

# Solutions

Our cycle of cooperation

Agriterra



FARMERS  
FIGHTING  
POVERTY



AGRICORD





# Contents

<b>Farmers Fighting Poverty</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Description of a cycle of cooperation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Various forms of advice</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Arrangements for advisory services</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Tailor-made financing</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Solutions</b>	<b>14</b>

Through the whole text we speak of producers' organisations. With this we mean organisations of farmers, rural women, young farmers and cooperatives.



# Farmers Fighting Poverty

## *Introduction to the services we offer to our clients*

**You have come into contact with Agriterra. Probably you are looking for opportunities to strengthen your organisation. You want to have more members and you want to increase your services to your members. You want to defend the interests of your members. You are looking for opportunities to improve the agricultural production and the services to agriculture in your country. You want better technology, inputs, fertilizers, processing, marketing opportunities, financing, research and education. In order to find assistance, you have been looking around in your own country, also among your colleagues, but you also want to know what colleagues from overseas can offer.**

Farmers, horticulturalists, members of cooperative societies and rural women from the Netherlands are willing to support colleagues from abroad who just like themselves rely on the power of their organisation. They provide this support through their agri-agency Agriterra. Agriterra offers access to know-how and money, which may help you to strengthen your organisation and promote economic activities.

This brochure will try to explain how we can provide you with know-how through our advisory department. We will also tell you how you can finance the activities you have planned with the help of our projects department.

Moreover this brochure will present some of our solutions to you. These solutions are answers in the form of know-how and money that we provide in a certain 'dose' or quantity as an answer to frequently asked questions. The dose is adapted to your situation. New and renewed solutions will be created on the basis of your demand.

The know-how that we provide is based upon our experiences with producers' organisations from all over the world. We can help you share those experiences by sending you brochures, by having you participate in meetings, through visits to the Netherlands or by the deployment of experts. These experts may come from the Netherlands or from a neighbouring country, but often they are still actively employed as (board) member or staff member of a farmers' or horticulturalists' organisation, a cooperative society or a rural women's organisation.





As far as financing is concerned, we depend on government bodies, private persons and companies, which trust us with their money to give assistance to you. They do so without making conditions, except that we guarantee them that we will use the money where it will produce most development.

Our programme "Farmers Fighting Poverty" starts from the national organisations. These organisations or the underlying structures or branches are the executors of the projects of Agriterra. These projects meet the demands of members. Together with the organisations we try to provide resources and know-how as directly as possible at the level where it is most needed. We want to directly involve as many members in the projects as possible. We aim to have at least 30% female participants, since women farmers constitute a large part of the working population in agriculture in the countries where we are active.

Furthermore Agriterra contracts all kinds of alliances to extend the supply of resources, know-how and solutions to producers' organisations. We do this for example together with other agri-agencies within AgriCord. We also collaborate with the world farmers' organisation IFAP, for which AgriCord implements the development programme. And in the Netherlands we coordinate the assistance through Agri-ProFocus, the public-private partnership for support to producers' organisations. Thus we try to create the attention for producers' organisations that we think is necessary to contribute to achieving the first Millennium Development Goal in the final sprint towards 2015: the elimination of hunger and poverty. For just like the president of IFAP Jack Wilkinson we believe:

*"The international community agrees that agriculture is key to eradicate human hunger and poverty. But even though agriculture is recognized as crucial, farmers do not see much evidence of this on the ground. Beyond the discussions, actions are urgently needed. This should begin with the recognition of farmers' organisations as key players to be included in the decision-making process. [...] Farmers' organisations have a crucial role to play not only in meeting world food needs but also in rural development, and are willing to take on this responsibility."*

Agriterra is an agri-agency, i.e. a special kind of development organisation supported by the national rural membership organisations in developed countries. Those are exactly the kind of organisations we want to strengthen in developing countries. Due to those ties with the world of organized farmers and due to the roots in rural social movements, we call ourselves agri-agencies. All over the world there are more than ten agri-agencies and meanwhile most of them are working together within AgriCord:

Afdi	- France	SCC	- Sweden
Agriterra	- Netherlands	UPA-DI	- Canada
IDACA	- Japan	MTK	- Finland*
Ieder voor Allen	- Belgium	Groupe Fert	- France

\* Agri-agency to be founded.



## Action-result-further action

The collaboration between Agriterra and your organisation is collaboration in the broad sense of the word. In a cooperation agreement we express the intention to work together at a process of democratic rural development. We acknowledge that strong producers' organisations play an important role: strong organisations which are representative, development oriented, participatory, constructive and willing to cooperate with organisations from other countries.

But in the end we obviously all want to know whether our efforts are having any effect. Therefore we screen organisations and thus we come up with a wealth of knowledge about producers' organisations. This activity is called profiling. During the profiling we take stock of facts and opinions about the organisation and try to link them with each other. The results constitute the basis for our cooperation with you.

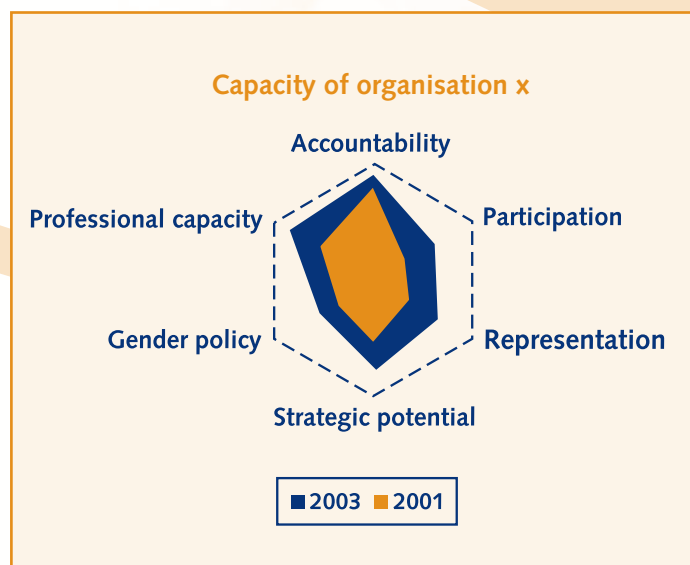


Figure 1: Results of two profilings

The results of the profiling are visually represented by a diagram showing six key elements, as shown in the adjoining example. After repeated measuring a second diagram shows the progress after three years. In the example we can see a clear progress for all elements after two years, except for accountability, but this was already very strong during the first measurement in 2001.

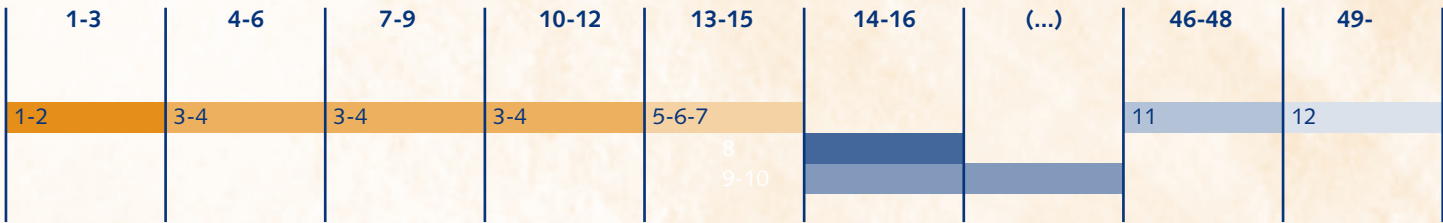


# Description of a cycle of cooperation

After a first contact between your producers' organisation and Agriterra we collect some basic information by means of a number of targeted questions. This may lead to some kind of modest cooperation in the form of a small project, a mission to get to know each other or support for participation in an international event. If we then both see opportunities for long term cooperation, Agriterra will start collecting data to carry out a so-called 'zero measurement': i.e. a first profiling as described below. At the same time you will analyse the strengths and weaknesses of

your organisation. Both surveys provide indications as to the direction of your strategy to reinforce. We then put this down into a cooperation agreement, on the basis of which larger projects may be initiated. In the course of those projects some data are collected already for the next measurement, which will allow a first judgement about the question whether and in which domains your organisation has indeed been strengthened. Also on the basis of that information new activities are set up within the scope of the same cooperation agreement and thus the next cycle begins.

## Months (indicative)



## Activities

- 1. First contact
- 2. Short general analysis of organization and positioning
- 3. Small first project, mission, etc.
- 4. Description and data collection
- 5. 'Zero measurement'
- 6. SWOT analysis
- 7. Strategic strengthening
- 8. Cooperation agreement
- 9. Large project, missions
- 10. Description and data collection
- 11. Second 'measurement'
- 12. Et cetera





# Various forms of advice

**The advisory department of Agriterra consists of liaison officers (m/f). One of their tasks is to improve the AgriPool advisory services. More generally we could divide their work into a number of core tasks, as advisor, matchmaker, ambassador and scout.**

## AgriPool

In order to provide your organisation with expert advice, Agriterra is running AgriPool: the not-for-profit employment agency for experts from agricultural and horticultural organisations all over the world. Through AgriPool we select the specific know-how you are looking for. Experienced administrators, farmers or rural women are willing and able to share their expertise with you. This is expertise in various fields, such as milk processing, saving and credit systems, leadership training, rural tourism or financial management. AgriPool symbolizes exactly what Agriterra is aiming at: strong producers' organisations through advisory and transfer of knowledge from *farmer to farmer*.

## Advisor

The Agriterra liaison officer is an advisor, but an advisor providing added value. The liaison officer creates this added value by going deeply into an organisation. The Agriterra liaison officer wants to know the client thoroughly and he or she wants to know what the client wants and needs. An optimal relationship with the client is therefore a relationship based upon mutual trust, in which hard nuts may be cracked without impairing the relationship. The liaison officer aims with his advice to strengthen producers' organisations in developing countries and to support the development of economic activities of those organisations. Consultancy takes place on the spot, for example through missions, but also at distance, through telephone or e-mail.

### *Practical example: Congo (part 1/3):*

*Five years ago the provincial producers' organisation FOPAC (Democratic Republic Congo) was created out of several existing producers' organisations. This new structure was facing a number of questions, such as: what is our role and how do we distribute the tasks between the umbrella and the member organisations? During a mission visit a liaison officer consulted with some member organisations about the topics they wanted FOPAC to deal with.*

*One topic that was reported by all member organisations was information and communication. The organisations thought FOPAC could play a coordinating role in this field.*

*Many organisations have their own members' magazine. By centralizing these magazines all affiliated organisations would be informed of each others' activities.*

*Another topic was the position of women within FOPAC. The existing women's organisation did not want to be swallowed up in the form of a 'women's department'. The liaison officer was able to overcome impasses by putting parties together and promoting dialogue. In this case these efforts resulted in a cooperation agreement in which both can keep their autonomy and the women's organisation will support FOPAC by strengthening the capacities of women and their organisations within FOPAC.*

## Matchmaker

The liaison officer is also a matchmaker. Consultancy means providing the client with knowledge. The liaison officer mediates actively in the search for required knowledge and useful contacts for your organisation. Therefore the liaison officer also acts as a matchmaker in knowledge. The main sources of knowledge are fellow organisations all over the world. The liaison officer has the task to make that knowledge accessible to you. Agriterra can also rely on students (by means of the training and apprenticeship programme), experts from AgriCord and other specialists.





### *Example Congo continued (part 2/3):*

*The organisation of collective marketing would also become a key task of FOPAC. The participation of the president in an international exchange about marketing of agricultural products in Bamako at the beginning of 2007 constitutes a very good start. By meeting and talking to fellow administrators from other countries he was able to gain insight in the possible role that FOPAC could play in this domain.*

*Since years we have been implementing a programme for leadership training together with the training institute of The Dutch farmers' organisation LTO North in the province of Northern Kivu. LTO trains a number of trainers who in their turn train farmers' leaders.*

### **Ambassador**

Thirdly our liaison officer is also your personal ambassador. He is an advocate of producers' organisations in general vis-à-vis authorities, development organisations, knowledge institutions, research centres and the business community. But he takes care not to take your own seat, because you are the one who can and must promote your own interests. The liaison officer creates opportunities and thus sees to it that your members can make themselves heard and are able to introduce their proposals. He wants people to talk more WITH farmers instead of only talking ABOUT them.

### *Example Congo continued (part 3/3):*

*The IFDC (International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development) has set up a programme in the Great Lakes Region in Africa. Our aim is to achieve more participation for producers' organisations within such a programme. On the one hand the liaison officer draws the attention of the people who are in charge of the new programme to producers' organisations. On the other hand he makes sure that producers' organisations are informed about the existence of the programme and the opportunities it might offer.*

### **Scout**

Finally the liaison officer also acts as a scout: he is the outpost of Agriterro in the field. Our advisory department plays an important role in the identification of producers' organisations we would like to work with. A liaison officer will always ask: what use is this organisation for farmers and rural women?

We teach our clients to be open and to respond to trends and opportunities in their environment. Sometimes we also provide opportunities ourselves. Rural tourism is a good example. In general we stimulate organisations to be open and democratic. Precisely organisations that are open to opinions of their members and to opinions of third parties and that try to determine their course on the basis of democratic decision processes, appear to be useful for societal and economic development. Our liaison officer will bring in his network and contacts for you.

### *Practical example*

*All over the world rural areas are very popular as tourist destinations. Western tourists look for authenticity and want to enter into direct contact with the local population. Tour operators however find it difficult to get access to rural areas. Unconsciously producers' organisations have a lot to offer in the field of tourist development and they may well provide a gateway to rural areas. Agriterro has pointed out this trend to the travel sector and tries to bring travel organisations and the agricultural sector together. Agriterro supports organisations in developing innovative concepts of stay-on-a-farm. Thus the farmers' travel organisation Runa Tupari in Ecuador has organized over 2200 nights and 1500 excursions per year. (see Solution sheet 'Rural Tourism')*

For more information about what our advisory department can do for you, you may contact the secretariat of the department at [advisering@agriterra.org](mailto:advisering@agriterra.org). But of course you can also call our general telephone number.





# Arrangements for advisory services

## Advisory missions

In case of advisory missions by AgriPool experts an expert agreement is established. This agreement contains arrangements with the dispatching organisation about reimbursement of tickets, fees and allowances for expenses of the expert. The calculation of the expenses allowance is based upon the international DSA standards.

In case of advisory missions by external experts or by our own staff members you will be asked to take care of reception, board and lodging and transport. We do this by means of a mission announcement letter. You will be reimbursed for those expenses and you need not give account for them. Thus hosting Agriterra experts involves a minimum of administrative paper work for us and for you.

## Exchange missions

In the context of collaboration between producers' organisations from the Netherlands and colleagues from developing countries, exchange visits occur regularly. These visits are meant to deepen and strengthen the mutual relationship. Preferably these visits result in concrete development initiatives. But exchange visits also contribute in creating more support for development cooperation in the Netherlands.

The administrative settlement of those visits falls under the same rules as for missions of experts, although in general no fees are granted. The dispatching organisation gets a mission invitation letter, confirming payment of travelling expenses and a fixed amount for reimbursement of expenses and an allowance. The hosting organisation receives an assignment letter requesting to take care of hosting, accommodation and assistance of the delegation.

## Events

Agriterra will help you to participate in international events and workshops of for example IFAP, IFDC or ACWW. In a number of cases we take the initiative to organize a workshop or event ourselves. The participating organisations receive an invitation letter, explaining the conditions for participation. Just like in the case of exchange visits the budgetary standards and reimbursements are based upon the international DSA rates.











# Tailor-made financing

**How to plan and spend the financial resources for your organisation, your projects, activities and services: that is the core task of our projects department. We try to provide funding that corresponds to the available resources, that is efficient and effective and that serves the main objectives of Agriterra and producers' organisations. Transparency constitutes an important condition for financing.**

Agriterra can provide you with a number of services and financing models that allow you to effectively take up your role as a strong membership organisation. All through the entire cycle of collaboration, the projects department is in charge of the completion of applications for project financing and for the administrative settlement of the advisory services.

## **Project financing**

Your project application is registered by a staff member of the projects department at [www.agro-info.net](http://www.agro-info.net) and is then being dealt with. Your organisation will be informed of this.

If the application fits within the budget and meets the quality requirements, we can start the further elaboration of the proposal in the form of an action plan, objectives, results and a budget.

## **Rate of treatment:**

The projects department follows internal standards as to the rate for treating project applications.

1. From application to definition or rejection: within 10 days
2. From definition to approval: within 40 days
3. From approval to implementation (start): within 10 days.

When submitting a project application you should allow for a term of 2 months before financing is granted.

Every project is registered at [agro-info.net](http://agro-info.net), which is accessible to all. You may follow the status of the project yourself at [www.agro-info.net](http://www.agro-info.net). Agriterra advises clients who think that their project is proceeding too slowly to get in touch with the responsible staff member of the projects department.





In case of approval of a project a financing agreement is established for one or more years. The signature of this agreement clears the way for financial support to your organisation and the implementation of the project. In signing you commit yourself to forward a periodic report with respect to content and a financial report. This report should at least show the achieved results and the link between these results and the incurred expenses.

Agriterra attaches great importance to a sound financial management by its clients. Before financing a project we therefore inspect the annual accounts and the auditors' certificate of the past years. If you cannot provide this information, we conclude that accountancy is the first element we will have to improve. The staff members of the projects department assess whether you meet the conditions of sound financial management. If we proceed to project financing, you commit yourself to forward not only a financial project report but also an approved annual account. This account should concern the overall receipts, expenditure and the balance sheet of your organisation.

### *Institutional financing:*

*If the financial management of your organisation is perfectly in order, you may qualify for institutional financing instead of project financing. Your organisation then has to present an annual budget (for the overall operation of the organisation) to Agriterra and other donors. In case of sufficient budget security Agriterra may decide to take care of a percentage of the total expenses. The justification then consists in a substantial report about the implementation of the activities plan and an approved annual account.*

Staff members of the projects department may be deployed for advisory missions and workshops to strengthen the financial management of a producers' organisation.

For more information about what our projects department can do for you, you may contact the department secretariat at [financiering@agriterra.org](mailto:financiering@agriterra.org). But of course you can also call our general telephone number.



## Laying the financial foundations for your organisation

### *FinBase*

Agriterra's FinBase solution offers a balanced package of tools and instruments for producer organisations (PO's), so that they can achieve the twin objectives of solid financial management and financial autonomy. FinBase addresses itself to all producer organisations, regardless of the number of members, the main mission or the level of organisation.

The main advantage of FinBase is that it enables your organisation to achieve a measurable improvement of financial management. And this improvement enables your organisation to attain a greater degree of financial autonomy in due course. This is because this Solution has been designed with the specific characteristics of producer organisations in mind! For example, if an Agriterra expert starts implementing this Solution with an audit of your internal administrative organisation, this will always be done in close consultation and with the effective participation of your office bearers. Likewise, the FinBase workshop module addresses issues and problems which have been identified by office bearers of producers organisations themselves.

### **Why FinBase and for whom?**

For you as board or staff member of a producer organisation (our clients), your main mission will be the promotion of the interests of your members and the support of these members in the realisation of economic initiatives. In order to successfully accomplish this mission it is paramount that you give proof of solid financial management and that you are able at all times to account for income and expenditures towards your members and donors. It is equally important that you improve steadily the degree of financial autonomy, among others by the generation of income from the delivery of services to your members. With FinBase you can achieve this!

#### ***A Kenyan example***

*KENFAP, the umbrella organisation of rural producers in Kenya, constitutes a good example of a producer organisation, of which the main focus is on service delivery to members. KENFAP created its own autonomous business unit under the name KENFAP Services Ltd. The main objective of this autonomous unit is to deliver services to the member organisations of KENFAP and to do so on a commercial basis. KENFAP enjoyed the technical assistance of experts (recruited with help from Agriterra) from its Dutch sister organisation LTO Noord. These experts advised KENFAP in elaborating a business plan.*

The Finbase tools, instruments and solutions are mainly destined for elected office bearers, administrators and staff with a distinct financial responsibility: treasurers, members of internal control commission, accountants, chief executives and presidents.

### **How?**

Collaboration in this programme starts usually with an intake in the form of an analysis of weak and strong points of the organisation as to financial management. This first analysis may be the result from an external audit or profiling mission, a quick scan, a survey questionnaire or a detailed audit of the administrative organisation.





As a result of this first analysis, recommendations are made for the implementation of concrete measures to improve financial management on specific points. If the intake analysis reveals a rather weak score on several items, this leads to the formulation of a more comprehensive strengthening trajectory.

In the second phase the programme enables the participating organisations

to implement the recommended measures and projects. The results of these measures are the subject of regular monitoring and evaluation. In this phase Agriterra will actively assist her client, not only by financial support but also by the selection and recruitment of AgriPool experts, by direct advice by Agriterra staff and by identifying and proposing suitable solutions.

Further progress will make possible new steps, such as addressing the issue of financial autonomy. Agriterra proposes to formulate business plans for the delivery of paid services of members. A business-like approach of service delivery to members has the advantage of combining your core business (services to members) with the financial objective of income generation. Agriterra's method of service-oriented budgeting and planning (SOMPLAN©) is the cornerstone of this approach.

## **Costs**

The costs for this solution depend on several aspects, as country, size of your organisation, the scope of the project, the number of specific activities etc. Agriterra (your liaison officer) will work out these costs after consulting you. Agriterra can take care of the expenses if the implementation of the solution is agreed upon, but in many cases a counterpart contribution is expected.

## **Contact information**

In case you have a liaison officer at Agriterra, you can contact him or her for this Solution. Otherwise you can contact our advisory department by phone: +31-26-3542078, by fax: +31-26-4455978 or by email: [advisering@agriterra.org](mailto:advisering@agriterra.org).



## Share your organisation with the world

Get your own website at [www.agro-info.net](http://www.agro-info.net)

Knowledge is power. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can be the solution to access information and share knowledge. As such ICTs can facilitate the way to empowerment.

ICTs can be used effectively to strengthen the position of farmers in globalising agricultural markets, for example through real time market information, or through communication and advocacy by means of their own websites. ICTs may provide new livelihood opportunities to rural communities by means of telecentre solutions and enhance efficiency and competitiveness of the agricultural sector as a whole.

### Bridging the distance

Distance is a major problem in rural areas. Distance may hamper information flows and thus limit the opportunities for organisations to develop. ICTs can be used to open up

information flows to their full potential. Just imagine that your organisation would have access to the latest agricultural and market news. Or that you could easily disseminate information on your own website, which your members may access anytime they want. Or that you could exchange with and learn from colleagues all over the world without having to travel. Does this sound appealing to you? Then go online with [www.agro-info.net](http://www.agro-info.net)!



### How can Agro-info.net help you to achieve your goals?

ICTs provide numerous possibilities. Having a website can help to:

*@ Manage the processes of providing services to your members at a lower cost and with a larger reach*

*@ Facilitate access to information and the involvement of stakeholders*

*@ Give worldwide free publicity to your organisation*

With Agro-info.net you can achieve all these goals. Agro-info.net is an information platform for producer organisations. It provides very detailed information on numerous projects with and by producer organisations worldwide, as well as related news items, documents, information on events and much more.

Maybe you have thought about having your own website before, but you did not go through with it due to lack of resources, capacities and time. As pointed out before, having a website may serve many purposes. Agriterra can help you to get online and offer you a website within Agro-info.net in an easy way and at low cost.

Experience learns that it is difficult to keep your website up-to-date and to feed it regularly with new and interesting content. Since other organisations are linked to Agro-info.net as well, you and your site will constantly be updated with new developments in the field through their content.



Therefore it will take you only a minimum amount of time to maintain your website. Moreover you do not need advanced IT capacities to be able to maintain your site. Your own 'partner site', as we call it, can be edited and renewed by means of a very undemanding application. With a given set of fields you can easily create your own website, publish news items and information on events or upload documents. The first step consists in us creating the website. The rest is up to you. You receive an account that enables you to log on to the system. With the help of a manual and supported by the webmaster we will guide you through setting up your website. You can choose your own colours, fonts and images. You can also create personalised pages to introduce your organisation, your activities and the services you have to offer. You could for example inform your members about the next General Assembly, warn them of a crop disease that is spreading through the region or publish information about the progress of a project. Moreover, Agro-info is a meeting place to exchange information for and about producer organisations.

By having your own website you dispose of a space to spotlight your organisation and to facilitate the exchange of information. By doing so you help building an information platform for farmers worldwide.

Through the Internet you can surpass all physical borders and connect to someone at the other side of the world. We can help you to get online and offer you a site within Agro-info.net!

### What do you get?

- your own partner website
- a manual
- support from the webmaster

If you already have your own website, we also provide the option of adding content from Agro-info.net to your site. If you have more specific wishes we can also assist you in developing a site specifically for your organisation.

### Costs

The costs for this solution depend on several aspects, as country, size of your organisation, the scope of the project, the number of specific activities etc. Agriterra (your liaison officer) will work out these costs after consulting you. Agriterra can take care of the expenses if the implementation of the solution is agreed upon, but in many cases a counterpart contribution is expected.

### Contact information

In case you have a liaison officer at Agriterra, you can contact him or her for this Solution. Otherwise you can contact our advisory department by phone: +31-26-3542078, by fax: +31-26-4455978 or by email: [advisering@agriterra.org](mailto:advisering@agriterra.org).

The positive effect of Agro-info.net for our organisation is that it provides a forum where farmers can be heard and be empowered. We see this as an opportunity for farmers in rural areas to make an improved use of ICTs.

Through Agro-info.net we feel a bond with the rest of the world. We can now give prominence to KENFAPs activities and extend our reach.

Agro-info.net is a real asset to us, because we can use it as a tool for building the capacities of our farmers and empowering them to make informed choices.

We use the website in very many ways: we post our news on it, as well as documents - including magazines, books and journals - and we update the farmers on upcoming events.

Moreover the website contains the profiles of KENFAPs organisations and thus visitors can read who we are and what we do.

*Sylvia Mburugu, KENFAP (Kenya)*



## People's Participation Programme

*Dynamic membership makes strong organisations*

### Introduction

Many farmer's organisations face the challenge of how to involve their members at a local level. They also wish to increase their membership or to promote the social inclusion of women and youth, for example. If your organisation has these ambitions, participatory processes at a grassroots level can do the trick. Why? Because grassroots participation can contribute towards improving democratic processes, reinforcing membership and creating critical mass for lobbying and advocacy. An increased participation of your members leads to more empowerment and capacity, which in turn contribute to the realisation of the final objective of reducing poverty.

To achieve this, Agriterra offers producer organisations a helping hand by introducing the People's Participation Programme (PPP) approach: organising local farmers around economic initiatives within the institutional framework of farmer's organisations which already exist.

### The PPP approach

PPP was originally developed by the FAO, and was later adopted by Agriterra in the context of farmer's organisations. It entails identifying local groups and assisting them in promoting their own economic initiatives. We do this through building their capacities, thus enabling these groups to analyse both their economic and institutional environment and their economic activities within the 'safe' context of a farmer's organisation which provides the services that benefit these groups. One other core element of the approach is linking up individual farmer's groups with external services, such as credit and research.

Agriterra exclusively finances the capacity building component of PPP. In return, local groups must contribute with meaningful input. Stimulating group savings is one of the elements of the PPP approach: activities funded through 'own' resources are more sustainable.

The PPP approach has been widespread; Agriterra has had positive experiences and results in Nicaragua (with UNAG).

Also, an evaluation of a PPP project in the South of Sierra Leone highlighted the main accomplishment: "bringing new types of group formation to enable a traditional society to better cope with the potentially disruptive processes of modernization, politics and the market-economy" and "increased ability to organize and plan together and to develop leadership was emphasized by the beneficiary representatives as the main achievement of the project, before the more tangible items such as access to credit, which were also highly appreciated. Intervillage contacts, workshops, getting to know a different world and the fact that important government officials now came to their village, were mentioned as achievements in the sphere of social welfare and organization".

Trained group promoters make up the institutional component of PPP. Each one covers from 10 to 15 local groups and enjoys permanent coaching by a coordinator.

### For whom?

PPP particularly suits national organisations that have a clear structure down to the local level, and which clearly motivate the participation of their members.



## Advantages

Your organisation reflects who your members are. Thus, a strong membership base strengthens the organisation, thus enabling it to better protect the interests of its



members and offer them the services they need. Improved participation means members are eager to contribute to the performance of an organisation capable of carrying out bottom-up processes. Ownership and appropriation are thus guaranteed!

As a result, you will be seen, heard and respected by your partners because you speak through the voice of your members.

At the local level, PPP contributes to increasing incomes and strengthening the entrepreneurship of individual farmers.

## How to proceed?

If you are interested in PPP, please address a motivated request to us. If the request is considered eligible, a kick-off seminar will be organised. Realisation of a complete PPP project takes approximately three years.

In general, the programme follows various stages:

1. recruitment or selection of group promoters and coordinators by your organisation
2. kick-off seminar
3. intensive training of group promoters and coordinators
4. identification of local farmer groups
5. capacity building processes with, and amongst, local farmer groups focusing on saving, analysing the local environment and identifying potential economic activities
6. linking up: both inside your organisation as well as externally with strategic partners
7. consolidation

## Costs

The costs for this solution depend on several aspects, as country, size of your organisation, the scope of the project, the number of specific activities etc. Agriterra (your liaison officer) will work out these costs after consulting you. Agriterra can take care of the expenses if the implementation of the solution is agreed upon, but in many cases a counterpart contribution is expected.

## Contact information

In case you have a liaison officer at Agriterra, you can contact him or her for this Solution. Otherwise you can contact our advisory department by phone: +31-26-3542078, by fax: +31-26-4455978 or by email: [advisering@agriterra.org](mailto:advisering@agriterra.org).



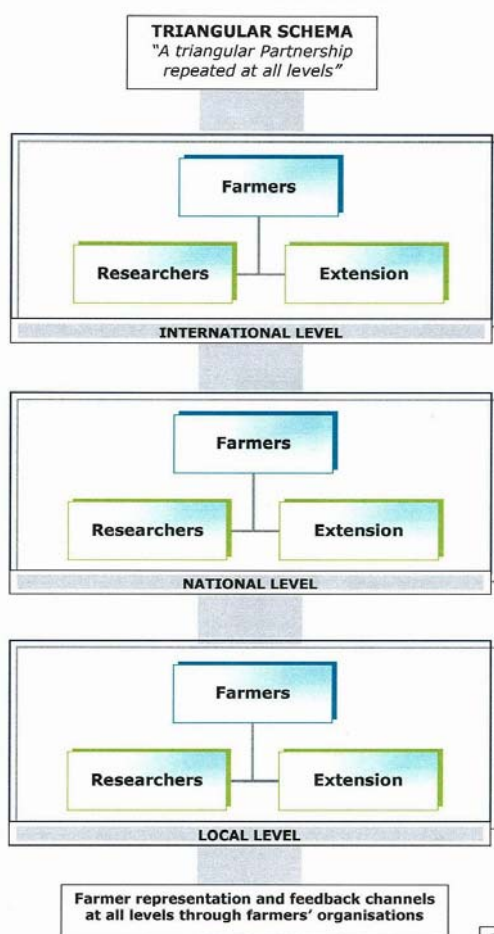
## Setting the research agenda

### Farmer-led agricultural research

Are you a rural member organisation (cooperative, farmers' organisation, rural women) and do you feel that agricultural research in your country is not addressing all issues that it should address? Are you of the opinion that research institutes are developing solutions and technical options that are not in line with the daily practice of farmers, or, perhaps worse, that are not taking into account the actual issues of farmers' reality or farmers' needs?

Would you like this to change? If so, please continue reading!

As the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) states in its policy paper *Negotiating linkages: farmers organisations, agricultural research and extension*: "The basis of sustainable agriculture is the dialogue and cooperation between farmers, researchers and extension agents. (...) Structural dialogue and working relations at all levels between farmers organizations and research institutes is key to this process."



### In the slipstream of IFAP's pioneering role

IFAP knew that farmers' institutional representation within research systems is not an easy thing to establish, and that, as a result, research agendas often do not reflect farmers' real needs, nor do research results reach farmers' fields. One of the main problems is the absence of institutionalized direct relationships between researchers and farmers at any level but the local one. Therefore, there is no or little influence of farmers on the setting of research agendas nor on the communication of research results. This Agriterra Solution aspires to help you establish structural linkages at all levels that make such influence possible (see figure).

### Why this Solution?

The key of this Solution is the way it looks at, and gives shape to agricultural research for development (ARD): as a supporting activity that is directed towards the real needs and priorities of your members! It consists of a sequence of interventions and training moments that focus on building linkages with research institutes and enhance the capacity of your staff and members to articulate their priorities and needs towards researchers.

We offer this Solution together with the International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture ICRA ([www.icra-edu.org](http://www.icra-edu.org)).



## How do we go about?

A project within this Solution will span approximately 5 months. There are three main phases:

### *Preparation*

- a) The farmers' organisation consults its members to prioritise and select practical problems/ constraints/opportunities that member-farmers want to address.
- b) Consultation on the selected problem/constraint/opportunity between your organisation and selected research institutions, resulting in a first outline of their potential contribution to solving the problem
- c) Deliberations between your organisation and research organisations to select other key actors that need to be involved in the research / co-innovation process.

### *Capacity-building*

- a) Three representatives of concerned farmers' organisations and three representatives of concerned research institutes will be selected, preferably one of every level: local, provincial/district, and national level. The six of them will make up the core team.
- b) An introductory course in Wageningen (the Netherlands): a team-building and ARD learning programme of 6-8 weeks for the core team, resulting in an action plan for tailor-made practice that the team will implement back home
- c) A tailor-made practice in the country of the core team, accompanied by (three missions of) ICRA staff, which will result in the design of a co-innovation process to address the identified problem / constraint / opportunity.

### *Mentoring support*

This is provided by ICRA to a farmer-led core team during the management and implementation of the innovation process.

### **Costs**

The costs for this Solution will depend on several factors like country, size of your organisation, the scope of the project, and number of specific activities. Agriterra (your liaison officer) will work out these costs after the first consultation with you. Agriterra may take care of the expenses if the implementation of the Solution is agreed upon, but in most cases a counterpart contribution will be expected.

### **Contact information**

In case you have a liaison officer at Agriterra, you may contact him or her for this Solution. Alternatively, you may contact our advisory department by phone: +31-26-3542078, by fax: +31-26-4455978 or by email: [advisering@agriterra.org](mailto:advisering@agriterra.org).

### **The potato farming system in Rwanda**

In Northern Rwanda, degeneration of germ-plasm, insufficient rotation and soil erosion threaten the potato farming system. Insufficient development of storage, packaging and other post-harvest techniques have led to a weak position of farmers in the commodity value chain. A team of ICRA trainees, composed of PO staff and researchers, made an in-depth analysis of farm management practices and of the potato value chain. They also made an inventory of the problems that farmers encounter and the technologies researchers propose.

During a subsequent seminar, facilitated by international potato specialists, farmers' organisations and researchers defined a joint action research agenda, as well as priorities for extension. Farmers' organisations are involved in field trials, farmer-to-farmer extension and seed multiplication. In the slipstream of this seminar, the national agricultural research institute (ISAR) and the national farmers network (ROPARWA) established a Memorandum of Understanding, addressing insecure land rights and limited access to credit and inputs as important obstacles to the adoption of innovations. To overcome them, collaboration with local government, credit institutions and private entrepreneurs is sought. Another priority is the empowerment of potato farmers in the potato value chain and the promotion of farmers' initiatives for value addition.



## Starting up a cooperative society

*The best way to increase farmer income*

### The question: unfulfilled farmers' aspirations

You are a farmers' organisation and you lobby for the interests of your farmers, who do their utmost best to make a decent living for their families and themselves. However, this is not easy. Farmers encounter many problems, from limited market access to unavailability of credit and high prices of inputs. They also might envisage business opportunities such as increasing the value of their product by some form of processing, something that more often than not requires more investment than they can afford individually.

You feel that your role as a farmers' organisation would gain in relevance and strategic importance if you helped these farmers to set up business initiatives that deal with these issues and enable them to increase their income and well-being.

Does the above ring a bell? Then you should continue reading!

### The answer: farmers' cooperative societies

In fact, what you (and we!) want to promote is the creation of 'farmer-controlled business initiatives', that is enterprises that are owned and controlled by the farmers themselves instead of by other stakeholders in the chain – who do not have the interests of the primary producers (your affiliates!) at heart.

#### Long ago and far away

In the early 20th century, in nearly every village in the Netherlands farmers created their own input supply cooperative, because by buying the inputs jointly farmers could get the farm inputs they needed for a lower price and with a guaranteed quality. Traders often cheated farmers by supplying sub-standard quality of fertiliser, realising that individual farmers were not able to control the quality.

In the village of Nieuw Helvoet, for example, farmers needed potash fertiliser with 40%  $K_2O$  for their potato crop. The farmer who was elected as secretary of the cooperative asked all of the members how much fertiliser they needed and then tendered among traders to ensure delivery of the quantity needed for a sufficiently low price. The members were informed at what time the boat with fertiliser would arrive in the harbour and were asked to come to collect and pay for their order. This made it impossible for the traders to earn extra money by cheating farmers.

To make our point more tangibly, we give an example – from long ago and far away, but the principles are as valid as ever.

You would like to do the same: to enable your members to set up their own enterprise, to take business into their own hands and not depend on price-setting, marketing channels, input prices, credit conditions etc. that are set by others. There are many ways in which this can be done; most well-known among them is the cooperative society.

#### How to do this?

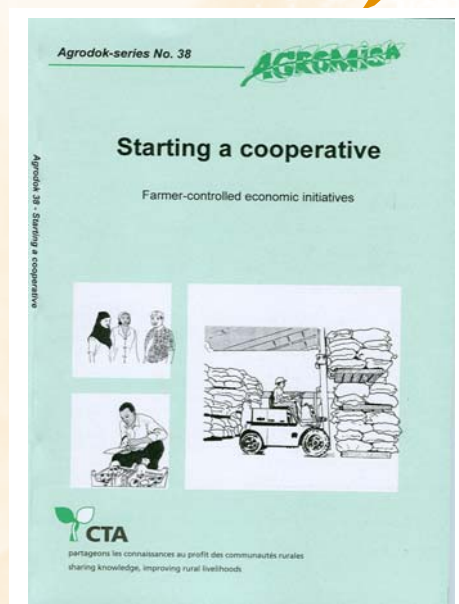
To create such a cooperative enterprise is, however, not a simple matter. You may feel that you could do with a set of tools and steps that makes that possible. We are glad to be able to offer you a toolbox that does precisely that.



The core of this toolbox is constituted by the booklet *Starting a cooperative*. In this publication the different steps needed to create such a cooperative are described in detail:

1. Developing the initiative
2. Building consensus
3. Establishing a steering committee
4. Feasibility study and member survey
5. Organisational design
6. Member commitment
7. Involving other stakeholders
8. Starting up the enterprise

But of course, our Solution amounts to more than sending you this booklet and wishing you success! In addition to more specific tools (such as a flow chart with key decision-making moments for go/ nogo choices), we can provide funding for the activities that are envisaged in most of these steps, and we will certainly offer advisory services in some of the phases, provided both by Agriterra personnel and of course by relevant experts from farmers' organisations and cooperatives. After all, what advice could be better than that which is provided by farmer and/or cooperative leaders who have gone exactly through this process and know its pitfalls and opportunities?



## So... why do this?

Perhaps you are still not sure whether this Solution is the one you and the farmers of your organisation need. Let us list the advantages.

For your organisation:

- increased experience in setting up business initiatives, which is of key strategic importance for the farmers and for your own relevance as representative organisation
- the possibility to generate future income for your organisation in the form of some participation (shares, etc.) in the new business.

For the members:

- more control of other phases in the chain than the mere primary production
- more net income (income – costs) at farm level

For society at large:

- development of the rural social and economic texture that is a pre-condition for sustainable well-being

So why hesitate any longer? Take your business into your own hands, and help the farmers in your organisation to take *their* business into *their* own hands!

## Costs

The costs for this solution depend on several aspects, as country, size of your organisation, the scope of the project, the number of specific activities etc. Agriterra (your liaison officer) will work out these costs after consulting you. Agriterra can take care of the expenses if the implementation of the solution is agreed upon, but in many cases a counterpart contribution is expected.

## Questions and proposals

In case you have a liaison officer at Agriterra, you can contact him or her for this Solution. Otherwise you can contact our advisory department by phone: +31-26-3542078, by fax: +31-26-4455978 or by email: [advisering@agrilterra.org](mailto:advisering@agrilterra.org).



## Let them come!

### *Farmer-led rural tourism*

You are part of a rural people's organisation (cooperative, farmers' organisation, rural women organisation, association of young farmers, etc.) and you want the rural economy to grow? Are you looking for new income-generating strategies? Do you think that rural areas in your country have something unique to offer to tourists? Are there branches of your organisation in those areas? If you can answer these four questions with "yes", then rural tourism might be an interesting business opportunity for your organisation.

### **Benefit from a growing sector**

Worldwide tourism is a fast growing industry, especially in developing countries. In 2010 tourism will represent over 11 percent of the world income and more than 250 million jobs. Thanks to increased interest in traveling to rural areas in developing countries, there lies a huge potential for rural people's organisations to obtain a significant market share in this sector. To benefit from this sector, your role as a rural people's organisation within rural tourism development can be twofold. First of all by raising awareness about rural tourism and its opportunities among your

members and providing sound services on tourism development. Secondly, through development of rural tourism infrastructure and services in cooperation with your members.

In addition to agriculture, rural tourism has the potential to enhance employment and stimulate economic diversification and local businesses in rural areas. Furthermore it has the power to conserve and promote rural qualities and local culture.

Rural tourism is something innovative and exiting, for tourists as well as for farmers and their organisations. It enables tourists to get a unique insight view in the daily life of farmers and farmers at their turn can share their way of life and earn some additional income. Rural tourism developed and owned by (regional chapters of) farmers organisations is still a relatively unknown way of business development in rural areas. The good news is that in the last few years several farmer-owned tourism companies have successfully been set up in countries like Ecuador, Brazil, Tanzania, Vietnam and Madagascar.

#### **Runa Tupari**

In 2002, the farmers' organisation UNORCAC set up the travel agency Runa Tupari with support by Agriterra. UNORCAC represents 42 rural communities in the north of Ecuador (Cotacachi region), implementing programmes in the field of extension, trade and processing, legal assistance and rural tourism: with Runa Tupari, the local population shares in the benefits of tourism. Smallholders have invested in building the guesthouses. This independent entrepreneurship is one of the success factors. The travel agency as well as the construction of the guesthouses meanwhile led to more employment and income for the rural people of the Cotacachi region.

In these countries tourists are invited to:

- participate in farmers' activities like planting rice or picking tea.
- enjoy the hospitality of a farmers' household by sharing a meal or staying overnight.
- experience guided tours and trekking in a rural setting.

### **Success factors**

The ingredients for a successful farmer-led tourism venture are first of all a strategic location, nearby a touristy honey pot or a tourist route.

Further essential ingredients are hospitable farmer households, a beautiful landscape, pleasant weather, interesting flora and fauna and a few acres of land.



In order to succeed, people involved should have a business mind-set and the initiative should be developed from a market perspective, preferably in cooperation with a tour operator.

This Solution aims to serve as a guide to support your organisation and the relevant regional or local branches through the process of starting a farmer-led tourism cooperative and to help to find your way and make your own choices in developing a successful enterprise. You are kindly invited to make use of the different tools developed especially for farmers' organisations with an ambition in rural tourism, such as:

- Quick scan tourism – What's in it for me?
- Business plan manual for tourism development
- Training course for guides



What is Agriterra offering you with this Solution?

- Clear guidelines for the whole development process, from identification of options to a tourism company reaching break-even point
- Provision of peer-to-peer advisory services
- Broker services between supply (your organisation) and demand (travel agencies)
- Access to a network of alike farmer-led tourism companies in different countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.
- Clear focus on tourism as a business
- Access to European market through the Dutch rural tourism website, to be launched at the beginning of 2008

## Costs

The costs for this solution depend on several aspects, as country, size of your organisation, the scope of the project, the number of specific activities etc. Agriterra (your liaison officer) will work out these costs after consulting you. Agriterra can take care of the expenses if the implementation of the solution is agreed upon, but in many cases a counterpart contribution is expected.

## Contact

In case you have a liaison officer at Agriterra, you can contact him or her for this Solution. Otherwise you can contact our advisory department by phone: +31-26-3542078, by fax: +31-26-4455978 or by email: [advisering@agrilterra.org](mailto:advisering@agrilterra.org).