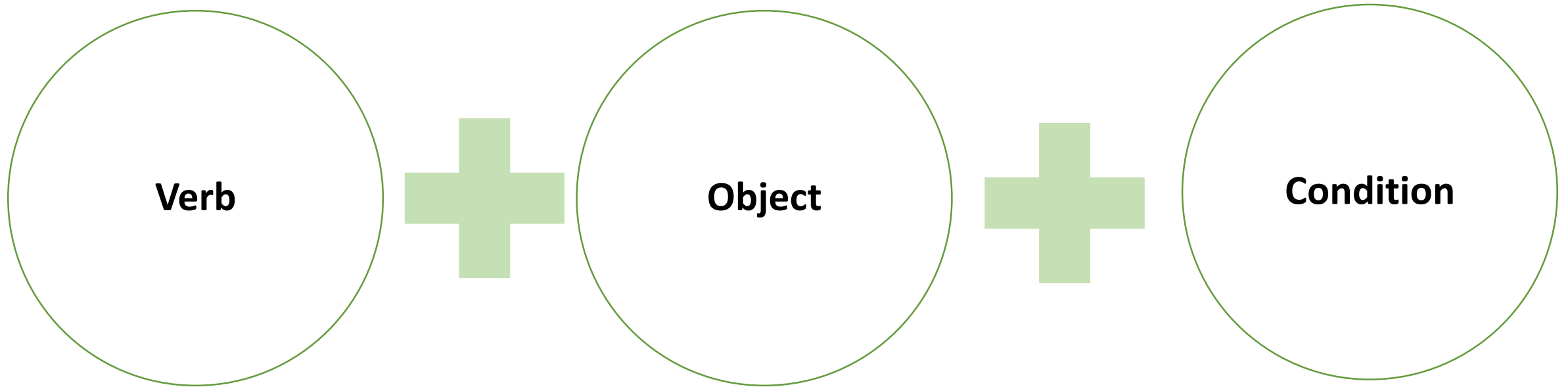


Describe and deepen
those aspects that are
common among
respondents



Identify differences
between stakeholders

Skills redaction



Example: “Identify technological needs of small and medium size farmers, by productive chain, at a regional and local level”

SKILLS BY CATEGORY

Technical discipline (4)



- Evaluate the production systems from a social, environmental and economic sustainability perspective, recognizing its usability and improvement.
- Manage innovation opportunities in farming and technology transfer in the productive, organizational, managerial and commercial areas, according to the characteristics of the territory.
- Apply disciplinary and technical expertise for the fulfillment of the objectives of the RAS program.
- Apply the fundamentals and techniques of project management to intervene in its various stages.

Agricultural phenomenon (3)

- Understand the territory and the extension system from an integrated and systemic perspective, as a means of sustainable development.
- Analyze the territory, integrating the social, political, cultural and economic area, to understand it in a systemic perspective.
- Develop intervention strategies according to the social and territorial context in which he/she works.



Interpersonal communication (3)



- Select communicational strategies suitable to the characteristics of the territory and the participants with whom he/she interacts and works.
- Energize groups and communities in a collaborative framework, using techniques of group management and participatory leadership.
- Use knowledge management strategies, to foster his/her self-education and professional performance, and of the groups and communities he/she advises.

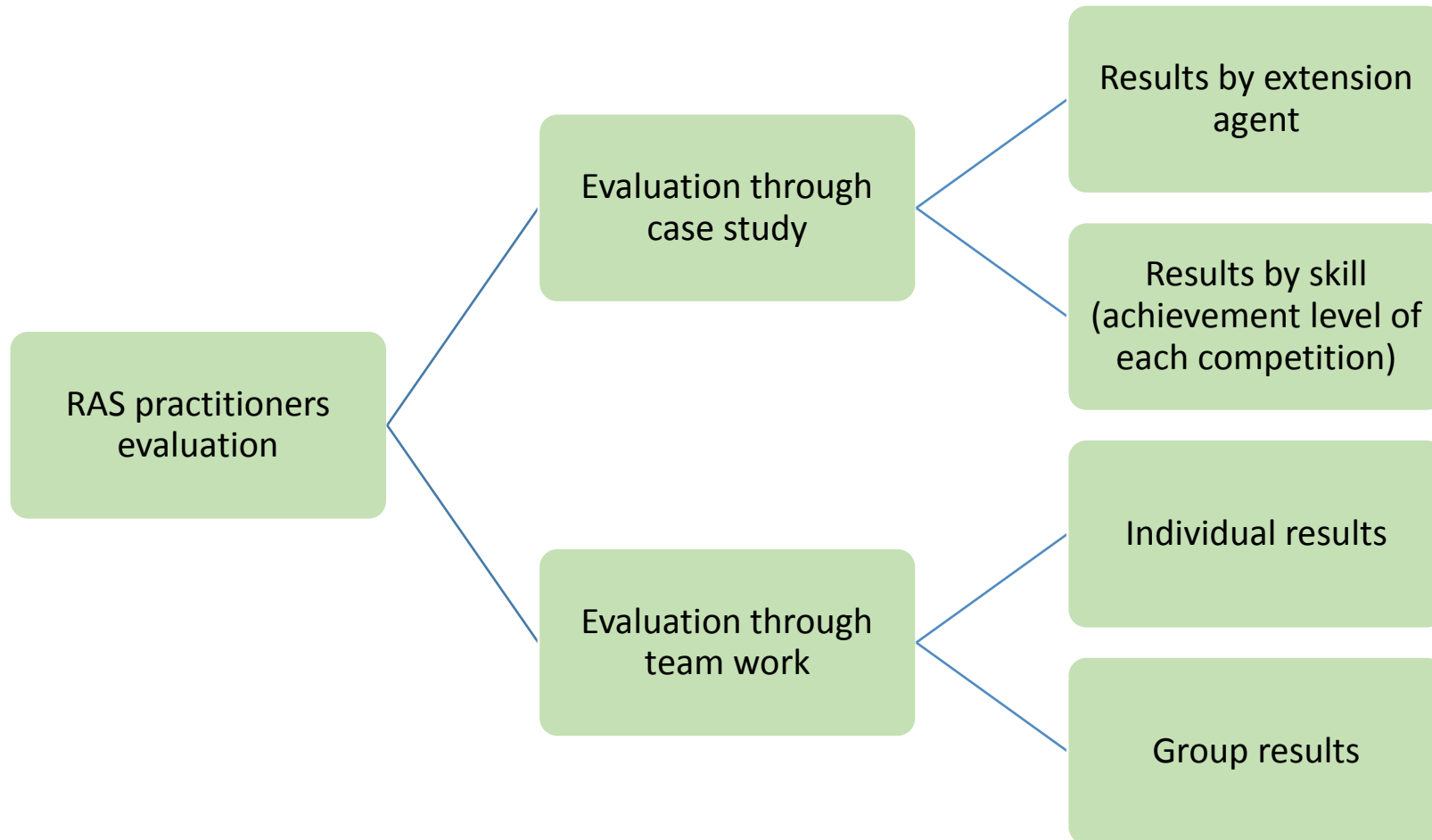
Educational process (3)



- Incorporate the features and components of a teaching – learning process, for the development of educational programs.
- Implement educational experiences aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the extension program, selecting strategies and resources appropriate to the context and characteristics of the beneficiaries.
- Incorporate traditional knowledge and cultural vision of the territory, as a basis for a better learning experience of its members.

STAGE 2: SKILLS EVALUATION

Evaluation strategy



Characteristics of the evaluated group:

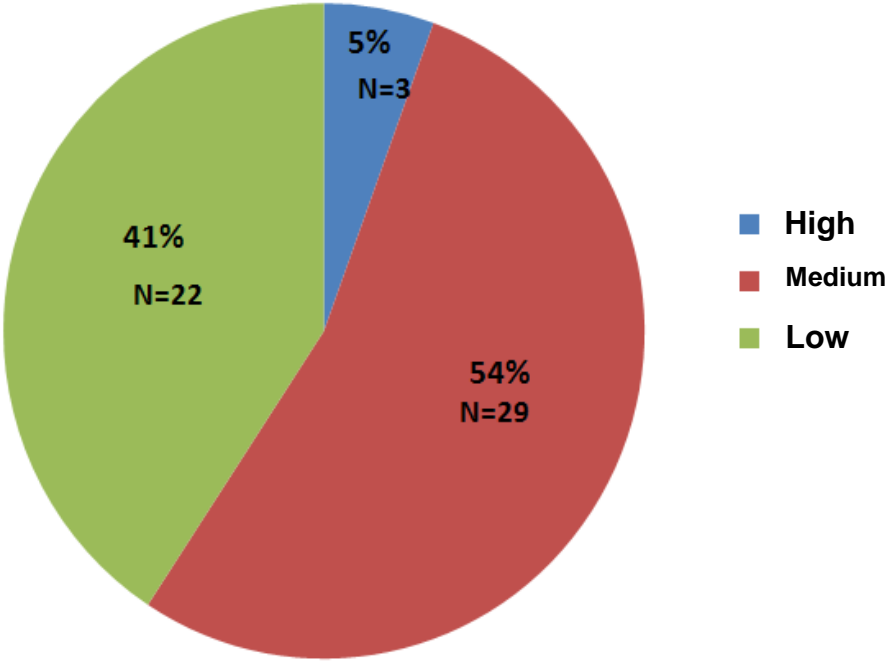
- Sample: 60 RAS practitioners
- Total participants: 54
- 22 Team managers
- 32 Technicians
- 85% men ; 15% women

Ranges by individual performance level

Performance level	Criteria 1	Criteria 2
High	Acccomplished ≥ 40%	Accomplished + Moderately accomplished ≥ 70
Medium	Acccomplished ≥ 30% and <40%	Accomplished + Moderately accomplished ≥ 50
Low	Acccomplished < 30%	-

Individual performance level

Nivel de desempeño	N° of cases	% of cases
High	3	5
Medium	29	41
Low	22	54
TOTAL	54	100



Ranges by skill achievement

Achievement level	Criteria 1	Criteria 2
High	Accomplished $\geq 40\%$	Accomplished + Moderately accomplished ≥ 80
Medium	Accomplished $\geq 30\%$	Accomplished + Moderately accomplished ≥ 50
Low	Accomplished $< 30\%$	-

	Summary of achievement by skill, TECHNICAL DISCIPLINE AREA	
		Achievement level
1	Evaluate the production systems from a social, environmental and economic sustainability perspective, recognizing its usability and improvement.	Medium
2	Manage innovation opportunities in farming and technology transfer in the productive, organizational, managerial and commercial areas , according to the characteristics of the territory.	Low
3	Apply disciplinary and technical expertise for the fulfillment of the objectives of the RAS program.	High
4	Apply the fundamentals and techniques of project management to intervene in its various stages.	Low

	Summary of achievement by skill, AGRICULTURAL PHNOMENON AREA	
		Achievement level
5	Understand the territory an the extension system from an integrated and systemic perspective, as a means of sustainable development.	Low
6	Analyze the territory, integrating the social, political, cultural and economic area, to understand it in a systemic perspective.	Medium
7	Develop intervention strategies according to the social and territorial context in which he/she works.	Medium

	Summary of achievement by skill, INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AREA	
		Achievement level
8	Select communicational strategies suitable to the characteristics of the territory and the participants with whom he/she interacts and works.	High
9	Energize groups and communities in a collaborative framework, using techniques of group management and participatory leadership.	Medium
10	Use knowledge management strategies, to foster his/her self-education and professional performance, and of the groups and communities he/she advises.	Medium

	Summary of achievement by skill, EDUCATIONAL PROCESS AREA	
		Achievement level
11	Incorporate the features and components of a teaching – learning process, for the development of educational programs.	Medium
12	Implement educational experiences aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the extension program, selecting strategies and resources appropriate to the context and characteristics of the beneficiaries.	Medium
13	Incorporate traditional knowledge and cultural vision of the territory present in a community, as a basis for a better learning experience of its members.	Medium

Team work evaluation averages

Dimension	Maximum score (N°)	Average score (N°)	Achievement level (%)
Planification (organization and preparation)	8	6	75
Workflow	14	11	77
Communication	12	8,5	70
Attitudes	10	8	79
Total	44	33	75

STAGE 3: TRAINING PLAN

Training Plan: Technical discipline area

Skill	Gap	Training plan content
Evaluate the production systems from a social, environmental and economic sustainability perspective, recognizing its usability and improvement.	Medium achievement level	<p>Environmental sustainability (Use and maintenance of natural resources; environmental protection and biodiversity; efficient use of energy and water; waste management; pest control; integrated pests and diseases management).</p> <p>Social sustainability (Consumers; safe and reliable products; workers commitment to ethical working conditions; community; commitment to the environment).</p> <p>Economic sustainability (efficiency and productivity; rational economic management of productive areas; solidarity economy; fair trade; local markets).</p>
Manage innovation opportunities in farming and technology transfer in the productive, organizational, managerial and commercial areas , according to the characteristics of the territory.	Low achievement level	<p>Innovation in farming systems: rationale and relevance.</p> <p>Strategies and instruments of innovation in the productive, organizational, managerial and commercial areas.</p> <p>Development of a participatory innovation process.</p>
Apply disciplinary and technical expertise for the fulfillment of the objectives of the RAS program.	High achievement level	<p>Agricultural production systems and main productive areas.</p> <p>Techniques and practices for sustainable management of productive land areas.</p>
Apply the fundamentals and techniques of project management to intervene in its various stages.	Low achievement level	<p>Stages and components of project formulation for productive development.</p> <p>Requirements identification for project formulation.</p>

Training Plan: Agricultural phenomenon area

Skill	Gap	Training plan content
Understand the territory and the extension system from an integrated and systemic perspective, as a means of sustainable development.	Medium achievement level	Key concepts of territorial development. Intermediate Cities. Functional areas. Functional ecosystems.
Analyze the territory, integrating the social, political, cultural and economic area, to understand it in a systemic perspective.	Low achievement level	Critical domains of endogenous and exogenous origin of the territories (land and production structure, governance of natural resources, territorial relationship with the markets).
Develop intervention strategies according to the social and territorial context in which he/she works.	Medium achievement level	Territorial cohesion. Intermediate governments and territorial development. Local government and regional development. Sectoral public policies and territorial cohesion.

Training Plan: Interpersonal communication area

Skill	Gap	Training plan content
Select communicational strategies suitable to the characteristics of the territory and the participants with whom he/she interacts and works.	High achievement level	The recognition of a situation, its elements and values at stake. Verbal communication and active listening. Communication strategies.
Energize groups and communities in a collaborative framework, using techniques of group management and participatory leadership.	Medium achievement level	Nonverbal communication skills: voice, body, appearance, expression. Management of techniques and strategies for working with groups. Techniques for conflict resolution. Leadership tools in communication.
Use knowledge management strategies, to foster his/her self-education and professional performance, and of the groups and communities he/she advises.	Medium achievement level	What is knowledge management. Knowledge management in the context of rural extension. Ways to communicate / transfer knowledge.

Training Plan: Educational area

Skill	Gap	Training plan content
Incorporate the features and components of a teaching – learning process, for the development of educational programs.	Medium achievement level	<p>Learning and characteristics of the teaching – learning process.</p> <p>Components of the teaching – learning process.</p> <p>Planning: planning T – L experiences, objectives and learning outcomes, teaching – learning strategies design.</p> <p>Implementation and follow-up: monitoring of learning and feedback.</p> <p>Learning assessment: assessment for learning; evaluation strategies.</p>
Implement educational experiences aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the extension program, selecting strategies and resources appropriate to the context and characteristics of the beneficiaries.	Medium achievement level	<p>Adult Education: Trends, characteristics and challenges.</p> <p>Constructivist approach in education.</p> <p>Strategies for collaborative teaching - learning: Techniques of Learning by doing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching materials - Learning paths, - Field trips, - Exchange of experiences, - Demonstration activities, - Simulations <p>Self-evaluation, reflection on their practice and educational activities implemented .</p>
Incorporate traditional knowledge and cultural vision of the territory present in a community, as a basis for a better learning experience of its members.	Medium achievement level	<p>Recognition of traditional knowledge.</p> <p>Recognition of prior/previous knowledge.</p> <p>Diagnosis of learning needs.</p>