global forum for rural advisory services
forum mondial pour le conseil rural
foro global para los servicios de asesoría rural

Module 1: Introduction to the New Extensionist

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In 2012 GFRAS developed the "New Extensionist" document, which details the role that extension plays in an agricultural innovation system, and the strategies and capacities needed (at individual, organisational, and system level) http://www.g-fras.org/en/activities/the-new-extensionist.html. Based on this document the GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training emerged to promote the New Extensionist, mainly through training, curricula review, and research on extension.

The Learning Kit contains 13 modules designed for self-directed, face-to-face, or blended learning and can be a useful tool for individual extension field staff, managers, and lecturers.

The Introduction to the New Extensionist module is developed as part of the New Extensionist Learning Kit http://www.g-fras.org/fr/652-the-new-extensionist-core-competencies-for-individuals.html

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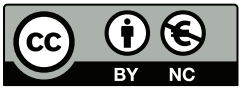

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1. Before you begin

1.1 General instruction

This module should be used in conjunction with the workbook provided. As you read through the module, you will find different visual features that are designed to help you navigate the document.

Figure 1: Icons used to highlight important information throughout the manual

The module makes use of keywords (difficult or technical words that are important for you to understand). To ensure that you receive the full benefit from the module, keywords will be marked the first time they occur and defined in a box containing the keywords symbol. Make sure that you read the definition of any words that you are unsure about.

1.2 Activities

Each session in the module will contain various types of activities to help you become knowledgeable and competent. The module contains three types of activities:

A **pre-assessment** is to be completed before reading through the module overview and introduction, and a **post-assessment** is to be completed once the entire module has been covered. This will measure the degree to which your knowledge has improved by completing the module.

Each session contains one or more **session activities** to be completed in the workbook where indicated in the module. These activities measure your ability to recall and apply theoretical knowledge.

At the end of each study unit a **summative assessment** needs to be completed. These assessments are longer than the session activities and will test your knowledge on all the work within the study unit.

1.3 Assessment instructions

Keep the following in mind before doing any of the assessments:

- All assessments are to be completed in the provided workbook.
- The manual contains all relevant information you will need to complete the questions. If additional information is needed, such as the use of online sources, facilities will be made available.
- Work through the activities in a study unit and make sure that you can answer all the questions before attempting the summative assessment. If you find that you are not certain of any part of the training material, repeat that section until you feel confident.
- The summative assessment must be done under the supervision of your trainer at the end of your learning period.

Module 1: Introduction to the New Extensionist

Module outcomes

After completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain the reasons behind the need for EAS to develop better capacities, as elaborated in GFRAS' call for the New Extensionist
   - Be able to explain why and how your role as an extension agent has changed
2. Describe the capacities needed at different levels of EAS and particularly elaborate on the practical implication for field-level extension agents
   - Describe the additional knowledge and skills (or competencies) that will help improve your advisory services in the changed landscape

Module overview

The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) has elaborated the envisaged role of the "New Extensionist" and has identified the capacities required at the individual level. In this module you will be introduced to the changing context of the rural community and the implications of this on extension activities. This will be done in order to understand how the currently favoured agricultural innovation system came into being and to understand the individual roles of different types of extension advisory service providers and how they are linked. In the second half of the module, you will be introduced to the vision, mission and guiding principles of GFRAS that form the core of the organisation. In doing so you will be able to understand how the learning kit relates to you as a future extension professional and what is to come as you further your studies.

Module introduction

Changes in context over the past few decades have affected the way Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) are organised and managed. These changes can be better understood by looking at the wider Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) of which EAS is a key component. Extension services are shifting their focus and as an extension agent you are now required to strengthen your professional training with a range of knowledge and skills that support interaction with diverse actors, and to share information and knowledge.

Advisory services that were dominated by public extension services are now becoming more varied to include private actors such as agro-dealers, agribusiness services, financial services and international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in addition to producer organisations and cooperatives. As an extension agent you need to understand this increasingly complex landscape and build capacities to better serve rural producers, especially the smallholder farmers.

Although the document focuses mainly on extension in the agricultural sector, it is important to remember that many of the practices discussed in this module are relevant to other forms of extension. This is due to the multidisciplinary nature of extension that will be further discussed in Module 2.

Complete the pre-assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 1: Rationale for the New Extensionist

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the trends observed in the rural sector with a focus on globalisation and the need for pluralism;
- Describe the development of AIS to address the changing rural context; and
- Describe the types of EAS providers and their roles.

Study unit overview

In this unit you will look at how the agricultural innovation system was developed to address the ever changing nature of the rural context as well as the types and roles of various extension service providers within this system.

Study unit introduction

Extension and Advisory Services have been an important factor in promoting agricultural rural development. As an extension agent, besides your 'classical' objective of improving agricultural productivity through technology transfer and adoption, you must also be capable of understanding factors such as declining water availability, soil degradation, uncertain climates, market distortions, infrastructure problems and social considerations such as gender, age and ethnic differences that affect farmers' adoption of technologies. While doing so, it is important to take gender, age and ethnic differences into account.

The types of interventions have changed considerably over time with the original focus on linear technology transfer being replaced by the more inclusive and systemic AIS method

emphasising interaction/linkages between research, extension, education, markets, farmers and other actors. In public service provision there is an increasing involvement of the private sector, NGOs and farmer organisations resulting in the emergence of pluralistic forms of EAS. It is important for you to be able to identify options that are best suited for supporting agricultural development in a cost-effective way.

Session 1.1: Changes in rural farming/ livelihoods and their implications

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- List trends affecting rural agriculture; and
- Describe the role of extension in addressing these issues.

Introduction

This session provides an overview of different **trends** that have been taking place around the world that affect rural agricultural development. Examples include **globalisation** of agriculture, outgrower schemes and pluralism of actors that assist farmers. Agriculture is critical to the livelihoods of more than a billion rural producers. There are many challenges in agriculture today with low-income farmers facing a variety of economic, social and ecological difficulties such as:

- Poor infrastructure;
- Complex **agro-ecological** conditions;
- Complex and costly processes of production, processing and sale;
- The degree of political and economic **marginalisation**, implying limited access to markets;
- Diverse socio-economic conditions such as:
  - Full-time farming households;
  - Off-farm employment;
- The importance of group action in some areas for traditional practices (for example exchange labour) and soil and water conservation through the management of shared resources; and

- A high proportion of female-headed households and of female farm labour.

Trends: Observed changes in a specific direction.
Globalisation: A set of economic, social, technological, political and cultural structures and processes resulting from international policy.
Agro-ecological: A look at agriculture from an ecological point of view, taking into account the interactions between nature and agricultural activity.
Marginalisation: Social exclusion.

Pluralism in addressing diverse needs

You can see that farmers have different requirements based on the diversity of rural life and needs. Different rural advisory service (RAS) providers use different methods and approaches that vary in efficiency based on the needs and capacities of their clientele. Pluralism allows for the development of multiple specialist service providers that are capable of addressing the varying needs of a rural community when working together. These service providers can be divided into public/government and non-state actors with the latter including NGOs, farmer organisations and private companies. You will learn more about these providers in Session 1.3.

Globalisation

Globalisation has resulted in a change in production, consumption and the trade of goods with an increased need to link domestic and international markets. Many find globalisation to be an exciting experience, resulting in increased economic growth due to the sharing of resources, information and technology. Unfortunately, due to cultural, economic and technological barriers to entry, many rural farmers become isolated due to globalisation as they are unable to adapt to the changing market environment. Farmers may have difficulty selling their produce due to international requirements with regard to

production standards for the market and changes in local demands for goods due to imports of cheaper or more desirable alternatives. This has created a need for **value chains** which link actors in the agricultural industry and policymakers to the rural community.

The GCARD (Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development) Roadmap has emphasised the need for linking all actors both directly and indirectly associated with RAS in terms of sharing, generating and implementing agricultural knowledge to ensure research leads to development change. This includes actors involved in the delivery of credit, inputs, training, value chain links and **policy** development.

Value chains: All actors or processes related to a commodity from production, to processing to sale.

Policies: Principles and rules guiding the behaviour of an organisation in order to achieve a goal.

Outgrowers

Globalisation has seen the involvement of large multinational companies in the form of outgrower schemes (also known as contract farming). These companies provide training and services ensuring that farmers develop from subsistence to production farmers. Farmers normally sell their crops exclusively to the outgrower company, with a portion of their profit used to pay back the initial investment and training from the companies. Studies by the Food and Agriculture Association (FAO) have shown this to be an effective approach, with a case study in Lao PDR indicating that outgrower farmers earn significantly more than their subsistence counterparts.

The role of GFRAS and other RAS providers as regulatory bodies is essentially to ensure the protection of outgrower farmers in the form of policymaking to ensure that contracts protect the rights of farmers.

Case study: Rwanda

After the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the country was left in a vulnerable state with its largely rural population requiring support in a time of instability. The work by NGOs during a period of government-restructuring helped the rural community organise into groups and associations and provided them with additional advice and services. The period saw the influx of multiple NGOs, private sector actors and international donors all providing extension services, albeit independently from one another.

The rural population of Rwanda currently represents 81,4% of the total population with multiple extension service providers and farmer-based Organisations and cooperatives in place. The current public extension service providers, the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), in association with the Information and Communications Department (ICT), are promoting the **decentralisation** of extension services and promoting pluralism between all actors to address the specific needs of farmers in each district.

This pluralistic extension approach has been termed the Twigire Muhinzi extension model and was the focus of the 2016 Farmer to Farmer Extension International Learning Event hosted by MINAGRI in association with international agricultural and extension partners.

Decentralisation: The transfer of power, resources and functions away from a centralised authority to private entities.

Complete Activity 1.1 in your workbook.

Complete Activity 1.2 in your workbook.

Session 1.2: The position of extension in the AIS

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Analyse the broader system within which farming exists that has affected the position and role of extension; and
- Describe how AIS falls into this framework.

Introduction

Context: The parts or circumstances that define a statement, idea or situation.

Innovation: The process of creating or improving a method, idea or product.

Systemic: A system wide approach looking at multiple factors (e.g. market or economy) that form the system as a whole.

In spite of developmental efforts, rural poverty, global hunger and undernutrition still occurs, with two thirds of the world's hungry and poor currently found in the rural sector. Addressing these problems requires a multidisciplinary approach. The New Extensionist movement is aimed at expanding the role of EAS within AIS in order to meet the ever-changing needs within the rural **context**.

Development of the AIS system

Extension is seen as a major player in furthering rural **innovation** and development. Though originally developed to educate farmers on new agricultural technologies, the theory and practice of extension has changed over the past 5–6 decades from a linear to a more **systemic** approach. These approaches are more accurately

defined as systemic approaches as they are aimed at addressing specific shortcomings within a system. Examples can be seen in projects aimed at addressing rural poverty or vulnerability within the larger agricultural system. New approaches have expanded on the role of extension as a go-between for researchers and farmers, as originally laid out under the transfer of technology approach in the 1960s. Key insights from participatory research and extension, adult education, rural **empowerment**, farming systems research and extension, agricultural knowledge and information systems (AKIS), and the more recent AIS have influenced the practice of extension and contributed to extension as a discipline. The newer AIS approach promoted by GFRAS, the World Bank, and other actors can be seen in Figure 1, showing how the model was built on the AKIS model.

Empowerment: The sharing of control, information and technology to allow individuals to grow, participate and contribute to a process for their own benefit.

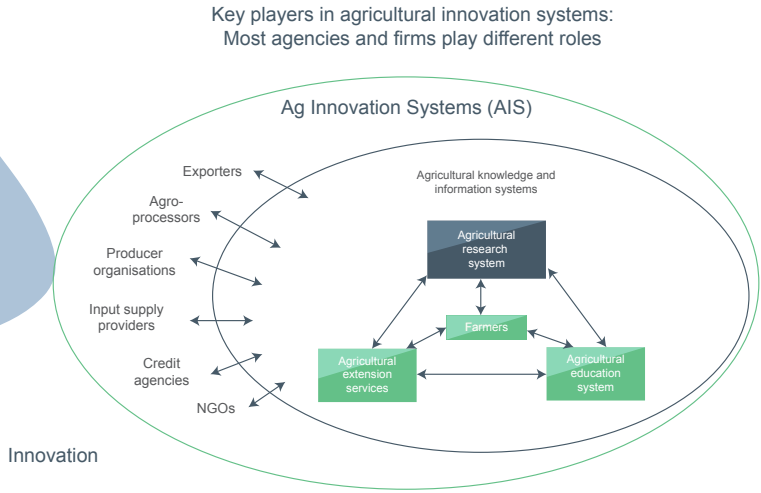

Figure 1: Figure showing the relation between the AKIS and newer AIS approaches

Source: Developing Innovative Extension Systems to help Small-scale Men and Women Farmers by Burton E. Swanson

Defining AIS

The World Bank defines an AIS system as "a network of organisations, enterprises, and individuals focused on bringing new products, new processes, and new forms of organisations into social and economic use, together with the institutions and policies that affect their behaviour and performance".

Institutional: The structures, rules and regulations that determine the behaviour of individuals within a community or region.

The AIS system is made up of individuals and organisations that demand and supply knowledge and includes policies and mechanisms that determine how these different agents interact with one another. AIS is an innovation-oriented system that does not only focus on research and extension activities, but addresses aspects such as organisational (organisation of farmers as groups) and **institutional** innovation (such as land-leasing through policy change). Figure 2 illustrates the central focus on innovation and its link to other actors and processes in the extension system.

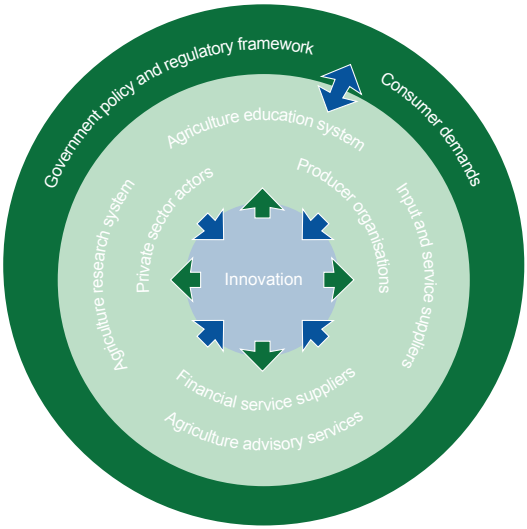

Figure 2: Innovation is the central focus of the extension system

Implementation

The effectiveness of an AIS system is dependent on the innovation capacity of the system. The four elements that need to be considered in order to determine capacity are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The four elements of innovation capacity

Factors	Capacity
Actors and their roles	Incorporates: • Identifying actors relevant to agricultural innovation and their roles; and • Having a degree of engagement in value addition, output marketing, social mobilisation, institutional development, policy **advocacy**, coordination and networking.
Patterns of interaction that exist between different role players	Focus on: • The level of connection between actors; • The identification of isolated institutes and organisations; and • Methods of linking actors.
Institutions	Look at: • How organisations operate, considering social and infrastructure aspects; • Their readiness to link other actors; and • How their structuring will affect linking with other actors.

Factors	Capacity
Enabling environment	Identifying: • Challenges and limitations; • Policies available to promote linking actors; and • Ability of actors to influence policymaking.

Advocacy: The process of influencing policies.

Promoting interaction

In order to ensure an enabling environment you need to use methods that break down barriers, provide assistance, facilitate communication and allow for proper management. Table 2 outlines methods you can use to achieve these goals.

Table 2: Methods to promote interaction

Method	Description
Innovation platforms	Bringing different actors together to discuss and promote change, using: • Local platforms focused on specific value chains; and • National and regional platforms able to set agendas for national agriculture and create policies.
Innovation brokering	Connecting farmers to service providers and other actors in the agricultural value chain

Method	Description
Innovation grants	Provide funding in the form of collaboration grants to promote interaction between actors in AIS
Innovation management	Identifying the functions needed, actions to be performed and the tools required within an AIS

Facilitate policy changes

Facilitate: To make something easier.

GFRAS and other actors are often concerned with advocating changes in institutes and policies to remove barriers between the different actors in an AIS. The key to AIS success is the use of multiple actors each with different types of knowledge and their effective communication, requiring the removal of barriers and often an initial push to **facilitate** innovation. This is accomplished through the use of policy working groups to influence policy, sector coordination agencies to coordinate the actors within an AIS at a national level. An innovation support facility which allows development of new coordination capacity in the case where national coordination is inadequate.

Role of extension in AIS

Extension and EAS are integral to AIS. The AIS framework allows for the organisation and role of extension to be clearly defined within the context of the other actors, processes, institutes and policies.

The goals of EAS and AIS interaction are:

- The capacity-building of producers and the rural poor in order to improve production, resource management and market knowledge, and to promote the exchange of farmer-to-farmer

information; and

- The creation of groups among actors in order to foster collaboration to address specific needs and to ensure learning and information sharing.

Table 3 :The strengths and weaknesses of the AIS approach

Strengths	Weaknesses
Connects actors in order to allow for knowledge and skill sharing, facilitating the innovation process.	Facilitating pluralism between actors is a mid- to long-term approach that scares off funders looking for tangible short-term results.
Identifies innovation processes and focuses on institutional and policy changes to facilitate innovation.	Finding professionals skilled in facilitation, brokering and relationship building can be difficult.
Allows EAS to move from a technology delivery service to an innovation enabler.	Viewing AIS incorrectly as a blueprint for organising innovation in agriculture, when it in fact represents a diversity of approaches applicable to innovation.
	Using aspects of AIS selectively without considering reforms and learning and development capacity which are core aspects of AIS.

Complete Activity 1.3 in your workbook.

Session 1.3: EAS providers and their roles

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Identify the types of EAS providers and their roles.

Introduction

This session investigates the pluralism that exists in the EAS, and how coordination between these different actors differs between different countries/regions. Extension can be viewed as an informal education function, spreading information and advice in order to promote knowledge, attitudes, skills and hopes. As previously mentioned, EAS providers can be grouped as public, farmer organisations, NGOs and private companies, with all actors sharing the previously mentioned goal. The following section looks at what defines these providers and highlights the variations within each group.

Private extension providers

In order to look at the relation between EAS providers, you need to familiarise yourself with their individual roles. The following section outlines what defines farmer organisations, NGOs and private companies.

Farmer organisations

Commodity: A raw material or agricultural product that can be bought or sold.

Farmer organisations are involved in providing extension services related to the **commodity** along the entire commodity value chain. The organisation is made up of various actors including the beneficiaries of EAS, resulting in a robust system with strong links between participants in a commodity value chain.

Farmer organisations differ from most private extension providers in the fact that they are created to be run by farmers for farmers. This provides communities with a platform to discuss their concerns amongst peers and strengthen their voice when it comes to affecting policy change.

NGOs

NGOs are commonly driven by social and environmental **ideals** with extension activities focused on welfare, gender equality and environmental stability. NGOs are known for using adaptive, cost-effective, participatory, demand-driven and client-orientated techniques.

Ideals: Something thought of as being perfect.
Commercial: Related to the selling and buying of goods and services.
Venture: A business plan involving risk with the goal of making a profit.

Private companies

Private companies, corporations and individuals most commonly assist relatively well-off clients in producing high value products of interest to the company. Some private companies do reach poor rural producers, like through the use of outgrower schemes, but keep in mind that the use of contract farming is a **commercial venture**.

Public and private extension providers

Public or government extension services in most countries are focused on establishing policies and the coordination and quality assurance of other actors in the pluralistic system. In general, public extension is meant to be **impartial** and focused on the public good with roles in natural resource management, family financial management, nutrition and health promotion as well as family well-being. Public extension is able to reach the most **disenfranchised** farmers and provide security in the form of subsidies and disaster relief measures.

Impartial: Evaluating all considerations equally.
Disenfranchised: Deprived of privileges or rights.

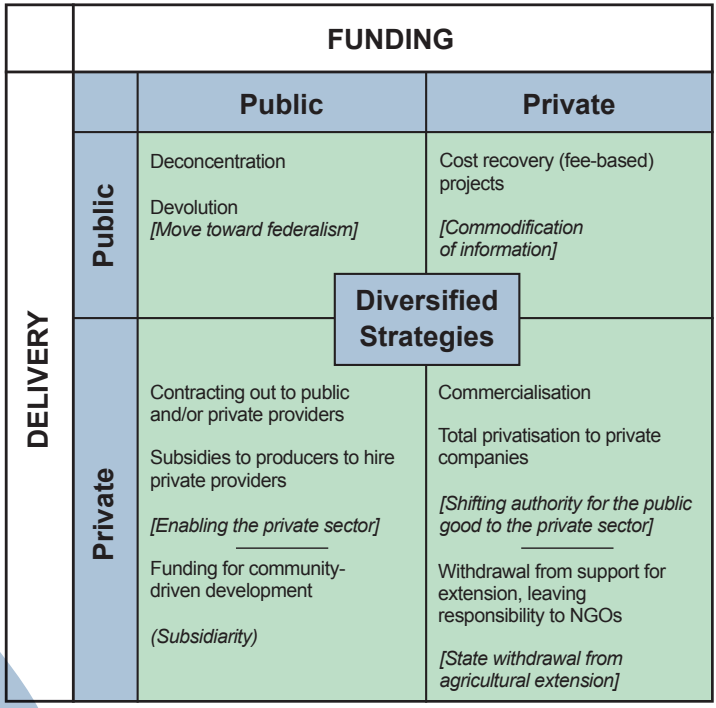

Figure 3: Current reforms in public and private extension systems

Work by W. Rivera for the FAO characterises the relationship between public and private extension systems as being divided into four groups based on funding and delivery. These divisions as shown in figure 3 below which represents the reforms in public sector agricultural extension since the 1980s.

Purely public extension provision where the government funds and delivers an extension service (top left block) requires the redistribution of central authority to branch offices and institutes

in order to meet the varying needs of rural farmers across the country. This requires shifting staff from national to provincial/ state level, district to sub-district levels and the **devolution** of authority or the shifting of authority to lower levels of government to allow individual departments to make decisions best suited to the local farmers. Brazil and Mexico are examples of state level devolution with Bolivia, Columbia and the Philippines using a municipal/district level system.

Devolution: The shifting of authority to lower levels of government.

In many cases, the burden on the state both in terms of financial and delivery requirements for a public extension system is too great. As a result, many governments have decentralised extension with either a privatised or partial privatisation model. The lower left block represents a system in which private extension services are used, but funded by the government. This is achieved through direct contracting of private EAS (Mozambique, Hungary and Venezuela), providing farmers with subsidies on the condition that they hire private EAS (Mexico, Uganda and Chile) and the provision of grants to communities to establish their own development projects. The latter community projects are rarely focused on developing extension services. Note that due to the devolution of authority as seen in Mexico, the country is able to use a combination of public funding and delivery along with a subsidy-based system.

The top right block is an opposite form of partial privatisation in which cost recovery based private funding through fee-based public extension delivery is used. Ecuador uses a mixed system using both public and private funding in combination with the systems outlined in the lower left block.

The lower right block represents total commercialisation such as found in New Zealand or total privatisation seen in England, Wales and the Netherlands. Countries such as Peru which have

no formal public or private extension provision and rely purely on national and international NGOs, are also included in this grouping.

Many countries such as Ecuador and Mexico use diversified strategies combining quadrants throughout the country.

Complete Activity 1.4 in your workbook.

Concluding remarks

You should now have a better understanding of how the changing nature of rural needs and aspects such as globalisation gave rise to the AIS used today. In learning about the role, development and application of AIS, you were able to learn how different extension providers fit into the system. In learning about extension providers you were able to see the need for pluralism to ensure innovation and improved extension efficiency. Extension is a group effort involving multiple actors, each specialised to meet specific needs in the community. It is the ability to work together, united by common goals and principles that will see the success of the New Extensionist movement.

Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Study unit 2: New Extensionist capacities

Study unit outcomes

After completing this study unit, you should be able to:

- List and describe the vision, mission and guiding principles of GFRAS that drive the New Extensionist movement;
- Explain the different levels of strategic fields and capacity development and how they relate to one another; and
- State what is expected of you and describe the core competencies to be covered in this module and others.

Study unit overview

In order to be effective as extension agents, you are expected to go beyond simply providing messages about set technological packages. As individuals, we require a range of competencies, in other words, knowledge and skills to act in a wide variety of situations. Following FAO's framework on capacity development, GFRAS has identified functional and technical capacities across three levels, namely individuals, organisations, and an enabling environment or system. These capacities are in line with GFRAS' guiding principles that have a bearing on the envisaged role and functions of the New Extensionist in agricultural innovation systems. The technical and functional capacities refer to formulation and implementation of policies, generation, management, and exchange of information, engagement in networks and partnerships, and programme delivery.

Session 2.1: GFRAS principles and their effect on EAS capacity development

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- List and describe the vision, mission and guiding principles of GFRAS; and
- Discuss the strategic fields of action that promote capacity development.

Introduction

This session introduces GFRAS' guiding principles that have a bearing on the envisaged role and functions of the New Extensionist. This includes, among others, demand-drive and accountability, pluralism and partnership, harmonisation, subsidiarity, alignment, and result focus.

Vision, mission and guiding principles

GFRAS functions within a strategic framework based on its vision, mission and guiding principles which in turn are based on the AIS system discussed in Section 1.2, and capacity development, which will be discussed in Session 2.2.

GFRAS' vision is for rural advisory services to effectively contribute to agricultural innovation systems for sustainable development. GFRAS' mission is to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic and demand-driven rural advisory services for sustainable development. The guiding principles define how and with whom GFRAS works. These principles are discussed in the table below:

Table 4: The guiding principles of GFRAS

Demand-driven and accountability	RAS is driven by and accountable to RAS clientele
Pluralism and partnership	GFRAS aims to facilitate and coordinate the work from various actors in order to promote synergy, innovation and strengthen the forum
Evidence-based approaches	GFRAS focuses on evidence-based measures and approaches, in other words, measures and approaches based on experimental trials and research to ensure efficiency
Subsidiarity	Processes and initiatives are led by lower level actors with GFRAS providing guidance and support where needed
Transparency	GFRAS' activities are implemented in a transparent way with all actors having access to created information within the public domain
Alignment	GFRAS' guiding principles are in line with international development institutes, their policies and programmes
Monitoring, evaluation and learning	GFRAS promotes improved monitoring, evaluation and learning within all activities related to RAS, such as enhanced learning, which is one of the core elements of GFRAS

Capacity development

Capacity development is a process of growth aimed at strengthening and maintaining the capabilities of individuals, organisations and societies in order to achieve their goals. The FAO corporate strategy on capacity development outlines three levels of capacity development, as shown in the figure below. As mentioned, these development levels form the basis on which the New Extensionist mission, vision and goal are based to ensure sustainable development.

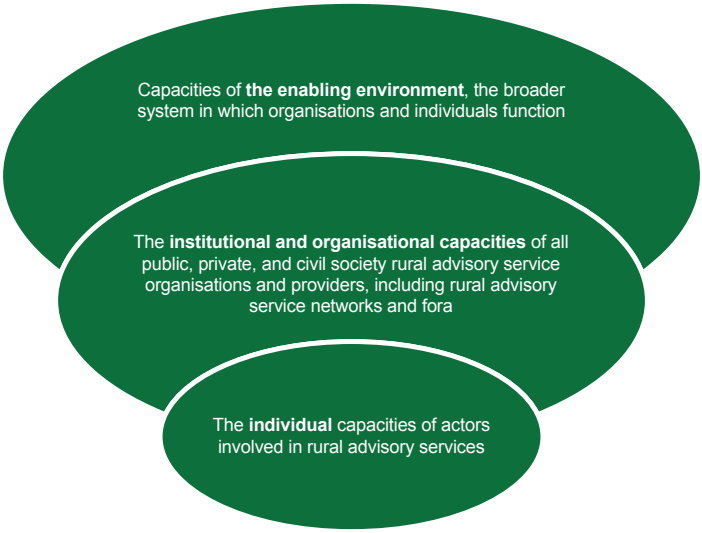

Figure 4: The levels of capacity development

Strategic fields of action

The strategic fields of action are procedures developed based on the levels of capacity development to ensure the achievement of GFRAS' mission and vision. These strategic fields and their goals are outlined in the GFRAS strategic framework 2016 to 2025.

Strategic field 1: Advocacy and support for an enabling policy environment and appropriate investment in rural advisory services

According to the New Extensionist, RAS's need "appropriate regulatory frameworks to ensure fair competition, offer a level playing field, and enable collaboration among different extension and advisory service providers". Due to these requirements, GFRAS is focused on inclusion and recognition of advisory services in policies and investments with a focus on improving visibility and strengthening influence of rural advisory services in policy investments.

Goal: Increased recognition of rural advisory services in policies and investments.

Strategic field 2: Professionalisation of RAS

Increased visibility of RAS within the agricultural innovation system requires recognition of extension professionals. GFRAS focuses on professionalism of RAS actors and an emphasis on sufficient human capacity, the application of policies, strategies, approaches and methods, as well as high quality, pre-service, on-the-job training and continuous professional development. This will see an improvement in the functioning of advisory service providers and forums to the needs of farmers.

Goal: Strengthening the performance of rural advisory services.

Strategic field 3: Facilitation and enhancement of effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange

Pluralism is a cornerstone of the New Extensionist movement and as a result, GFRAS focuses on improved peer-to-peer information exchange to enhance learning and promote knowledge generation in the agricultural innovation system. As outlined in the strategic framework, this field focuses on "strengthening

capacity to generate, find, share, adapt, and use evidence, lessons learned from experience, scientific and local knowledge, and up-to-date information."

Goal: Enhanced learning in rural advisory services.

Complete Activity 2.1 in your workbook.

Session 2.2: New roles and capacities in the EAS

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Define the different levels of capacity development; and
- Describe how development of new roles outlined by the strategic fields relate to the levels of capacity development.

Introduction

Due to the core importance of capacity development, the levels are called the capacity development framework. The framework, in conjunction with agricultural innovation, form the basis for outlining the strategic fields that are used to strengthen GFRAS' vision and mission.

Capacity development levels

This section discusses the functional and technical capacities across three levels: individuals, organisations, and enabling environment.

Level 1: Enabling environment

The conditions in a specific context affect the performance of extension and advisory services and are known as the enabling environment. The enabling environment consists of:

- Policies;
- Legal and economic frameworks;
- National public sector budget allocations and processes;
- Incentives and social norms;
- The relevance given to rural advisory services by policy-makers, investors and funders;

- The level of exchange and sharing of knowledge and information within the agricultural innovation system in general and RAS in particular;
- Market dynamics; and
- The availability of training institutions.

Goal: The aim of GFRAS is not to focus on the entire agricultural system but rather to focus on strengthening the enabling environment for pluralistic RAS networks and actors. This will then improve their potential and efficiency within the agricultural innovation system.

Level 2: Institutional and organisational

GFRAS has facilitated the creation and strengthening of extension and advisory service networks at regional, sub-regional and national levels with the aim of shaping innovation processes and strengthening the capacities of smallholders. The aim of this was also to create relationships between actors in the public, private and civil society sectors.

Goal: To create and further strengthen regional RAS networks and forums to improve their effectiveness and ability to support their members.

Level 3: Support for an enabling policy environment and investment in rural advisory services

RAS's need New Extensionists who are able to understand the entire agricultural innovation system, and are able to facilitate pluralistic systems and understand the use of evidence-based methods. Individual capacity development is needed in the form of education and training to meet these requirements. This can be in the form of:

- Ongoing education and training;
- Continuous professional development;
- Informal education;
- On-the-job training; and
- Formal education through training institutions.

At its simplest level, individual capacity development requires access to information, and knowledge and experience exchange with programmes such as the GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training supporting human resource development in advisory services. Further focus on turning extension into a profession is needed to ensure driven professionals with defined career paths.

Goal: To develop appropriate and comprehensive human resources in rural advisory services.

Expected outcomes

The table from the GFRAS strategic framework outlines the expected outcomes as defined by the strategic fields and levels of capacity development. In the table you will be able to see how the application of the strategic fields at different capacity development levels are able to fulfil the vision and mission of GFRAS.

Table 5: Application of strategic fields

Level of capacity / Strategic field	Level 1. Enabling environment Goal: Strengthened enabling environment for RAS' to use their potential and effectively fulfill their roles	Level 2. Institutions and organisations Goal: Functionally strengthened regional RAS networks	Level 3. Individuals Goal: Appropriate and comprehensive human resources developed in RAS
Strategic field 1. Advocacy and support for an enabling policy environment and appropriate investment in RAS **Goal: Increased recognition of RAS in policies and investments**	Increased visibility and coherant voice of RAS in rural development and agricultural discourses and frameworks, and at events	Actively engaged regional and thematic RAS networks that influence national and regional discussions of development and agriculture	RAS actors who influence policies and investments, due to increased support measures and better guidelines RAS professionals with enhanced skills, who are able to contribute to more effective agricultural innovation systems

Strategic field 2. Professionalisation of RAS **Goal: Strengthened RAS performance**	Increased recognition by policy-makers, donors, investors, and programme managers of the need for action towards professionalisation of RAS	Strengthened institutionalisation, governance, coordination, and financing structures for regional and thematic RAS networks Better guidance provided to RAS networks and fora for improving their performance and collaboration with other actors in agricultural innovation systems	Improved training, education, standards, and opportunities for RAS actors with incentives, certification, and career development mechanisms in place
Strategic field 3. Facilitation and enhancement of effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange **Goal: Enhanced learning in RAS**	Agricultural innovation systems that support measures for improved access to high-quality information and knowledge on RAS	RAS networks and fora have a stronger brokering role in agricultural innovation systems, and a greater capacity for advocacy	RAS providers and clientele have more opportunities to access, share, and use information, knowledge, experience, and evidence on RAS approaches and methods

Complete Activity 2.2 in your workbook.

Session 2.3: Core competencies required by the New Extensionist

Session outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Describe the core competencies laid out by the GFRAS Consortium and how they relate to the New Extensionist Learning Kit.

Introduction

The New Extensionist has brought attention to the new roles and capacities needed by extension and advisory service providers at different levels. As a result, there is a call for a set of core competencies for individual extension professionals, aimed at decision makers in training institutions such as colleges and universities, and extension and education managers. This session describes the scope and components of the core competencies identified by the GFRAS Consortium as critical for extension agents throughout the world.

Core competencies

Competency is the ability to do something efficiently and effectively with competence, or the sufficient knowledge and skills needed for you to work within the context of your job.

The New Extensionist document led to the creation of the GFRAS Consortium for Extension Education and Training and the outlining of the core competencies needed to develop the "New Extensionist".

The learning kit outlines the core competencies required by field staff, managers and lecturers in order for users to effectively

interact with all the different actors in the agricultural innovation system for the betterment of all actors. In late 2014, education experts in the GFRAS Consortium met to produce learning materials out of the New Extensionist position paper.

You can see the results of this in the 13 modules of the learning kit which represent the necessary competencies for capacity development of its users, of which this module is the first. The remainder of this section outlines the core competencies you will gain in each module as outlined in "The New Extensionist: Core Competencies for Individuals".

Note that although many of the competencies discussed will currently seem foreign and difficult to understand. This section acts as a brief introduction to what will be covered. The learning kit aims to empower you to build the capacities needed to become a competent extension professional, so take pride in seeing what you will be able to accomplish after completing the 13 modules.

Competency/Module 1: Introduction to the New Extensionist

Based on the content of this module, you should now have acquired the ability to define the framework of agricultural innovation systems, position yourself within this innovation system and be able to identify the specific roles and the capacities that you need as part of the New Extensionist movement.

Competency/Module 2: Overview of Extension approaches and tools

In order to be an effective extension practitioner you need to be familiar with the role of extension in innovation and development and be familiar with the tools and approaches available to you. An extension practitioner requires the knowledge needed to choose the best tools and approaches for the given context.

Competency/Module 3: Extension programme management

As an extension practitioner, you are expected to have the skills needed to establish an extension programme utilising the proper planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at all steps of the project. This requires effective problem-solving methods in the context of the enabling environment, as well as the ability to build strategic partnerships, networks and manage stakeholders. In order to manage all these actors, you will need to use a pluralistic approach to coordinate and link the different actors.

Competency/Module 4: Professional ethics

As an ambassador of extension, you need to apply proper values and good principles such as honesty, respect, accountability, transparency and integrity. It is important to remember that extension is a science and therefore you must aim to become a proud extension professional.

Competency/Module 5: Adult learning for behavioural change

In order to implement extension projects, you will need to be able to properly interact with the community. This means that you will require an understanding of adult learning design and that you must be able to implement adult learning programmes using adult learning (the art of helping adults learn). Part of behaviour change is the ability to initiate and support social networks for agricultural innovation in order to allow those involved to share information between one another and create relationships.

Competency/Module 6: Basic knowledge management and extension

Communication with all stakeholders in the agricultural system requires the effective management of knowledge in terms

of knowing who your target group is and how to properly communicate said information to them. This will involve the identification and use of appropriate information communication technologies (ICTs) such as radios, televisions, cell phones, etc. which are best suited for reaching your target audience. In order to communicate effectively, you will need to be able to identify cultural and gender implications that may affect communication and innovation.

Competency/Module 7: Introduction to facilitation for development

An extension practitioner is required to understand and organise demands with a focus on building organisational capacity. He/she must also be able to broker and establish links with actors in the innovation system.

Competency/Module 8: Communication mobilisation

Community mobilisation will see you conducting livelihood assets assessments to ensure that communities have the essentials for life, often requiring resource mobilisation (the process of acquiring new or additional resources for an organisation). These activities require specific problem-solving and decision-making skills. You will need an understanding of leadership principles and the ability for leadership development to establish community-run initiatives. All of this will require you to have an understanding of the implications of culture and diversity, including gender and youth.

Competency/Module 9: Farmer Organisational (FO) development

The principle of farmer organisations development will require the understanding of types of groups, organisations, theories and models and the ability to manage group dynamics. You will also need to understand the different interactions between individuals.

In addition, you must also understand the enabling environment in terms of policies and "rules of the game" and general practices in a region in terms of how they will influence organisations.

Competency/Module 10: The role of Extension in value chains

You will need an understanding of the basic concepts and tools for value chain approaches to link farmers to markets, with an understanding of both input and output markets. This linking to markets will require an understanding of consumer preferences to identify key commodities while also taking into account standard certification and regulatory systems that are relevant to market entry.

Competency/Module 11: Agricultural entrepreneurship

Value chain extension is the first step in establishing a link between markets and farmers with the extension provider also needing to promote farm entrepreneurship. This empowers farmers to run their own businesses. This requires the ability to analyse business opportunities and do market research, as well as the know-how to successfully transfer these skills to others.

Competency/Module 12: Gender

As an extension provider, you will be required be inclusive in terms of gender-sensitive approaches and the ability to engage with and keep the attention of the rural youth. You will be required to appreciate gender differences by asking the following questions: who does what, with what, how and why?

Competency/Module 13: Risk mitigation and adaptation

Equipping extensionists with risk management and adaptation skills is key to minimising negative agricultural impacts triggered

by unforeseen shocks such as a sharp swing in product and input prices and extreme weather/climate events. The module focuses on approaches to risk and adaptation management, assessment and developing intervention of risk in the agricultural context, resilience in the context of risk, understanding how improved risk planning can increase identification and adaptation of farming strategies, climate change concepts, and how extension professionals can be equipped to better manage risk and uncertainty. The module also presents selected standard approaches and tools for assessing climate change risks and adaptation measures.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, it can be seen that many skills are required of an extension practitioner. The learning kit will act as a stepping stone on your way to professionalism, giving you the confidence to address a variety of problems regardless of the context you find yourself in. The mission, vision and guiding principles of GFRAS will act to remind you of your role as an extension professional, with the strategic fields and capacity development levels assisting in defining your role based on the needs of the context you find yourself in.

Complete the summative assessment in your workbook.

Complete the post-assessment in your workbook.

Glossary

Word	Definition
Value chains	All actors or processes related to a commodity from production, to processing to sale.
Policies	Principles and rules guiding the behaviour of an organisation in order to achieve a goal.
Trends	Observed changes in a specific direction.
Context	The parts or circumstances that define a statement, idea or situation.
Innovation	The process of creating or improving a method, idea or product.
Systemic	A system wide approach looking at multiple factors (e.g. market or economy) that form the system as a whole.
Empowerment	The sharing of control, information and technology to allow individuals to grow, participate and contribute to a process for their own benefit.
Institutional	The structures, rules and regulations that determine the behaviour of individuals within a community or region.
Advocacy	The process of influencing policies.
Facilitate	To make something easier.
Commodity	A raw material or agricultural product that can be bought or sold.
Ideals	Something thought of as being perfect.

Word	Definition
Commercial	Related to the selling and buying of goods and services.
Venture	A business plan involving risk with the goal of making a profit.
Impartial	Evaluating all considerations equally.
Disenfranchised	Deprived of privileges or rights.
Devolution	The shifting of authority to lower levels of government.
Globalisation	A set of economic, social, technological, political and cultural structures and processes resulting from international policy.
Agro-ecological	A look at agriculture from an ecological point, taking into account the interactions between nature and agricultural activity.
Marginalisation	To be excluded on a social level.
Decentralisation	The transfer of power, resources and functions away from a centralised authority to private entities.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definition
RAS	Rural advisory services
GCARD	Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Association
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
EAS	Extension and Advisory Services
AIS	Agricultural Innovation System
NGO	Non governmental organisations
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Department
AKIS	Agricultural knowledge and information systems

Resources

The following resources were used in writing this manual:

- Aerni, P., Nichterlein, K., Rudgard, S. and Sonnino, A. (2015) 'Making Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) Work for Development in Tropical Countries', Sustainability, pp. 831-850.
- Davis, K. (2015) 'The New Extensionist: Core Competencies for Individuals', GFRAS, August.
- GFRAS (2012) 'The "New Extensionist": Roles, Strategies, and Capacities to Strengthen Extension and Advisory Services', Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services, November.
- GFRAS (2015) 'Advocacy and leadership in rural advisory services for sustainable development', Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services Strategic Framework 2016-2025, October.
- Raheed, S. (2015) 'Note 13: Agricultural Innovation Systems', GFRAS, August.
- Rivera, W. (2003) 'Agricultural Extension, Rural Development and Food Security Challenge', Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations.

Other modules of the New Extensionist Modules are:

1. **Introduction to the New Extensionist**
2. Extension Methods and Tools
3. Extension Programme Management
4. Professional Ethics
5. Adult Education for Behavioural Change
6. Knowledge Management for RAS
7. Facilitation for Development
8. Community Mobilisation
9. Farmer Organisational Development
10. Value Chain Extension
11. Agricultural Entrepreneurship
12. Gender in Extension and Advisory Services
13. Risk Mitigation and Adaptation

Other related modules developed by GFRAS are on:

- Evaluation of Extension Programmes
- Policy Advocacy for RAS