



LOBBY

TRAINING PROGRAMME ● ● ● ● ●

## Training description

Farmers' Advocacy Consultation Tool (FACT)





## TRAINING PROGRAMME ● ● ● ● ●

### **COURSE NAME**

Farmers' Advocacy Consultation Tool (FACT)

### **DURATION**

The FACT trajectory consists of three phases:  
`Preparatory Workshop`, followed by  
6-8 month period for piloting FACT's concepts  
`Lessons Learnt Workshop`.

### **FOR WHOM**

- Board members and management staff



## ***Cooperative business development & farmer entrepreneurship Advice – Training - Exchange***

Agriterra professionalises ambitious farmer cooperatives and organisations worldwide. Cooperative expertise and peer-to-peer advice from the Dutch agri & food top sector are key principles; advice, training and exchange are the key methodologies.

Agriterra developed a range of practical training products for cooperatives and agricultural organisations in emerging economies.

# **FACT FARMERS ADVOCACY CONSULTATION TOOL**

Professional cooperatives and farmers' organisations are key for sustainable economic development. It leads to a stable and prosperous agri-sector and economy as a whole. Agriterra strengthens farmer ownership to stimulate strong and vibrant rural areas.

As an international specialist in cooperative development, we work by using a three-track approach. We make cooperatives bankable and create real farmer-led businesses. We support in improving extension services to members and enhance farmer-government dialogues.

Within this framework, Agriterra promotes producer organisations' lobby and advocacy work and has developed the Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool (FACT), with the aim of making a contribution to the improvement and success of farmers' influence in front of decision makers. FACT is the result of three decades of observing, systematising and applying a systematic way of work for lobby and advocacy by farmers organisations.

### **Objective**

By using the Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool (FACT) Agriterra introduces a structure that is designed to ensure effective lobbying. FACT is essentially a way for farmers' organisations and their constituencies to relate to each other. It ensures that any policy proposal that the organisation prepares takes root in the reality, needs and concerns of its members.

FACT is a practical and goal oriented tool in order to enhance the position at the negotiation table.

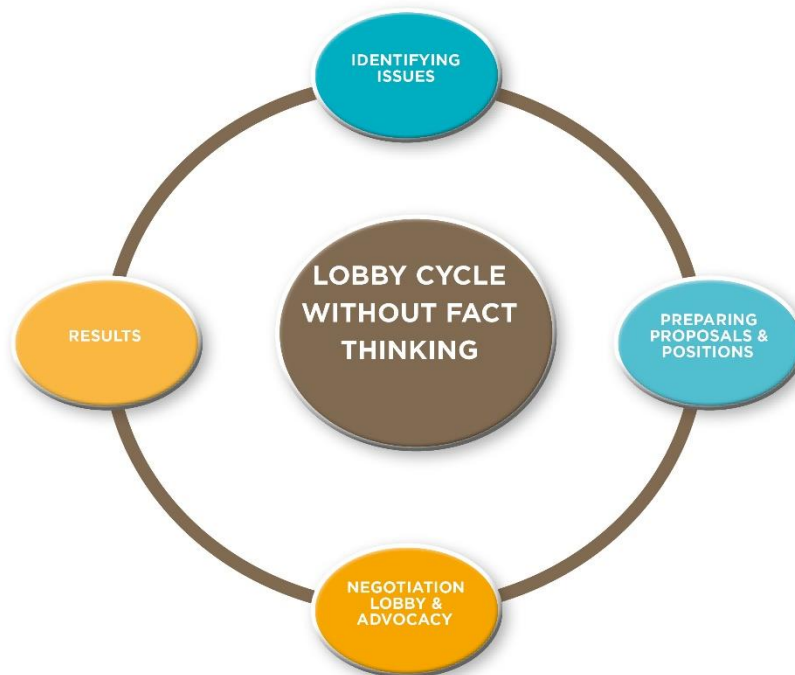


## Lobby Cycle without FACT Thinking

Lobbying for farmer organisations and cooperatives connects farmers to policy makers and businesses. It is quite normal that farmer organisations do Lobby activities with a starting point of issues defined at the central level of the organisation (by few leaders and/or managers). In turn, instead of generating accurate and precise 'proposals' for changing realities for farmers, farmer organisations end up producing general 'positions', asking for general improvements around a certain issue.

The pitfall is that decision makers normally will not take these issues into real and meaningful solutions for farmers. These proposals normally lack systematic consultation to grass roots, are not well-targeted and not evidence-based. This kind of proposal making jeopardise farmers' organisation possibilities of success in their lobby work.

This type of lobby work can be summarised in the following 'Lobby Cycle Without Fact Thinking':



## FACT Thinking Policy Cycle

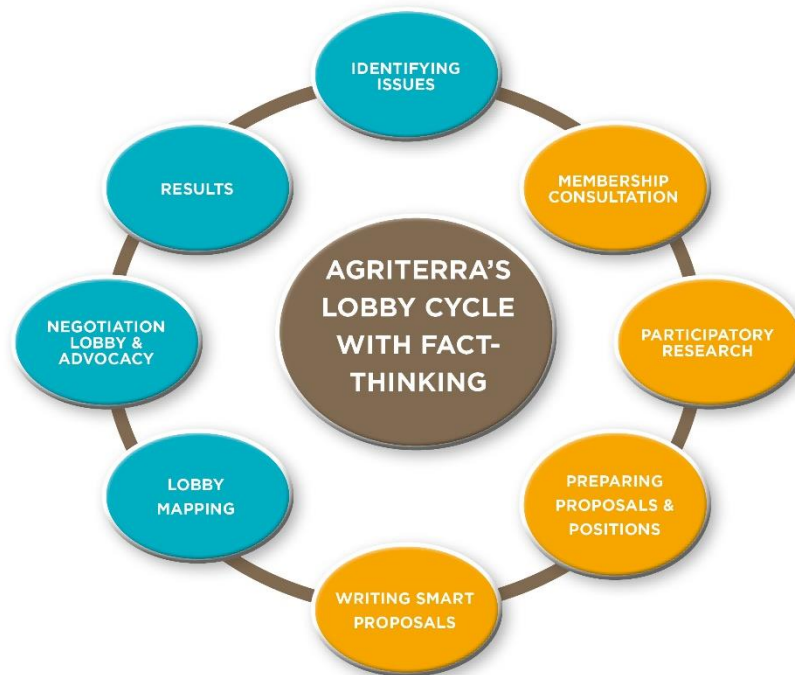
In contrast with the above, with the FACT methodology for lobby- and policy-influencing, Agriterra intends to change this way of work. The FACT methodology aims to enhance farmer-government dialogues by means of including systematic consultation to members for defining policy agendas to work on, by focusing on lobbying that is based in the systematisation of their real day to day problems and by generating specific and concrete solutions for these problems.

FACT includes the systematic consultation to grassroots for defining the lobby agenda of the organisation. After that, systematic participatory research allows the organisation to define solutions to these problems and to build the proposals'



arguments based in evidence. Then, SMART proposals are prepared, which are accountable, systematic, evidence-based and with a clear target: to 'upload' farmers' problems to decision makers, when proposing specific solutions to be 'downloaded' to farmers, meaning specific solutions to be decided and implemented. These proposals are then lobbied and advocated by means of strategising the way of approaching and engaging with the relevant stakeholders that will decide or influence the decision asked to decision makers.

The 'new' lobby cycle using FACT can be illustrated as follows:



## The FACT approach

The Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool -FACT- is essentially a way for farmers' organisations and their constituencies to relate to each other. It ensures that any policy (or other type of) proposal that the organisation prepares takes root in the reality, needs and concerns of its members.

The combination of members' information and concerns, in addition to the experts' advice can generate proposals that are accountable, well informed, tackle relevant issues and are technically well prepared. This enables a better representation of members of farmers' organisations by their leaders. While the success of any proposal is never guaranteed, the FACT approach certainly increases the possibility of success.

The approach is based on four pillars (as it is shown in the FACT Thinking policy cycle sketched above):

1. consultations;
2. participatory research (data gathering and analysis with advice of experts);
3. writing SMART proposals; and
4. lobby mapping & stake-holders analysis.



## The FACT methodology

The collaboration work for enhancing the producer organisations impact in their lobby & advocacy work is based in the FACT methodology. Collaboration activities include the so called FACT capacity building trajectory, monitoring of the use of FACT in practice, coaching and advise.

The FACT trajectory is a capacity building track that includes (at least) three steps or phases:

- a 'preparatory workshop';
- a 6-8 month period for piloting FACT's concepts -or more when recommendable;
- a 'lessons learned' workshop;
- institutionalisation & roll-out.

The methodological side of the work is based in a number of methodological material developed over years of experience. Most of this material is available in 10 languages; including English, French, Spanish, Swahili, Arabic, Rumanian, Vietnamese, Bahasa, Bangla and Nepali.

## Selection of participants

A FACT trajectory revolves around the aim of 'contributing' to the routine work of each organisation. The success of the initiative largely depends on the will and disposition of the participating farmers' organisations to incorporate the FACT concepts defined in their follow-up plan in their daily work. Therefore, it is assumed that participating organisations share these basic views.

In this same line, it is assumed that individuals participating in the workshops are selected by the organisation with a criterion of directly implementing these FACT concepts in their work. It is also assumed as well that those attending the FACT workshops have the ability to read and follow the FACT materials. When there are limitations in this sense, a tailor-made approach may be required. A basic principle behind the FACT approach is that the work of farmers' organisations is based on membership consultation to ensure that the organisation is democratically controlled by its members.

The FACT approach counts on farmers being the ones who better know their reality and context. Therefore, every proposal of a 'solution' to their problems should take into account their knowledge, their concerns and their aspirations.

A key assumption of the FACT approach and trajectory is that the above assumptions and principles are shared by all participants and their organisations. Master Trainers are expected to be leaders of the FACT approach and taking care that these assumptions are valued and followed.

## The facilitators

For rolling out FACT methodology within an organisation FACT trainers are needed. The future trainers is required to have participated in a FACT capacity building trajectory, and to have the experiences and the necessary skills for facilitating the workshops.