

SUSTAINABLE SERVICES WORKSHOP

AGRITERRA TRAINING PROGRAMME ● ● ● ● ●



INTRODUCTION

Farmers' organisations, farmers' cooperatives or farmers cooperative unions often provide services to its members, as members request this. Services refer to all activities provided by the organisation to advise, train and coach members on how to improve their agricultural business and increase their income.

Services can cost a lot of resources and if not effectively implemented, it may not show the expected results. Often services are subsidised and guided by governments or donor organisations, making the organisations depend upon outside funds and thereby not very sustainable.

One can provide services to members in a more sustainable way, guided by the real needs of farmers and driven by the active participation of the members.

This workshop aims to lay the foundation for such a member driven and guided sustainable service system.



PARTICIPANTS

The workshop can be held at one single farmer organisation with a group of 14-18 persons. Larger groups are not recommended. There must be a fair representation of:

- board members (5), including chairman and vice chairman;
- representatives of the accounting committee or supervisory committee (1-2);
- staff members and field workers (5), including Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Director, accountant and extension workers;
- active farmers/lead farmers or representatives of the members organisations (5).



OBJECTIVES

The objective of this workshop is to support a farmers' organisation or cooperative to develop a farmer-led and financially sustainable services system. The workshop is designed in a participatory way, using simple illustrations, and following a logic, step by step approach. The workshop should also be fun, and several energisers are added if needed.



COSTS

Available on request.



Delivering services to members is an important strategy to ensure sufficient supply to the cooperative and to have satisfied members.





REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

This workshop is suitable for farmers organisations, cooperative federations/unions at regional/district/provincial and even national level, that want to make their services to members more sustainable, effective and focused on the real needs of the farmers/members. The workshop can also be used for primary cooperatives. In small or single purpose organisations, 2.5 days will be enough to run this workshop. For a higher level organisation or a multi-purpose organisation, it is recommended to use 3.5-4 days for this workshop.

Those organisations must have a desire and the will to change things. If there is no genuine interest in changing the organisation, do not propose this workshop.



WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

- Bringing in a mind-set shift from externally funded services to intrinsic and internally driven services provision, in which members are accountable for the success of the services programme.
- New ideas: you will be surprised about the creativity and ideas that will be put forward.
- Think independently and become inspired by examples from other farmers organisations.
- Services do not always require huge budgets; be creative and realise what resources you have.
- A detailed and concrete action plan for a few (2- max. 3) prioritised services .



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SERVICES?

Farmer organisations like farmer cooperatives, unions or federation usually provide advisory services to their members. The term services refers to non-financial support to members. These services are meant to address the needs of the members. It does not include input supply or financial support and services or lobby and advocacy services.



AFTER THE WORKSHOP

Agriterra can offer support in the implementation of a well-designed services system, if a SMART action plan is prepared, addressing some of the most important services as identified during this workshop. Agriterra's financial contribution is limited as we do not believe in fully subsidised services.



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Agriterra is an agri-agency founded by the Dutch agricultural sector that professionalises farmer organisations and cooperatives worldwide in order to better serve the needs and interests of their member farmers.

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