

FINAL DRAFT

A GIZ Manual on:

Promoting Farmer Group Governance

Compiled by: Mutizwa Mukute

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Table of Contents

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	7
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	8
1.1 Background	8
1.2 Contexts that shape the manual	8
1.2.1 The international context	8
1.2.2 The Zimbabwean context	9
1.2.3 The GIZ Agricultural Input Supply Project in Zimbabwe	9
1.3 Objective of the manual	10
1.4 Scope of the manual	11
1.5 Process of developing the manual	12
1.6 Intended users of the manual	12
1.7 Organisation of the manual	13
1.8 How to use this manual	13
1.8.1 Content of training	14
1.8.2 Process of training	14
a. Before each training session	14
b. During each training session	14
1.8.3 Training methods	15
1.8.4 How to keep adult learners interested in a training session	15
1.8.5 Guidelines for a group promoter	16
SECTION 2: KEY IDEAS ON GROUP FUNCTIONALITY	17
2.1 The concept of a group and related terms	17
2.1.1 Group	17
2.1.2 A farmer group	17
2.1.3 Types of group interactions	17
2.1.4 Farmer group interactions	18
2.1.5 Features of a functional farmer group	19
2.1.6 Group size and functionality	19
2.2 Group development and associated leadership and group promoter roles	19
2.2.1 Forming	20

2.2.2 Storming	20
2.2.3 Norming	20
2.2.4 Performing	20
2.2.5 Transformation or Adjourning	21
2.3 Pattern of tasks in the different stages of group development	21
2.4 Group promoter's guidelines	21
SECTION 3: GOVERNANCE OF FARMER GROUPS	23
3.1 Introduction	23
3.1.1 Meaning of governance	23
3.1.2 Importance of good governance of farmer groups	24
3.2 Mechanisms for good governance	25
3.2.1 Principles of good governance	25
a. Inclusion and gender equity	25
b. Accountability and transparency	25
c. Rule of law	25
d. Participation and responsiveness	26
e. Effectiveness and efficiency	26
3.2.2 Group governance structures	26
a. The General Assembly or Annual General Meeting	27
b. The Management Committee	27
c. Sub-committees	28
d. Group members	28
3.2.3 Roles and responsibilities of some sub-committees	29
a. Duties of the Production Subcommittee	29
b. Duties of the Marketing Subcommittee	29
c. Duties of Group Auditors	29
3.2.4 Policies	30
a. The constitution	30
b. Financial bylaws	30
c. A code of conduct	31
3.2.5 Record keeping	31
3.3 Tools on governance	31
3.3.1 Structure-related tools	31
a. Guidelines for planning and holding meetings	31
b. Sample minutes of an Annual General Meeting	32
3.3.2 Tools on group policies	34
a. Framework of a group constitution	34
b. Sample Code of Conduct for the Management Committee	35
3.3.3 Record keeping tools	37

a.	Sample membership list	37
b.	Membership fee register	37
c.	A receipt book	38
d.	A cash book	38
e.	Bank book	39
f.	Financial folder	39
g.	A lockable cash box	39
3.4	Group promoter’s guidelines	39
SECTION 4:	LEADERSHIP	41
4.1	Introduction	41
4.1.1	Differences between leadership and management	41
4.1.2	Qualities of good leadership	41
4.1.3	Leadership roles	42
a.	Business or task-related roles	42
b.	Member or relationships-related roles	42
4.1.4	Leadership and power	42
4.2	Leadership styles	43
4.2.1	Group development and leadership styles	43
4.2.2	Four common leaderships styles	43
a.	Autocratic style	43
b.	Bureaucratic style	43
c.	Democratic style	44
d.	Laissez-faire	44
4.3	Guidelines for using the four leadership styles	44
4.4	Group promoters’ guidelines	45
SECTION 5:	STRATEGIC PLANNING	47
5.1	Introduction	47
5.1.1	Meaning of vision	47
5.1.2	Values	47
5.1.3	Mission statement	47
5.1.4	Goal	47
5.1.5	Strategic plan	48
5.2	Strategic planning as a leadership mechanism	48
5.2.1	Process to follow	49
5.3	Tools for strategic planning	49

5.3.1 Steps in developing a strategic plan	49
5.3.2 Strategic plan format	50
5.3.3 Sample Strategic Plan	51
5.4 Group promoter’s guidelines	53
SECTION 6: GROUP CONFLICT RESOLUTION METHODS AND MECHANISMS	55
6.1 Introduction	55
6.1.1 Definition and value of conflict	55
6.1.2 Forms of conflict	55
6.1.3 Sources of conflict in farmer groups	55
6.1.4 Effects of conflicts	56
6.2 Approaches of dealing with resolving conflicts	57
6.2.1 Avoidance	57
6.2.2 Accommodation	57
6.2.3 Compromise	57
6.2.4 Competition	57
6.2.5 Collaboration	58
6.2.6 Elimination	58
6.3 Tools for analysing and resolving group conflicts	58
6.3.1 Problem tree analysis	58
6.3.2 Collaborative negotiation	59
6.4 Group promoter’s guidelines	60
SECTION 7: BUILDING EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS	62
7.1 Introduction	62
7.2 Relationship building mechanisms	62
7.2.1 Bridging	62
7.2.2 Linking	63
7.3 Tools for building relationships	63
7.3.1 Negotiation	63
a. Instances when direct negotiation is ideal	64
b. Possible outcomes of negotiations	64
c. Guidelines for achieving win-win outcomes	64
d. Tips for reaching win-win outcomes	65
7.3.2 Facilitation	65
7.3.3 Mediation	66
7.3.4 Lobbying	66

a.	Main qualities of good lobbying statements	67
b.	Basic structure of a lobbying statement	67
c.	Guidelines on meetings with people you seek to lobby	67
7.4	Group promoter’s guidelines	68
	SECTION 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATION	70
8.1	Introduction	70
8.1.1	Meaning of monitoring and evaluation	70
8.1.2	Purpose of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation	71
8.2	Monitoring and evaluation methods	71
8.2.1	Sources of monitoring and evaluation information	71
8.2.2	Data generation methods	71
a.	Quantitative data	72
b.	Qualitative data	72
8.3	Monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines	72
8.3.1	Data generation techniques to establish group functionality and performance	72
8.3.2	Seasonal calendar	73
8.3.3	Group functionality monitoring and evaluation form	73
8.3.4	Guidelines for participatory monitoring and evaluation	75
8.3.5	Guidelines for evaluating impact using stories of change	75
8.3.6	Guidelines on what the group promoter may monitor	76
8.4	Group promoter’s guidelines	76
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	78

Acronyms and abbreviations

AEW	Agricultural Extension Workers
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AGRITEX	Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services
AISP	Agricultural Input Supply Project
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EA	Environment Africa
ESAFF	Eastern and Southern African Small Scale Farmers' Forum
FACT	Family Aids Caring Trust
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FCTZ	Farm Community Trust Zimbabwe
GIZ	Germany Agency for International Cooperation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
LPD	Department of Livestock Production and Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OD	Organisational Development
PILLARS	Partners in Local Language Resources
PPP	People's Participation Programme
SNV	Netherlands Development Services
SWOT	Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats
TOT	Train of Trainer
TTT	Technical Training Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VSCSs	Village Savings and Credit Schemes
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers' Union

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

This manual was compiled to contribute to the development of 1,000 functional farmer groups that are participating in the Germany Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) project in Zimbabwe. The project is being implemented in two provinces, namely, Manicaland and Masvingo. GIZ works with and through the Agricultural Training and Technical Extension (AGRITEX) Department whose Agricultural Extension Workers (AEWs) serve as group promoters.

Group promoters, who are also sometimes called group facilitators, support the development of farmer groups through providing advice, training and linkages; and monitoring the same. More specifically, group promoters:

- *Advise* farmer groups on how to get started, plan, organise, lead, govern, manage and profit from working together;
- *Train* farmers in areas such as: crop and livestock production, land management, agro-processing, marketing, financial management and group organisation; and
- *Link* farmer groups with other development actors such as government departments, service providers and the private sector.

A farmer group is a team of farmers who work together towards a common goal. Such a goal is often about agricultural production, adding value to produce, land management or marketing.

1.2 Contexts that shape the manual

Three main contexts shape this manual: international, national (Zimbabwe) and GIZ. GIZ shaped the manual because it was developed at their request. Below is a summary of the main actors and ideas that shaped the manual.

1.2.1 The international context

The international organisations whose experiences and insights inform this manual include the following:

- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO);
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD);
- Netherlands Development Services (SNV);
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS);

- International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI); and
- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

All these acknowledge and promote farmer organisations as vehicles for developing rural economies and improving farmer livelihoods.

1.2.2 The Zimbabwean context

In Zimbabwe, farmers have historically formed groups to meet social and economic needs. For example, they practised *nhimbe* to lessen labour demands in tilling land. Others practised *Zunde RaMambo* to produce crops as public goods on land set aside for that purpose under the chief's custody. More recently, the government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and donors have been promoting farmer groups for social and economic development. The different types of farmer groups that have been promoted in Zimbabwe include:

- Farmer associations;
- Farmers' unions;
- Farmer field schools;
- Agricultural cooperatives;
- Producer and commodity groups; and
- Savings and credit schemes.

The farmer groups have faced many challenges, which include the lack of good leadership, poor structures, governance systems and performance. This has created the need for building the capacity of farmer groups to run their affairs effectively.

1.2.3 The GIZ Agricultural Input Supply Project in Zimbabwe

GIZ's focus on farmer groups in Zimbabwe began in 2009, when it initiated the Agricultural Input Supply Project (AISP) in Manicaland Province. Since then, there have been three phases of the project, which can be summarised as follows:

- a. AISP-I: Worked through farmer groups to provide agricultural inputs. This can be likened to providing fish.
- b. AISP-II: Worked through farmer groups to provide agricultural inputs and AGRITEX to provide technical skills. This can be likened to providing fish and teaching how to fish.
- c. AISP-III: This is the current phase in which the manual has been developed. It focuses on supporting the development farmer groups so that they function effectively and lay the foundation for creating social and economic benefits for their members. The group development approach can be likened to teaching farmers about how to farm fish.

Under the current Training of Trainer (TOT) approach:

- i. The GIZ Technical Training Team (TTT) on Group Development facilitates the training of AGRITEX personnel on farmer group development;
- ii. AGRITEX personnel, especially the AEWs, then train farmer groups on group development; and
- iii. The farmer groups develop their capacities to function as groups, to work with others and to produce and market at a profit.

The TOT approach is intended to create a multiplier effect. This means that the training will reach a high number of farmers than if the trainers directly taught farmers.

The focus of this manual – governance of farmer groups – was determined by a needs identification study that was conducted by GIZ in Manicaland and Masvingo provinces in early 2014. The needs were clustered around four main areas (Figure 1.1):

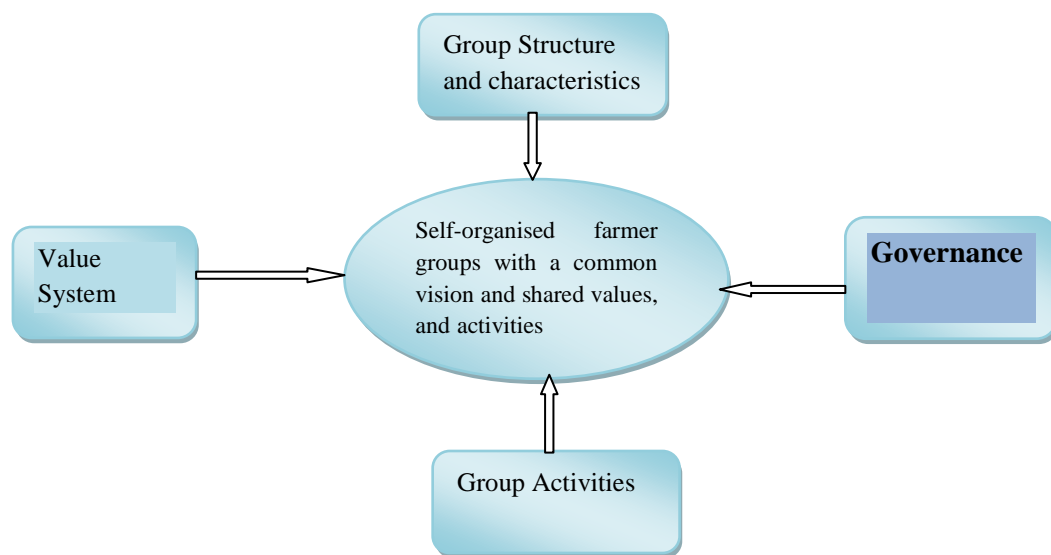


Figure 1.1: AISP Framework for Group Development

The manual on Group Structure has already been developed.

1.3 Objective of the manual

The specific objective of developing this manual is:

To develop appropriate mechanisms, tools, approaches and methods that can be institutionalised by groups and assist them to enhance functionality, as well as develop appropriate methods to monitor these approaches and their impact on group functionality.

The objective is based on the knowledge that functional farmer groups have the following benefits:

- Positive, productive and collaborative interpersonal relationships;
- Access to credit, information, training, advisory services and markets;
- Cheaper procurement of inputs and marketing of produce arising from reduced operational costs, bulk buying and selling;
- Cross-learning through sharing experiences;
- Increased opportunities for participating in developmental initiatives;
- Capacity to manage local resources sustainably, effectively and profitably; and
- Capacity to speak for themselves and influence relevant policy.

The manual is intended to contribute towards the achievement of the GIZ AISP-III goal, which is: *“self-organised farmer groups with a common vision and shared values, and activities supporting its growth and sustainability.”*

The project output that the manual directly addresses is building the capacity of training and extension personnel involved in farmer group development in six districts of Manicaland and Masvingo provinces.

1.4 Scope of the manual

GIZ defined the scope of this manual by identifying the topics that the manual must cover and these are:

- Systems for the management and structure of groups that will assist them to enhance their functionality according to their needs;
- Mechanisms and methods that will assist groups to resolve conflict in a transparent and fair way;
- Mechanisms to allow members to enforce their rights and understand their respective responsibilities within the group;
- Strategic planning tool that will assist groups in the visioning process as well as periodic goal setting and operational planning;
- Mechanisms to foster transparency and accountability within the group structures;
- Tools or methods that can be institutionalised by groups to monitor and evaluate group activities;
- Mechanisms that will assist groups in fostering appropriate leadership styles; and
- Tools that will assist group to map strategies for building relationships with external stakeholders, including lobbying, negotiation and creating win-win situations.

The manual uses the term:

- **Mechanism** to refer to group principles, policies, structures; roles, rights and obligations; procedures, processes and methods; and
- **Tools** to refer to sub-mechanisms such as guidelines, illustrations and examples that can be used to support group functionality.

1.5 Process of developing the manual

The process of developing this manual involved obtaining input from several sources:

- a. Written work on farmer group governance from various sources, including GIZ, FAO, UNDP and IFAD;
- b. GIZ TTT that provided guidelines and commented on the draft manual;
- c. Four farmer groups in Manicaland province who were interviewed to get a sense of farmer group needs and realities in relation to group governance;
- d. Five AGRITEX group promoters who were interviewed to get a sense of group promoter training needs on farmer group governance;
- e. Two members of the TTT provided feedback on the draft manual;
- f. Thirty-three (33) participants pretested the manual during a 2-day workshop. They comprised:
 - Eighteen (18) farmer leaders from the AISP and Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU),
 - Nine (9) group promoters from AGRITEX and the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise and Cooperatives Development;
 - Five (5) TOTs from AGRITEX, Department of Livestock Production (LPD), Environment Africa (EA), Family Aids Caring Trust (FACT) and Farm Community Trust Zimbabwe (FTCZ);
 - One (1) GIZ member of the TTT; and
- g. A post pretesting meeting with one GIZ member of the TTT and 3 Trainers from partner organisation.

1.6 Intended users of the manual

- a. The intended primary users of this manual are AEWs who work as group promoters in the GIZ AISP-III project that is being implemented in Manicaland and Masvingo provinces.
- b. The secondary users of the manual are members of the GIZ Technical Training Team (TTT), AGRITEX and GIZ development partners who facilitate the training of AEWs in group development.
- c. The ultimate beneficiaries are the targeted 1,000 farmer groups that will be trained in governance to improve their functionality and performance.
- d. Other organisations involved in farmer group development should also find this manual useful and apply it in their respective contexts.

1.7 Organisation of the manual

The manual is organised into eight (8) sections as follows:

- *Introduction*: Gives the background, objectives, scope and processes of developing the manual;
- *Key Ideas on Group Development*: Discusses the main concepts on group functionality, with emphasis on farmer groups;
- *Good Governance of Farmer Groups*: Discusses meaning, importance and principles of good governance, governance structures, roles, mechanisms and tools and suggests ways of training farmer groups on governance;
- *Leadership*: Discusses meaning of leadership and management, leadership styles and qualities, and guidelines for using four leadership styles;
- *Strategic Planning*: Discusses the visioning concepts and processes as well as the strategic planning process. It also suggests an easy-to-use strategic planning format;
- *Group Conflict Resolution Methods and Mechanisms*: Discusses meaning and value of conflicts, how conflicts arise, mechanisms and tools for addressing them as well as how group promoters can build the capacity of farmer groups to minimise negative conflict and tackle both negative and positive conflict when it arises;
- *Building External Relationships*: Discusses mechanisms and tools for establishing synergy with external stakeholders, including creating win-win outcomes, mediation, facilitation and lobbying; and
- *Monitoring and Evaluation*: Discusses meanings and value of monitoring and evaluation, how a farmer group may monitor and evaluate its functionality and performance over time, and tools that can be used to support this.

The last six sections specifically address group governance capacity needs that GIZ identified among the ultimate project beneficiaries – farmer groups – in early 2014. Each of these six sections primarily focuses on the *how to*.

1.8 How to use this manual

The manual is divided into eight sections. The first two sections provide background information that is necessary for the group promoter to know. A group promoter must read all Sections of the Manual.

Farmer groups on the other hand:

- Must be taught materials covered in Sections 3 to 8; and
- Should be made aware of some of the background information in Sections 1 and 2. Section 1 covers matters that are *nice to know* for farmer groups. Section 2 covers topics that farmer groups *should know* in terms of group functionality.

Sections 3 to 8 can be further divided into learning units at the discretion of the group promoter. The scope of each unit should be based on several factors including the:

- Extent to which it is difficult to teach or learn;
- Group's prior knowledge on the topics; and
- Amount of time set aside to cover the unit.

Below are general guidelines on planning and implementing each session.

1.8.1 Content of training

Sections 3-8 are divided into four sections each. The first three sub-sections cover the content of what group promoters are urged to train farmers on. Each first subsection (e.g. 3.1), covers definitions or explanations of main concepts. The second subsection (e.g. 4.2) covers mechanisms, strategies or processes, while the third subsection (e.g. 6.3) covers tools, examples and illustrations. The difference between mechanisms and strategies on one hand and tools on the other is that the former are broader and the latter are more specific.

1.8.2 Process of training

The process of training is covered under the fourth subsection of each section (e.g. 7.4). The subsection suggests how the group promoter could train the farmer group on the topics covered in that section. In order to avoid repetition, below are general guidelines on how to prepare for and facilitate each session.

a. Before each training session

- Prepare the necessary materials in advance, including reading the relevant sections;
- Prepare a schedule of the training; and
- Prepare a simple evaluation system that will identify what has been learnt, what has been useful and what participants did not like or understand. Use the evaluation to identify areas needing further training.

b. During each training session

- Set the appropriate climate for learning by organising the materials, sitting arrangement and starting on time;
- Present the objectives of the unit and link them to the previous unit;
- Inform the participants about what they will do to achieve the unit objectives;
- Initiate the learning experience by making a presentation followed by a participatory activity or vice versa;
- Reflect on the learning experience from the presentation and participatory activity through guided discussions;
- Discuss lessons learnt from the learning experience and discussions;

- Look into the future and guide participants to share how they would apply lessons learnt in real life situations or in their groups;
- Also discuss the challenges that they might face in applying the lessons in real life situations;
- Let participants evaluate the learning session (formally or informally);
- Summarise the learning session and connect it with the broad intention of group functionality; and
- Give handouts at the end of each session, if possible.

1.8.3 Training methods

The recommended training methods for working with this manual are interactive, participatory and practice-based. This is consistent with adult learning. A rich mix of training methods is necessary in order to suit the nature of the topic being learnt and keep learners interested. The methods should include lecturing. The interactive training methods include and are not limited to:

- Brainstorming;
- Group discussions;
- Case studies;
- Role plays;
- Games;
- Debates;
- Practical exercises; and
- Take-home assignments involving real-life issues.

1.8.4 How to keep adult learners interested in a training session

Group promoters should use a range of methods to maintain farmers' interest during a training session:

- Use energisers and ice-breakers;
- Draw on local wisdom such as proverbs;
- Appeal to their sense of seeing by visualizing the training using the black board and chalk; flipcharts, cards and markers; and
- By involving them in learning activities suggested above.

Field visits and look and learn visits can be used to augment 'classroom' based learning. While training is important for acquiring knowledge and skills, visits are important for changing attitudes and developing a sense of 'we can do it too'.

1.8.5 Guidelines for a group promoter

Some of the main guidelines for the group promoter are:

- Be prepared ahead of the training session;
- Develop flexible plans;
- Address the issues and needs of the group;
- Start from where the group members are in terms of what they know;
- Acknowledge and build on the knowledge of the group;
- Allow time for a genuine exchange of knowledge and ideas during training sessions;
- Strike a balance between giving knowledge and seeking contributions from the group;
- Encourage dialogue and joint learning;
- Be humorous while at the same time being sensitive to people's issues and feelings;
- Create an environment that is good for group learning. This may include setting ground rules (e.g. participation, punctuality, mutual respect and discipline); and
- Serve group members' interests to create social and economic value.

Section 2: Key ideas on group functionality

This section identifies the main ideas on group and group functionality, including group development. It starts by examining groups in general before specifically focusing on farmer groups.

2.1 The concept of a group and related terms

The concept of a group is central in this manual; and so are associated concepts such as group interactions, group dynamics and group functionality. Group promoters should find these concepts as an important foundation to perform their work. This is why the concepts are explained below.

2.1.1 Group

- A group is made up of people who come together to achieve a common goal based on the knowledge that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts;
- Groups take time and effort to function well and produce benefits for their members;
- Generally, it takes between three and five years for a group to generate meaningful benefits for its members; and
- Groups are like living things; they go through a life cycle.

2.1.2 A farmer group

A farmer group is a voluntary self-help group composed of farmers from the same village or community who come together to undertake mutually beneficial activities concerning their economic and social well-being. Such farmer groups tend to benefit from collective self-help capacities, negotiating and marketing power. A successful farmer group is one that persistently produces a stream of benefits for its members while at the same time retaining the capacity for self-management and productively relating with other stakeholders.

2.1.3 Types of group interactions

Two types of group interaction have been identified and are explained below:

- Task interaction is concerned with *doing with others*. It involves the coordination of knowledge, skills, motivations and resources to make decisions, generate products and achieve project goals.
- Relationship interaction is concerned with *being with others*, building interpersonal bonds in the group. Group cohesion is one of the main features of a functional group. This takes place when there is bonding among group members who coordinate their efforts and unite to achieve goals.

2.1.4 Farmer group interactions

FAO identifies three kinds of interactions among farmers: bonding, bridging and linking (Figure 2.1).

- Bonding refers to relationships between farmers in the same group;
- Bridging refers to relationships between farmers in different but interacting farmer groups; and
- Linking refers to relationships between farmers and other stakeholder groups such as service providers, government and the private sector.

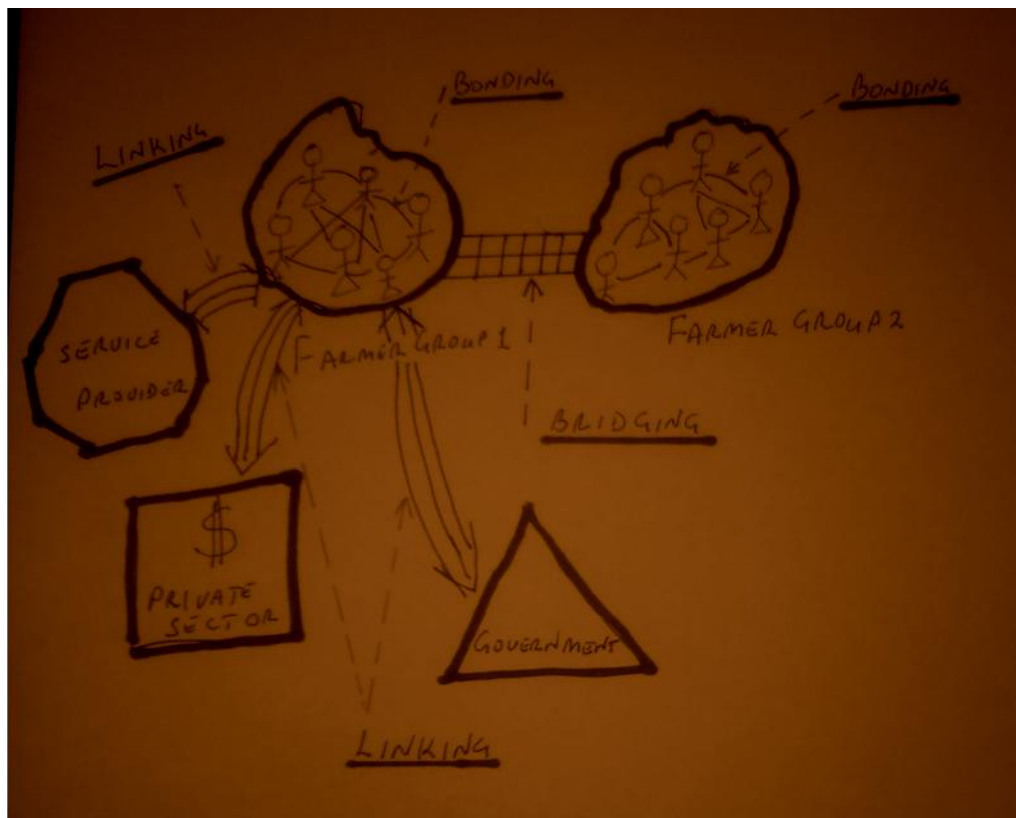


Figure 2.1: Illustrations of bonding, bridging and linking

This manual's section on building external relationships (Section 7) is concerned with bridging and linking.

2.1.5 Features of a functional farmer group

The following are some of the main features of a functional farmer group:

- *Common interest and goal:* Members have a common interest, clear goal, objectives and action plans;
- *Clear division of roles and responsibilities:* The group has a constitution, which defines the purpose and rules to be observed by its member, including rights and duties. The group has by-laws that defines how the affairs of the group are run;
- *Accountability of office bearers:* The group keeps proper records for transparency and accountability;
- *Decision-making:* members participate in decision making;
- *Planning:* The group carries out necessary situational analyses, strategic, annual and business planning;
- *Group ownership:* Members make financial and material contributions to the group thereby building a sense of ownership;
- *Mutual trust:* Members are honest to each other and work hard to achieve their objectives;
- *Leadership:* Members elect good leaders who keep the group together. The leadership is strong and participatory and able to negotiate and manage conflicts; and
- *Bridging and linking:* The group is well connected to other farmer groups as well as linked to service providers, government regulators and the business sector.

2.1.6 Group size and functionality

The right size of a farmer group depends on its purpose and activities. Experience in the agricultural sector suggests that the ideal number of members in a farmer group tends to range from 20-30. In general, smaller groups find it easier to pay attention to individual member needs, cooperation and participation; and are easier to coordinate and motivate; and communication is less centralised than in larger groups. Similarly, FAO notes that groups of less than 20 members usually work better and have fewer formalities because members get to know and trust each other. Larger groups on the other hand tend to increase coordination costs and create management inefficiencies. However, there are instances when larger groups have more benefits such as in pooling together resources.

2.2 Group development and associated leadership and group promoter roles

There are several group development models but the one that appears to be widely used was developed by Tuckman. The model suggests that a group goes through five stages of development, which are associated with changes in maturity, performance and relationships among members; and relationships between the group and others. The stages are discussed below.

2.2.1 Forming

Forming is concerned with the coming together of individuals who all become ‘new’ members in a newly formed group. At this stage, members are interested to know if they will be accepted by others, and their role in the group. The direction, roles and responsibilities of members are unclear. Members therefore seek direction from their leader. This results in dependence on the leader, who in turn tends to tell members what to do. Members tend to look up to the leader and the facilitator. The role of the group promoter tends to be to point the way forward, mention that what is happening is normal, share experiences from the past, including successful ones.

2.2.2 Storming

Storming is characterised by competition and conflict among members in relation to the allocation of roles, responsibilities and tasks. This happens when they become comfortable enough to express their real feelings and values. Power struggles may result in the formation of factions and cliques. If new members join at this stage of group development, they are likely to delay the group to move to the next stage because of prolonged conflict and changes in relationships among members. The leadership style often has to change in response to these developments – from telling/directing to persuading, coaching and ‘selling’. Compromises often need to be made in order to be able to progress to the next stage. At this stage the group promoter should focus on peace-making and reminding the group to listen and respond to every members’ views. The group promoter should also find ways to ‘expand’ the leaders’ confidence.

2.2.3 Norming

Norming is characterised by the development of group cohesiveness, clear and accepted roles, responsibilities, standards and norms. Much of the resistance from the storming stage is overcome. Members acquire a sense of “we have made it” and feel the need to continue working together as a group. The group becomes goal-directed and task oriented. Some of the decision-making is made by individual members and sub-groups to whom such responsibility has been delegated. Such sub-groups or committees could be on: Production; Input procurement; Learning and Networking; and Marketing. This means that leadership is shared in the group and the formal leader becomes a facilitator – an enabler. The leadership style becomes participatory. The arrival of new members at this stage is likely to cause the group to temporarily revert to the storming stage. The main focus of the group promoter is to help the group to develop its governance and leadership capacities. This is the main interest of this manual.

2.2.4 Performing

The group achieves high cohesion and adopts norms that encourage high performance and productivity. It becomes a functional team that operates strategically, having become clear about what needs to be done and why. The group becomes confident enough to seek out and resolve conflicts before they become harmful. The focus is on the achievement of goals using the agreed systems, procedures and criteria. The need for consulting the formal leader diminishes

significantly because there is a strong buy-in and ownership of the organisational vision and systems. Good interpersonal relations create synergies in the performance of tasks resulting in high performance. The leader delegates and provides personal and interpersonal assistance at the request of group members. The arrival of new members at this stage is likely to be disruptive, reducing the team's cohesiveness and effectiveness in terms of interpersonal relationships and task performance. Experiences in other sectors (outside agriculture) in Zimbabwe suggest that new members may be treated as outsiders or naïve – *mafikezolos*. At this stage, group promoters help the group to think big, widen its horizon. Bridging and linking may help the group to expand and renew itself.

2.2.5 Transformation or Adjourning

Transformation happens when the group changes its mission or reason for existence. An example is shifting from farmer field schools to production and marketing of agricultural produce. Adjourning is the 'death' of a group. This stage may also be reached as a result of conflicts, poor resource management or member dissatisfaction with leadership and governance. The arrival of new powerful members who hijack the group's project can also lead to adjourning (disintegration) of the group. Other reasons may be external to the group such as interference from politicians, service providers or government. The role of the leader is to establish the possibility of transforming the group. The group promoter may help the group to understand where it has arrived, how it got there and what can be done about it.

2.3 Pattern of tasks in the different stages of group development

It is important to remember that farmer groups take time to develop before they may mature. The timeframe for reaching maturity (performance) is roughly five years. The following pattern of tasks has been identified as a group develops along the maturity cycle:

- Generating ideas, plans and goals to address problems and tap into opportunities;
- Choosing and agreeing on alternatives, including goals and plans;
- Resolving conflict that may arise from role allocation (including power and leadership), different viewpoints and interests; and
- Performing actions to achieve group goals together while at the same time maintaining group cohesion.

This manual is designed to cover the transition from the storming stage to the norming stage, the norming stage itself and the transition to the performing stage. Most of the 1,000 farmer groups targeted by the project are about three years old.

2.4 Group promoter's guidelines

Below are recommended guidelines for the group promoter who finds it necessary to train groups on topics covered in this section. These cover training/learning objectives, number of training sessions and facilitation methods.

a. *Objectives:* The objectives of training are to help farmer groups to understand and apply the key concepts on groups and group development.

b. *Training sessions:* Two training sessions are recommended.

Session	Suggested topics
1	Groups, farmer groups, group interaction and dynamics, features of a functional farmer group, group size and functionality.
2	Group development model and its relevance to small farmer groups.
3	Use of the group develop model to establish explanations for the group's behaviour and performance.

c. *Suggested facilitation methods:* For the first session, use group discussions and presentations; and a presentation of the above training material by the group promoter. For the second session, make a presentation of the five stages of group development, allow for a question and answer session and then use case studies. The third session could focus on helping the group members to reflect on their group's history, progress and obstacles. It could be concluded by the development of a plan of action to address issues that may need attention. Below is a suggestion on how the third session could be conducted.

Sample session: Applying the group development model

- Ask participants to recap the first four stages of organisational development.
- Let them form groups of five people or so.
- Assign each group to:
 - Develop or draw an image that corresponds with each stage;
 - Describe events of its history of development from formation to its current stage;
 - List major achievements at each stage of development;
 - Identify key group challenges that were addressed;
 - Identify key group challenges that need to be addressed in the near future; and
- Hold a plenary session in which each group presents its results.
- Synthesize the results and let the group develop strategies on addressing the identified challenges.

Section 3: Governance of farmer groups

3.1 Introduction

This section discusses the meaning of governance, describes its principles, explains its importance, outlines the main mechanisms and tools for governing farmer groups. It concludes by suggesting activities for a group promoter. Group promoters and leaders need to acquire and read the relevant laws that govern groups to guide them in playing their roles effectively and within the laws of the country. Currently, the Cooperatives Act of 2005 of Zimbabwe provides the law that governs group formation and registration. This is now under the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development. The Ministry's mission is to "create and maintain an enabling environment that promotes vibrant, micro, small and medium enterprises and cooperatives". These include group-based enterprises such as those of farmer groups.

3.1.1 Meaning of governance

The UNDP notes that governance is a system of values, policies and institutes by which society manages its economic, social and political affairs. It exists at family, group, village, ward, district, provincial, national and international levels. Governance covers:

- Processes of making and implementing decisions;
- Mechanisms by which citizens and groups articulate their interests and address their differences;
- Values and principles, structures and power distribution in a group;
- Leadership and the exercise of power; and
- Rights and duties of members and decision-making processes.

Participants of this Governance Manual Pretesting workshop identified the following as elements of governance (Figure 3.1).

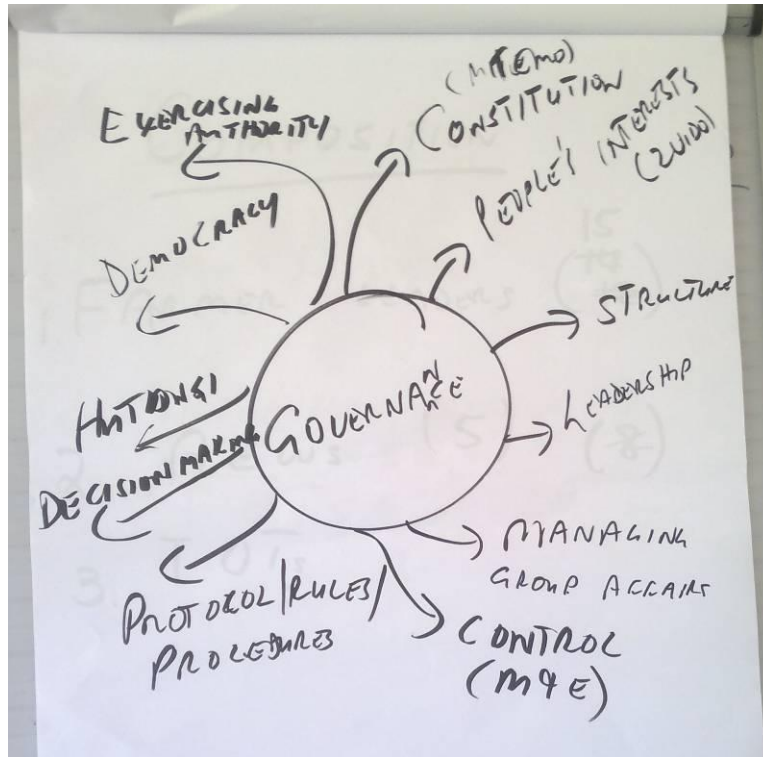


Figure 3.1: Key elements of governance identified by participants of this Governance Manual's Pretesting Workshop

3.1.2 Importance of good governance of farmer groups

Good governance enables farmer groups to function well. Group functionality is achieved when the group achieves self-reliance, shared responsibility, democracy, equity and equality, unity and effectiveness. Some of the specific results of good governance in farmer groups are:

- *Democratic farmer control:* Members actively make policies and decisions concerning their group, which results in bonding. Leaders are elected by group members and are accountable to the whole body of members;
- *Economic participation:* Farmer members equitably contribute to and democratically control the resources of their group;
- *Bridging:* Farmer groups strengthen their ability to act together to meet their interests by joining other farmer groups; and
- *Linking:* As independent self-help organisations, farmer groups enter into agreements with other development actors such as government and business companies on terms that preserve their independence and in the common interest of their members. This results in linkages that help the farmer groups to achieve their social and economic goals.

3.2 Mechanisms for good governance

There are several mechanisms that can be used to achieve group good governance. These range from principles, to policies such as the constitution and by-laws, structures and systems. Below are descriptions of each of these key mechanisms for group governance.

Good governance principles, mechanisms and tools are intended to increase accountability, transparency and performance of farmer groups.

3.2.1 Principles of good governance

Good governance principles provide a broad framework of how good governance can be achieved. While it is important for farmer groups to develop their own set of principles, it is necessary to share those that are in use elsewhere. These can serve as a guide. The commonly used principles of good governance in farmer groups are: inclusion and gender equity, accountability and transparency, ‘rule of law’, and participation and responsiveness.

a. Inclusion and gender equity

This inclusion principle seeks to ensure that different groups of people such as men and women, boys and girls, the young and the old, the poor and the disabled are not unduly excluded from or marginalised in groups. Gender equity encourages fairness in process and equality in outcomes for both men and women based on recognition of their differences.

b. Accountability and transparency

Transparency and accountability are interrelated.

- Accountability means to be answerable and responsible for one’s actions and decisions.
- Transparency is concerned with the ease with which members can access information and decisions.

Accountability and transparency are enhanced by the following:

- A constitution and associated by-laws for checks and balances;
- A code of conduct that guides group behaviour;
- Members exercising their rights and meeting their obligations;
- Monitoring and evaluation of activities and financial resources;
- Good record making and keeping, covering both financial and narrative information;
- Appropriate and adequate channels of information communication; and
- Sharing the information between and among members.

c. Rule of law

There are two main layers of the rule of law: one is internal to the farmer group and exists in the form of its constitutions and policies or by-laws. The other is external and concerned with national legislation that governs farmer organisations. Every member needs to be informed of

his/her duties, responsibilities and rights in connection with national and group laws. This will enable the group members to perform their duties and exercise their rights.

d. Participation and responsiveness

Participation refers to the active involvement of members in decision-making processes of their group as well as in its activities. Responsiveness refers to being aware of the needs and expectations of fellow members and responding sensitively and appropriately to them. Participation and responsiveness can be achieved through the following actions:

- Setting the date, place and time of a meeting and communicating it in good time to encourage member attendance;
- Having and using a clear mechanism for members to propose items for the agenda;
- Sharing a clear and detailed proposed agenda that allows members to understand what is to be discussed ahead of the meeting;
- Using suitable language and words in the meeting and associated minutes; and
- Establishing and using channels for receiving complaints and suggestions on the governance and performance of the group.

e. Effectiveness and efficiency

Effectiveness is about achieving planned objectives and activities. Efficiency focuses on the most economical use of material, financial and human resources to achieve the objectives of a group. Effectiveness is enhanced through the active participation of members in the affairs of the group. Developing, implementing and monitoring strategic, annual and business plans will also increase group effectiveness. Efficiency is increased through lowering transaction costs through pulling together resources; proper and transparent management of resources; and developing and applying time and financial management skills.

3.2.2 Group governance structures

The Zimbabwe Cooperative Act of 2005 provides for the establishment of the main group governance structures. A group's structure describes how governance, leadership and management roles, responsibilities and power are distributed, aligned and coordinated. This clarifies where decisions are made and who is accountable to whom. The structure depends on the group size and purpose. The minimum structure of small farmer groups that are of concern to this manual includes: a General Assembly; a Management Committee; Sub-Committees; and Members. Their respective roles and responsibilities are discussed below.

Below is a basic structure of a farmer group (Figure 3.2). The arrows show the direction of reporting. For example, sub-committees report to the Management Committee. The Management Committee reports to the Annual General Meeting.

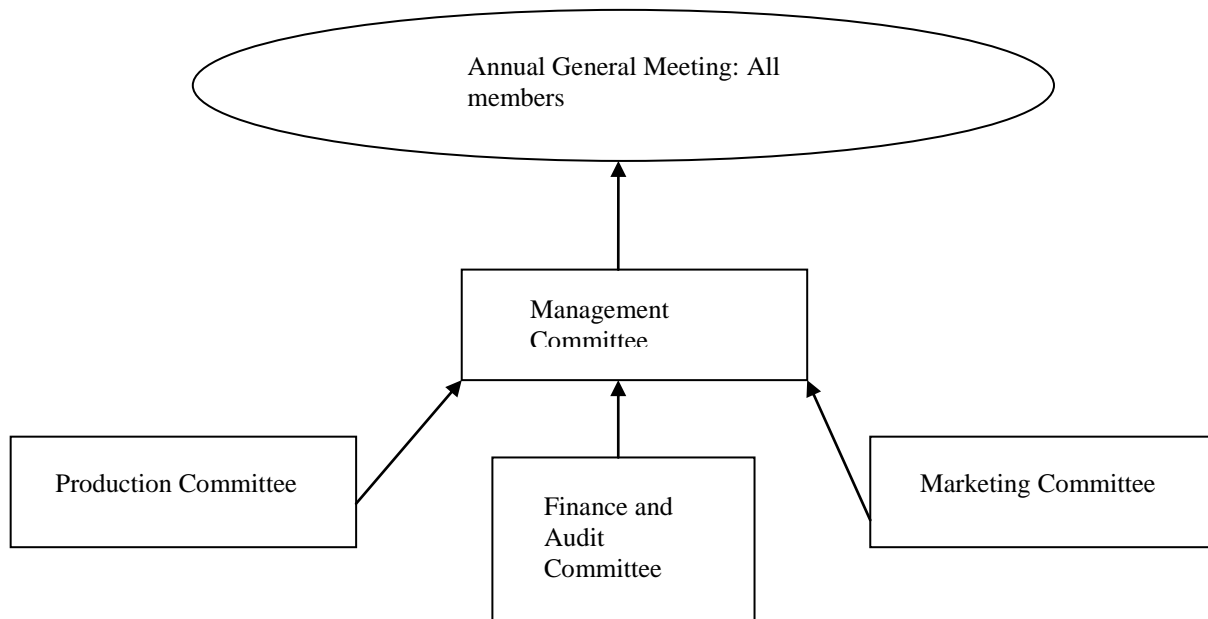


Figure 3.2: Basic structure of a farmer group.

a. The General Assembly or Annual General Meeting

The General Assembly comprises all the members of the group, who own and control the group. It meets periodically such as annually to discuss and decide on governance matters of the group. The most important roles of the General Assembly are to: choose office bearers; review the constitution and by-laws; review and approve annual plans, budgets, reports and business plans. The Assembly also decides on member contributions and benefit sharing. The tools subsection provides an example of minutes of a General Assembly Meeting (Box 3.1).

b. The Management Committee

The Management Committee consists of office bearers: the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and between three and nine committee members who are elected by the General Assembly at a duly convened General Meeting. It is good practice to include coordinators of sub-committees such as on Production, and Marketing as committee members in the Management Committee. Members of the Management Committee hold offices for specified periods of time before elections for the positions are held. The term of office can be 1-2 years. The term should be long enough to allow the office bearer to learn the ropes and create impact; and short enough to allow for injection of new blood. The terms of office tend to be renewable

twice or thrice. It is always important to consider member capacities, gender and youth representation among office bearers. The main role of the Chairperson is to preside over the General Assembly and Management Committee Meetings. The Vice-Chairperson assumes this role in the absence of the Chairperson. The main role of the Secretary is to call for General Assembly and Management meetings (in consultation with the Chairman) and to keep records, documents and decisions. The treasurer is responsible for recording and keeping financial transactions of the group. The details of the respective duties of the office bearers are discussed under the leadership section of the manual.

The joint roles of the office bearers include to lead processes on: developing the vision, mission and goals of the group; developing and enforcing policies, including the constitution; developing and reviewing strategic, annual and business plans; managing the resources of the group; financial and social auditing; convening meetings and engaging with stakeholders. Office bearers are often required to sign a Code of Conduct.

c. Sub-committees

Group subcommittees report to the Management Committee. They are established to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the group. Each subcommittee typically has two to three people. Examples of sub-committees are the:

- Finance and Audit Subcommittee that assists the Treasurer to manage the financial affairs of the group;
- Conflict and Grievance Handling Subcommittee that assists the Chairperson to resolve conflicts in the group;
- A Security Subcommittee that looks after the produce of the group at markets and maintains order when the group is receiving cash;
- Irrigation Subcommittee (where applicable) to ensure that the irrigation system is working;
- Production Subcommittee to coordinate group production efforts; and
- Marketing Subcommittee to coordinate the marketing of the group's produce.

The details of the Production and Marketing Subcommittees are discussed later in this section of the manual.

d. Group members

Group members play an active role in governance through participating in meetings, decision and group policy making processes. Individual members have a role to contribute towards the collective objectives of the group as well as to protect and promote its image. All members should, in playing their roles, act lawfully and responsibly.

3.2.3 Roles and responsibilities of some sub-committees

The Manual on Group Structure covered the roles and responsibilities of the: (a) Management Committee, (b) Executive Committee; (c) Office bearers; and (d) Members. This manual therefore focuses on subcommittees that are typically found in agricultural production and marketing groups. These are the production subcommittee and the marketing subcommittee.

a. Duties of the Production Subcommittee

The Production Subcommittee is headed by a Coordinator who reports to the Management Committee. The Subcommittee is responsible for ensuring that the group's production chain is well managed to achieve group plans. The specific duties of the Subcommittee are to:

- Ensure that group members have the necessary skills and means to produce the identified crops and/or raise animals;
- Establish and acquire necessary inputs on time;
- Coordinate the timing of planting crops, purchase of small livestock such as chicks to meet the group identified targets;
- Organise and manage group production tasks; and
- Coordinate and record production targets, including analysing differences between the achieved and planned targets.

b. Duties of the Marketing Subcommittee

The Marketing Subcommittee is responsible for the effective marketing of group produce and products. It is headed by a Marketing Coordinator. The specific responsibilities of the Marketing Subcommittee are to:

- Identify market opportunities, including the crops to grow or animals to keep;
- Organise for the safe storage and value addition of the produce before it reaches the market;
- Coordinate the bulking of the group members' produce for collective marketing;
- Ensure that the quality of the produce is maintained and the price at which the produce is sold is fair;
- Sell the group's produce; and
- Keep records of produce, sales, incomes and profits in liaison with the Production Subcommittee and the Treasurer.

c. Duties of Group Auditors

A group may also establish an Internal Auditors structure that reports to its Annual General Meeting. This is not reflected in the diagram on a basic farmer group structure above. The internal Auditors are responsible for verifying the financial records of the group. This role is normally assigned to one or two competent members of the group. The group's office bearers do

not qualify to become Auditors. In some cases, group auditors do not qualify to be members of the Management Committee. The duties of the group Auditors are to:

- Check the financial accounts prepared by the Treasurer for accuracy;
- Check the group's bank records and amounts; and
- Make a statement about the accuracy of financial records and sign the statement.

3.2.4 Policies

Farmer groups use several documents to govern their work. Such documents are called policies. The most important policy documents include the:

- Group constitution;
- Financial by-laws; and
- Code of Conduct.

The group constitution is often supported by by-laws. The former gives the broad guidelines and the latter focuses on the details such as the amount for membership fees, how costs and benefits are to be shared among members and how records will be kept and specific actions to be taken for violating specific provisions of the constitution. Each of these policy documents is discussed below.

a. The constitution

- The constitution of a farmer group contains the rules that regulate the existence of a group, the relations between and among its members;
- It defines the group's goals, the powers delegated to its leaders and the rules governing the management of the group's resources;
- It also spells out how office bearers are chosen; their terms of office; powers, roles and responsibilities as delegated to them by the AGM;
- How office bearers account to the members; and
- How the group may be dissolved.

The group constitution should be developed, discussed and agreed upon by its members. This ensures that they understand and own it. The provisions of a group constitution must not violate the laws of the country.

b. Financial bylaws

- Financial bylaws provide guidelines on the management of the group's financial transactions.
- They serve to increase financial accountability and transparency.
- Financial bylaws cover matters such as membership fees and shares, procurement of inputs and marketing of produce through the group, conditions for accessing and paying

back loans, accessing external loans, opening bank accounts, signatories to bank accounts and the auditing of books.

c. A code of conduct

- Members of a group's Management Committee are sometimes required to sign a group by-law called Code of Conduct.
- The Code of Conduct spells out how office holders should carry themselves when conducting business on behalf of the group.
- It helps group leaders and members to work in the best interests of the group.

A sample Code of Conduct for a group's Management Committee (Box 3.3) is included under the next subsection that discusses tools on governance.

3.2.5 Record keeping

A functional group gathers, writes up and keeps information about its work to capture the memory of events, actions, incomes, expenditure and decisions for future use. The Secretary is primarily responsible for keeping records of the group. The treasurer keeps all the financial records while group coordinators (e.g. on Production or Marketing) keep the records of what takes place under their respective subcommittees. Record making and keeping has the following value:

- Assists members to have an accurate record of important developments and activities that the group conducted in the past;
- Prevents misunderstandings that may arise from memory-based recollection of decisions and agreements;
- Provides information for monitoring progress in relation to business, annual and strategic plans; and
- Provide necessary information to meet legal and policy requirements of government, banks and business partners.

3.3 Tools on governance

Group governance tools are divided into categories: governance structures, policies and records. In discussing record keeping tools, emphasis has been put on financial record keeping tools because it is a weakness that has undermined group development in the past.

3.3.1 Structure-related tools

a. Guidelines for planning and holding meetings

Meetings are a mechanism for the participation of members, which also addresses responsiveness to their needs and interests. Meetings give the office bearers and members an opportunity to be accountable and transparent. There are several types of meetings with include

weekly, monthly, subcommittee, annual and extraordinary meetings. Guidelines for holding a good meeting include:

- Getting agenda items from group members in good time;
- Circulating clear and detailed agenda items ahead of the meeting to allow for preparations;
- Attendance by the majority of members so that a quorum is achieved and the principle of inclusion and equity is observed;
- Good chairing of the meeting that allows for adequate information sharing and democratic decision-making. This includes following agreed procedures on making decisions;
- Reading and approval of previous minutes;
- Documentation of the proceedings, action items and decisions of the meeting; and
- Safe keeping of records of meetings.

b. Sample minutes of an Annual General Meeting

There are several formats that can be used to write minutes of an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The box below (Box 3.1) provides a sample AGM minutes.

Box 3.1: Sample minutes of an Annual General Meeting

Date held: 2 May 2014 (1000 hrs to 1400 hrs)

Place: Gorejena Community Hall

Members present: Shingi Mhizha; Mutape Sithole; Nyasha Mandeya; Chipso Zvobgo; Tonderai Nyati; Spiwe Mhlanga; Thandiwe Nkomo; Shakespear Madamombe; and Kindness Bachi

Apologies: Raviro Bachi and Kudzai Mandeya

Chair of meeting: Spiwe Mhlanga

Secretary (note taker): Mutape Sithole

Minutes of last AGM: The minutes of the previous AGM were read and approved. Chipso proposed and Kindness seconded.

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting:

- (a) Plans to go on a learning tour to Zambia had to be changed because of expenses associated with procuring passports. Instead, members visited established groups in Binga.
- (b) The plans to increase the membership fee from US\$15 to US\$20 were effected and all the members have paid the full amount.
- (c) The group learning centre is nearly complete and roofing material has already been procured. Completion should be on time, before 1 June 2014.

Minutes

- (a) The proposed agenda items were approved at the beginning of the meeting.
- (b) The chairman presented the 2014/2015 annual plan, which was developed at a workshop in March 2014. The plan was approved unanimously.
- (c) The Treasurer presented the financial report, which was approved.
- (d) The treasurer presented a business plan for the next agricultural season and was approved with amendments to the proportions of profits that would be saved in relation to what would be shared. This was from a ratio of 60:40 to 35:65.
- (e) The AGM agreed to retain the membership fees at US\$20.
- (f) The AGM held elections for the three office bearers. Tonderai Nyati was elected Chairperson; Raviro Bachi was elected Secretary (in her absence); and Shingi Mhizha was retained as the Treasurer.

Date for the next AGM: 15 May 2015

Closure: The outgoing chairperson and Secretary thanked the members for their cooperation and support in the past. Chipso Zvobgo thanked them for their dedication and leadership, and outlined some of the key achievement made by the group under their guidance. The newly elected chairperson thanked members for showing confidence in him. He promised to build on the work of outgoing leaders and to observe the Code of Conduct. There being no other business, he closed the meeting at 1400 hrs.

Signature:

Date:

3.3.2 Tools on group policies

a. Framework of a group constitution

A farmer group constitution should be developed with the active involvement of members and in line with the laws of the country. The box below (Box 3.2) gives an outline of matters that should be covered in a group constitution.

Box 3.2 : Outline of a farmer group constitution

The three main components of the constitution are: Identity, Goals and Functions; Members; and Governance. These can be further elaborated as follows:

SECTION A: Identity, goals and functions

- *Name of the farmer group:*
- *Basic information about the group:* The location, date of formation, date of registration and contact details;
- *Group objectives:* The purpose for which the group was formed; and
- *Group functions:* The activities and services of the group and is linked to the objectives

SECTION B: Members

- *Membership:* Eligibility, conditions for membership, and rights and duties of members; and
- *Contributions:* The kinds of contributions that members should pay and may include joining fees and annual membership fees.

SECTION C: Governance

- *General Assembly:* Its composition, frequency of meeting, rights and responsibilities;
- *Extraordinary meeting:* The circumstances under which such a meeting can be called and by whom;
- *Management Committee:* Positions in the committee, duties of each member of the committee, how members are elected and their terms of office;
- *Election procedures:* Process and frequency of electing office bearers;
- *Decision-making:* Governance structures and their respective decision-making powers and processes for arriving at decisions;
- *Meetings:* Frequency of meetings, quorum needed to make decisions and consequences of not attending meetings;
- *Disciplinary actions:* Consequences that office bearers and group members face for violating one or more provisions of the constitution;
- *Review of the constitution:* When and how the constitution may be reviewed and amended; and
- *Dissolution:* The circumstances that may lead to the winding up of the group and how group assets will be handled.

b. Sample Code of Conduct for the Management Committee

A group may develop a Code of Conduct for its Management Committee to follow. Such a governance tool is meant to ensure that the group leaders conduct themselves in the best interests of the group. The box below (Box 3.3) is a sample Code of Conduct.

Box 3.3: Sample Code of Conduct for the Management Committee

Name of Group: Mpumelelo

Introduction

- The objective of the Code of Conduct is to outline how the Members of the Management Committee will conduct themselves in fulfilling their leadership and governance responsibilities in the group goal.

Commitment to setting up and/or operationalising governance policies and practices

- We shall ensure that the necessary constitution and bylaws are jointly developed, reviewed and implemented in line with good practice and national laws;
- We shall ensure clear and adequate separation of power and responsibilities between group structures;
- We shall develop and implement sound financial policies and systems to manage group resources;
- We shall ensure that our policies and activities are non-discriminatory and support gender balance and equity;
- We shall avoid conflict of interest between our personal interests and group interests; and
- We shall always act in the best interests of the whole group in our dealings with regulators, business groups, donors and service providers.

Commitment to involve and serve members

- We shall always encourage members to exercise their rights, including the right to participate in decisions and policies;
- We shall ensure that members actively participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of group operations;
- We shall ensure that group members equitably contribute to and benefit from group activities while making special provisions for members in special circumstances. These would include the ill and disabled;
- We shall obtain relevant information, knowledge and resources for and on behalf of members and pass them on to the group; and
- We shall accept support and donations from organisations and people whose aims and values are consistent with ours, and whose conditions do not undermine the independence and standing of our group.

Commitment to transparency, accountability and communication

- We shall be transparent in our dealings with group members, other farmer groups, government, donors, the public, service providers, the business community;
- We shall be truthful and honest in money matters;
- We shall maintain and use sound financial accounting systems and make financial information available to relevant people;
- We shall establish and use financial auditing systems in line with good practice;
- We shall institutionalise information sharing to promote transparency and accountability;
- We will conduct regular meetings and share information with members; and
- We will ensure that decisions and policies of the group are adequately documented in the right language and disseminated to members through appropriate channels.

Commitment to value creation

- We shall strive to find ways that create economic and social value for the group and its members;
- We shall pursue operations that increase the group and its members' collective and individual self-reliance; and
- We shall contribute to the development of the community in which we leave and operate and to the development of farming and farmer associations.

Signature of Management Committee Member:

Date of signing the Code of Conduct:

3.3.3 Record keeping tools

There are several kinds of record keeping tools and not all of them can be discussed in this manual. There are at least six kinds of tools that a group should keep. These are listed and explained in the table below (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Types of records that groups should keep

Type of record	Examples of records
Policy and legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government laws that govern groups; group constitution and bylaws; and group registration documents
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda items; and minutes of meetings
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of members and fees paid
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training workshops and learning tours; and training and reference materials
Group plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plans; annual plans; business plans; and budgets
Group reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs procured; produce sold; annual reports; reports to stakeholders; and monitoring and evaluation reports
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership fees paid; money and materials donated; loans made to members and repayment; loans acquired from banks and repayment; bank account details; bank statements; bank book; financial reports; cash book; and audited accounts reports

Samples of some of the records that are kept are illustrated below.

a. Sample membership list

Below (Table 3.3) is a sample of a membership list. It carries the necessary details of each member.

Table 3.3 Sample membership list

Surname	First name	Village	Cell number	Date of Joining	Members fee record		
					2012	2013	2014
Mhizha	Shingi	Tandi	0772551221	1 May 2012	US\$10	US\$15	
Sithole	Mutape	Chivese	0713200511	5 May 2012	US\$10	US\$15	
Mandeya	Nyasha	Chivese	0777695414	6 June 2012	US\$10	US\$15	
Zvobgo	Chipo	Tandi	0712333999	1 July 2012	US\$10	US\$15	
Nyati	Tonderai	Tandi	0733818992	1 July 2012	US\$10	US\$15	

b. Membership fee register

The membership fee register shows records of fees paid and associated balances for each member. Below (Table 3.4) is a sample page in a membership register.

Table 3.4 Sample membership register

Member's name	Payments as at 31 January 2014	
	Amount paid	Balance owed to group
Shingi	US\$20	US\$0
Mutape	US\$5	US\$15
Nyasha	US\$10	US\$10
Chipo	US\$15	US\$5
Tonderai	US\$10	US\$10
Totals	US\$60	US\$40

c. A receipt book

A group may decide to have receipt books so that whenever a payment is made, the person who makes the payment receives a receipt. It is important to keep the receipts in duplicate so that the person who issues a receipt keeps a record of the receipts. The receipt book has the following details: receipt number, date, name of person who made the payment, the amount of the money paid, the purpose of the payment, and the name and signature of the person who received payment. Receipt books can be bought from stationery shops or be specifically made for the group.

d. A cash book

This is the book in which the treasurer records money that he/she puts into and takes out of the cash box for purposes agreed on by the group. An exercise book can be used as a cash book. Each transaction should be numbered and dated, and the resultant balance indicated in the correct column. Below (Table 3.5) is an example of a page in a cash book.

Table 3.5: Sample cash book page

Number	Date	Item	Payment in	Payment out	Balance
1	1 January 2014	Brought forward from 2013			US\$100
2	10 January 2014	Membership fees from 3 members	US\$30		US\$130
3	11 January 2014	Membership fees from 2 members	US\$20		US\$150
4	12 January 2014	Withdrawal of money from bank account	US\$1,000		US\$1,150
5	12 January 2014	Transport to and from the bank		US\$10	US\$1,140
6	12 January 2014	Purchase of plastic material for greenhouse		US\$400	US\$740
7	12 January 2014	Purchase and transportation of poles for greenhouse construction		US\$300	US\$440
8	12 January 2014	Purchase of tomato seed		US\$30	US\$410
9	15 January 2014	Deposited money into bank account		US\$310	US\$100
10	15 January 2014	Transport to and from the bank		US\$10	US\$90

e. Bank book

A bank book is necessary when the group operates a bank account. It is used to record all bank transactions that are made by the group. It has the same headings as the cash book. Based on the above example, the group’s bank book may carry the following details (Table 3.6):

Table 3.6: Sample bank book page

Number	Date	Item	Payment in	Payment out	Balance
1	1 January 2014	Brought forward			US\$1,500
2	12 January 2014	Withdrawal		US\$1,000	US\$500
3	15 January	Deposit	US\$310		US\$810

f. Financial folder

The treasurer keeps documents of receipts for payments and purchases made in a folder. These are kept in chronological order for easy tracking. Bank deposit and withdrawal slips are also kept in the financial folder. The treasurer may ask for printouts that capture all the transactions done with the bank through the account. These are also kept in the folder and may be used to cross-check transactions by the group. The difference between bank statements and the bank book figures should be limited to bank charges and interest.

g. A lockable cash box

The treasurer should keep group money that is not in the bank in a safe place. Such a safe place may be a lockable cash box. The keys to the box should be kept in a secure place, preferably by another member of the group to reduce the treasurer’s temptation to access the funds for personal use. It is even better if the safe can be opened using more than one key so that no one person can open it without the cooperation of others. The case box or safe shall be opened when money is to be put in or taken out, usually in the presence of group members.

3.4 Group promoter’s guidelines

a. Objectives: By the end of training sessions that cover topics under this section, participants should be able to design structures and develop policies that enhance the functionality of their respective groups. Group members should be able to enforce their rights and understand their responsibilities within the group.

b. Training sessions: Five training sessions are recommended.

Session	Proposed topics
1	Governance; importance of governance; and principles of governance
2	Four main governance structures and their associated roles and responsibilities.
3	Governance policies, tools and examples
4	Record keeping, tools and examples
5	Roles and responsibilities of office bearers and members

- c. *Suggested facilitation methods:* A range of facilitation methods may be used. These could include drawing on participants' experiences through group work and case studies of governance mechanisms and tools that they have worked with in the past. The group promoter should present the training materials at an appropriate time and let the group use it to review their governance structures and mechanisms. Groups may also critique the training materials in light of their own experiences. Consider concluding each session by identifying areas of improvement for the group as well as an action plan indicating when improvements are to be made and by whom. If groups need additional information, the group promoter and members should agree on whose responsibility this should be. Below is an example of how the Record Keeping Tools and Examples session could be planned.

Sample session: Record keeping tools and examples

- Start the session by asking the group to suggest the value and importance of record keeping in their context.
- Link their contributions to group governance and functionality.
- Present the main record keeping tools that farmer groups tend to use.
- Ask participants to share the record keeping tools that they are already using, and list the benefits and challenges of using the tools.
- Give practical examples of narrative and financial record keeping tools and let group members work with each example.
- Conclude the session by identifying record keeping tools that the group needs to improve and add and how this is going to be done.

Section 4: Leadership

4.1 Introduction

Leadership is concerned with providing direction and influencing people. Incidentally, the people who are tasked with governing farmer groups also play leadership roles. Management on the other hand is concerned with getting work done within a given timeframe and resources. This section discusses the leadership and management of farmer groups.

4.1.1 Differences between leadership and management

Leadership and management are interrelated but different functions that complement each other. Managers may play some leadership role and vice versa. The main differences between leaders and managers can be summarised as follows:

- Leaders focus on creating a vision, inspiring followers to co-develop and pursue the vision, influence the character and behaviour of the group. Managers focus on planning, organising, coordinating and controlling resources to achieve tasks towards the group's goal;
- Leaders tend to focus on the long-term and the horizon. Managers are primarily concerned with the short range results and the bottom line;
- Leaders focus on the what and why to do things. Managers focus on the how and when to do things;
- Leaders challenge the status quo in order to transform situations. Managers tend to maintain order and the status quo; and
- Leaders invest their energies in doing the right things (purpose and direction) while managers focus on doing things right (process management).

4.1.2 Qualities of good leadership

There are several qualities that good leaders need to possess. Some of them are:

- *Literacy*: A leader must be able to read and write so that he/she can effectively govern and lead, and communicate with a range of stakeholders;
- *Integrity*: Being honest, transparent, impartial and responsible. Integrity also means walking the talk and leading by example;
- *Visioning*: Knowing where the group should go and how to get there. Being able to explain the desired future to the members, including the impact that the group work should have on members, the community and even the agro-ecological environment;
- *Decision making*: Possessing the ability to make decisions that are in the interests of the group while at the same time drawing on the contributions of members in the group. This also includes creating the right environment for the making of good decisions. Good leaders must also be able to make decisions in crisis situations, which requires the ability to manage personal and group emotions;

- *Listening and communicating:* Ability to listen carefully to others and to communicate well with group members and its stakeholders. This includes encouraging members to share their views and ideas and then linking them and letting them feed into plans and decisions;
- *Passion:* Good leaders have genuine interest to serve their members as well as the broader community. They are therefore willing to create time to serve the group and to work beyond the call of duty; and
- *Knowledgeable:* Having a good understanding of the group, its needs and how to meet its aspirations. This may also entail knowing where to seek the necessary knowledge and information for the group's benefit.

4.1.3 Leadership roles

The different leaders in a group play several interrelated roles that can be put under two categories: business-related; and member-related roles.

a. Business or task-related roles

- Establishing and using the necessary structures, planning, organising the work, allocating activities and tasks, following up and reporting; and
- Ensuring that the group has the necessary resources, including inputs and implements, and that such resources are put to good and correct use so that the group meets its objectives.

b. Member or relationships-related roles

- Motivating members to work together collaboratively and in harmony with each other; and
- Ensuring that members perform their duties and exercise their rights towards the achievement of the group objectives.

4.1.4 Leadership and power

Power refers to the ability to do something or to cause something to be done. The following kinds of power sources have been identified:

- *Positional power:* This is based on formal authority that people have from their position in organisations and society. A policeman has power to arrest people who break the law. A chairperson has the power to convene a meeting.
- *Reward power:* This is based on the ability to give material rewards such as money, benefits, desired gifts and promotions. For example, donors have reward power.
- *Personal power:* This is based on one's ability to attract others, build strong interpersonal relationships, persuade them and build loyalty. Such power is based on charisma and interpersonal relations skills.

- *Expert power:* It comes from a person's knowledge, skills and experience and knowledge of current/relevant affairs is called expert power. AEWs and service providers tend to be valued for their expert power.
- *Coercive power:* It is fear-based power that causes others to obey. Powerful figures who impose leaders and members in farmer groups use coercive power.

4.2 Leadership styles

Leadership styles refer to the set of *strategies* that leaders tend to use to achieve group goals. Leadership style is determined by how decisions are made, the extent to which group members are involved in goal setting and decision making, and the relationship between the leader and the followers. The styles are often determined by three interacting factors:

- Leader's background, values, ethics, principles and knowledge;
- Group members' backgrounds and personalities; and
- Group's cultural setting, philosophy and focus.

4.2.1 Group development and leadership styles

Studies on group development suggest that groups tend to need different kinds of leadership styles as the groups evolve. The stage and associated styles are: forming – leader directs; storming – leader coaches and persuades; norming – leader enables; and performance – leader delegates and provides assistance at the request of group members. In general, participatory leadership is preferred over other leadership styles because it draws on the collective capacities of the group. It also fosters the spirit of joint ownership of the group by its members.

4.2.2 Four common leaderships styles

There are many leadership styles and this manual discusses only four leadership styles that are likely to be found in farmer groups. These are explained below.

a. Autocratic style

The autocratic leader expects obedience from his/her followers or group members. This is achieved through directing, telling and ordering after he/she has already taken the decision. The other features of an autocratic leadership style are:

- Retaining as much power and decision making authority as possible;
- Not consulting fellow group members;
- Expecting group members to do it the way he/she has told them to do it;
- Motivating group members by using rewards and punishments; and
- Micro-managing of group members.

b. Bureaucratic style

The bureaucratic leader ensures that procedures are observed at all times. The other features of bureaucratic leadership are:

- Giving clear direction and guidelines for performing tasks;
- Motivating group members by persuasion and giving feedback on tasks;
- Managing by the book;
- Being firm but fair; and
- Ensuring that standards are met.

c. Democratic style

Democratic leaders use a participatory approach with the objective of building commitment and consensus among group members. The other features of democratic leadership are:

- Giving background information on an issue in question and offering a tentative solution;
- Encouraging members to generate options and participate in making decisions about the affairs of their group;
- Sharing decision-making and problem solving responsibilities;
- Keeping members informed about things that affect their being in the group;
- Encouraging members to grow and develop and to achieve their personal goals; and
- Motivating by recognising or rewarding team effort.

d. Laissez-faire

Laissez-faire leaders allow followers or group members to make decisions and take path of their choice because such leaders have considerable trust in their group. The leader takes direction and advice from those in strategic positions. The other features of laissez-faire leadership style are:

- Being hands off;
- Valuing the opinions of all group members and builds consensus;
- Playing a low key role, which may give the impression that the group has no leader;
- Tending to set a few guidelines for making decisions; and
- Often serving as the group's resource person.

4.3 Guidelines for using the four leadership styles

No single leadership style suits all situations. It is therefore important to understand when each leadership style is appropriate. The table below (Table 4.1) suggests the circumstances under which each of the four leadership styles is suitable, and unsuitable. It is worth noting that an autocratic leadership style tends to generate fear and low moral when used for an extended period of time, which is counterproductive. Participatory leadership styles work in most group situations.

Table 4.1: Leadership styles, their advantages and disadvantages

Style	Advantages – The style works when:	Disadvantages – The style does not work if:
Autocratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups are large, or passive or meet infrequently • Members are new and need guidance to follow procedures • Members are expected to do as they are told • Deadlines are tight and many people are involved • Decisions need to be made away from the group and consultation is not feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members expect their opinions to be taken into account • The procedures for decision making require group input • There are high stakes in making the decision • Time is available for consulting members
Bureaucratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group members need to understand and follow standards or procedures • Safety is of primary importance • Looking after group assets and resources such as cash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity is needed • Old ways of doing things are no longer adequate • Members are beginning to lose interest in the group
Democratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with committed members who understand the values, procedures, rules and goals of the group • Working with group representatives, motivated or functional groups • Implementing plans on the ground • Resolving individual and group or complex problems • Tapping into new opportunities • Building teams and a sense of shared ownership and responsibility • Making changes that affect group members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the cost of making a wrong decision is high • There is no time for participatory decision-making • Safety is of primary concern • When members do not have the necessary competencies to make the decision
Laissez-faire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups are small and highly motivated • Group members have the direction, knowledge and experience to make the decision • Group members can exercise the freedom comfortably and responsibly • When dealing with field experts such as consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group is new and still looking for direction • The group is large and dispersed • Group members do not know enough about the issue on which a decision must be made • When stronger leadership input is necessary

4.4 Group promoters' guidelines

- a. *Objectives:* By the end of the training sessions on the section, group members and leaders should be able to foster appropriate leadership styles for their group.
- b. *Training sessions:* Two training sessions are recommended.

Session	Proposed topics
1	The definition of leadership, differences and similarities between leadership and management, leadership roles and qualities of good leadership
2	Leadership styles and their associated strengths and limitations.

- c. *Suggested facilitation methods:* Session 1 could begin by the group brainstorming on the topics identified above. This could be followed by a presentation that links group outputs to training materials in this manual. The third part of the session could focus on linking leadership roles and qualities to the group's experiences in the group and elsewhere. Session 2 could begin by a presentation on leadership styles. This could be followed by a

question and answer session. Participants may then come up with metaphors or proverbs that best describe each leadership style. Some of the relevant Shona proverbs are:

- *Rume rimwe harikombe churu* (One man cannot surround an ant-hill), which refers to instances when the participatory and shared leadership style is desirable;
- *Zanodenga akaonekwa nembonje pahuma* (The person who does not consult will be distinguishable by scars on the forehead), which underlines the importance of democratic leadership;
- *Kupesana kwejuzu ndiko kunaka kwaro* (The beauty of a jersey lies in the mix of colours), which is a ‘modern’ proverb that supports democratic leadership because it enables cross-pollination of ideas;
- *Mbeva zhinji hanzina mashe* (Many mice have no lining in their nest: Too many cooks spoil the broth), which is relevant when the autocratic style is desirable; and
- *Ushe mazoro hunogachidzanwa* (Leaders take turns and leadership should be passed on), which underlines the importance of democracy and rule of law.

Sample session: Leadership styles

- Ask each participant to write down the name of the person whose leadership they like most.
- Then ask each participant to give 3-5 reasons on what they admire about the person’s leadership.
- Share these qualities in the plenary and put similar qualities together.
- Present the leadership styles discussed in this manual and have a question and answer session for clarification.
- Ask the participants to compare the leadership qualities they admire with those found under different styles and see which leadership style most of them like.
- Engage in a discussion about why participants prefer those leadership qualities.
- Form groups that will role play different leadership styles being applied in the right contexts.

Section 5: Strategic planning

5.1 Introduction

One of the main roles of leadership is to ensure that the group has a compass, that is, direction. In order to develop such a compass, the leaders and members come together in a visioning process. The main results of a visioning process are the following strategic tools for the organisations: a vision, a mission, values, goals and a strategic plan. These are briefly explained below.

5.1.1 Meaning of vision

A vision is a statement that declares the group's most desired future. It focuses on the destination in the long-term, covering at least 10 years. The vision should be consistent with the group's values. The vision can cover both group functionality and performance by answering the following two questions:

- If we could create the group of our dreams, what would it look like? Or,
- If we could bring about the desired change for our group members, the community and ecological environment, what would it be?

5.1.2 Values

These are the ethical and moral guidelines of the group. They describe the ethical qualities that the group believes in and should live by. They have to be taken into account when making decisions about the group. For example, a group that believes in gender equality will not exclude women from taking leadership positions.

5.1.3 Mission statement

A mission statement describes why the group exists and what it hopes to achieve. It covers the following aspects: its purpose and reason for existence; the business in which the group is; what the group does and for whom; and the value that it seeks to create for its members and the community. It should be concise so that group members can remember it.

5.1.4 Goal

Group goals describe what a group plans to achieve in the medium term, which is often 3-5 years. They are often pitched at the level of strategic plans. Goals cover both group functionality and performance targets. The goal should:

- Fit with the vision and the mission statement;
- Be simple and easy to understand; and
- Be easy to adapt and change when necessary.

The box below (Box 5.1) provides samples of a vision, mission statement, values and goal of a newly formed farmer group.

Box 5.1: Sample of vision, mission statement, set of values and goal

Vision: A functional farmer group that meaningfully improves the income levels of its members, improves the quality of the land and satisfies its customers.

Mission: Empowering group members to work together and practise agriculture as a business.

Values:

- Produce food that is safe and nutritious;
- Continuously meet the needs of consumers;
- Observe ethical business standards;
- Find and access profitable business opportunities for members; and
- Protect and improve the land and water resources on which the group life and business depends.

Goals

- To make the group functional by developing the necessary policies, structures, systems and establishing productive internal and external relationships by the end of three years; and
- Initiate profitable farming projects for the group.

5.1.5 Strategic plan

A strategic plan is a group's plan to achieve its goals. It is achieved through a strategic planning process. It maps out the groups' work for a period of 3-5 years. It is developed in the context of the group's operating environment, mission, vision, values and policies. It connects different group activities towards the realisation of the group's goals and mission. It also covers the allocation of resources. A strategic plan helps the group in the following ways:

- Provides a clear sense of direction, purpose and urgency;
- Is a means of drawing on the creative energies of group members in a coordinated manner;
- Provides ways of ordering activities and allocating resources;
- Is a basis for making annual plans and targets; and
- Is a basis for identifying obstacles towards to the realisation of the group's goals and making the necessary adjustments.

5.2 Strategic planning as a leadership mechanism

This is the formulation of a strategic plan by drawing on the group's knowledge of the environment; its vision, mission and values as well as its major strengths and resources in order to create value for itself and for society. Group leaders have the responsibility to ensure that a strategic plan is developed and implemented.

5.2.1 Process to follow

- Scan the environment to establish opportunities and challenges. You will get information from fellow members, customers, experts, group promoters, partners and written documents.
- Identify the issues and opportunities that you want to tackle and tap into.
- Formulate the issues and opportunities into goals that you want to achieve. Link these to your values, vision and mission.
- Develop strategies or methods that you propose to use in order to achieve the goals.
- Identify actions, resources and timelines needed to achieve the goals.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation system to accompany the implementation of the plan.

5.3 Tools for strategic planning

A group's strategic plan should be aligned to its vision and mission. It is therefore important for these two group direction statements to be captured at the beginning of the strategic plan. Guidelines for developing a step-wise strategic planning process are outlined below.

5.3.1 Steps in developing a strategic plan

Then the following steps may be followed in developing a group strategic plan:

- *Step 1 – Establish the current status:* Discuss and summarise the group's status regarding group development and group performance, focusing on the most important aspects. Some of these could be how well it is functioning, what it is producing and selling, and how much income it is generating.
- *Step 2 – Develop goals of the group at the end of the next three years:* Discuss and come up with the feasible and desired achievements of the group over the next three years. Focus on the aspects that are described in the current status. This means developing group goals concerning its functioning; production; and income generating matters.

Step 3 – Conduct a Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats (SWOT) analysis: Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Below is an example of a SWOT analysis that could be produced by a newly formed farmer group (Table 5.1). After establishing group strengths, come up with strategies on how to utilise them. Develop ways of tapping into the opportunities and mitigating the effects of threats.

Table 5.1: Sample of SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths (<i>found in the group</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A common history; • Hard working and disciplined members; and • Members with skills and experience in crop production. 	<p>Weaknesses (<i>found in the group</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of experience in working as farmer groups; • Low marketing capacity; and • Low capacity to raise capital.
<p>Opportunities (<i>found outside the group, in the operating environment</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A growing demand for food crops that we can produce; • The presence of an organisation that is willing to support farmer group development; and • Established farmer groups that are willing to share their insights. 	<p>Threats (<i>found outside the group, in the operating environment</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased frequency of droughts in our area; • Poor roads in the area, which make transporters charge high prices; and • Political polarisation in the community, which could spill into the group.

- *Step 4 – Develop annual milestones or indicators:* Moving backwards from the goal (intended achievements) at the end of the third year, develop milestones or indicators achievements of each year.
- *Step 5 – Develop strategies of major activities:* Moving forward from the current status or position, develop the broad activities that your group should implement in order to achieve each goal.
- *Step six – Identify the resources that are needed for performing the activities:* Discuss and come up with types of financial, material and other resources that are needed to implement the major activities. Identify potential sources of the resources. Quantify the resources needed and put a monetary value to each.
- *Step 7: Allocate roles and responsibilities:* Discuss and agree on who will be responsible for carrying out the different activities that are associated with each goal. This should include monitoring and evaluation.

5.3.2 Strategic plan format

A strategic plan covers a timeframe of about three years. It is built around Key Result Areas, which are the broad areas around which work is organised. In the case of newly formed farmer groups, the two main Key Result Areas are likely to be:

- Organisational and Institutional Development, which covers group governance; and
- Programmes and projects, which include Income Generating Projects.

One to three goals may be developed under each Key Result Area. For each goal there must be:

- *An impact indicator*, which shows what you want to achieve for each goal;

- One or more *objectives* that are specific, quantifiable and time-sensitive statements of what is going to be achieved and when. Each objective must be:
 - Specific;
 - Measurable;
 - Achievable;
 - Realistic; and
 - Time-framed.
- An *outcome indicator* summarises what the group wants to achieve under each objective;
- *Activities* under each objective that describe what is to be done, by whom, with whom and when; and
- *Output indicators* that show the immediate results of each activity.

5.3.3 Sample Strategic Plan

Below is a sample strategic plan that is organised around a recommended format or Strategic Planning tool (5.2).

Table 5.2 Strategic plan format

Key Result Area 2: Income Generating Projects

Goal: To initiate profitable income generating projects for the group					
Impact indicator: Group members are earning annual profits of US\$4,800 each from farming projects by the end of 3 years.					
Objective 2.1: To increase the proportion of land cultivated by group members by 50 percent by end of 2017 in order to generate enough surplus for sale					
Activities	Outputs	Responsible	When	Resources needed	Outcome
Identify idle land in the community	Idle land in identified and documented	Executive Committee	June 2014	Time	Group members procure 25 hectares of ideal land in their community to produce surplus for income generation
Identify families with right of access to the land	Register of villagers with idle land compiled	Executive Committee	June 2014	Time	
Seek permission to use the idle land for group projects	Express permission from villagers	Executive Committee	July 2014	Time	
Seek the permission of the traditional head to use the land for which permission to use was given	Approval to use the land secured	Executive Committee	August 2014	Time	
Put the land under cultivation	Additional land put under cultivation	Group members	October 2014 onwards	Draught power and labour	
Objective 2.2: To cultivate and market the cash crops that are in demand, profitable and are suited to the agro-ecological conditions of the area and generate profits ranging from US\$3,000 to US\$6,000 per year per group member					
Activity	Output	Responsible	Timing	Resources needed	Outcome
Conduct an annual market analysis	Report that identifies most viable farming projects	Marketing subcommittee	Every June and January	Money for travelling, communication, food and accommodation	Profitable farming that meets nearly 100 % of family needs of group members
Conduct a skills analysis of member capacity to produce the identified crops	Knowledge and skills needed identified	Group promoters	Every July and February	Time to meet with members	
Attend skills development processes	Necessary production skills developed among members	Group members and service providers	Throughout the year	Time, food, accommodation and stationery	
Procure the necessary agro-inputs	Timely availability of inputs	Production committee	Ahead of planting season	Financial resources	
Produce the necessary crops	Surplus produce	Group members	Depends on project	Land, inputs, draught power, water/rains and labour	
Lobby government to improve the roads	Improve roads	Executive Committee	As necessary	Time and financial resources for travelling, food and communication	
Negotiate lower prices for transporting produce	Better prices based on better roads and more competition	Marketing Committee	As necessary	Time and financial resources for travelling, food and communication	
Bulk the marketing of the crops	Benefits from economies of scale	Marketing & Security Subcommittee	Depends on project	Storage facilities, protection and containers	
Share income	Profit made	Annual General Meeting	Annually	Time	

5.4 Group promoter's guidelines

- a. *Objectives:* By the end of the training sessions that cover this section participants should have developed an understanding of how to develop a common understanding of the group's purpose and direction. They should also be able to use a strategic planning process and format.
- b. *Training sessions:* Three training sessions are recommended.

Session	Suggested topics
1	Vision, mission, values and goal formation
2	Strategic planning process
3	Strategic planning format

- c. *Suggested facilitation methods:* For Session 1, it would be a good idea to start by defining each concept. This could be followed by a question and answer session. Participants could go into groups and formulate the group's vision, mission, values and goals. Then they could share these in plenary to present, debate and discuss group work results. A home assignment could be given to members of the group to polish these further and present them at the next session for further discussion and possible adoption. Session 2 could then start with the presentation and discussion of the group's visioning results. This would lead to discussions about strategic planning and its linkage to visioning. The strategic planning process could then be presented and discussed. Participants could share how they have conducted their planning in the past. The group promoter would link such planning to the strategic planning process, underlining the timeframe and strategic nature of such planning. Participants could then discuss how they can translate their group goals into a strategic plan. The session could be concluded by the development of a plan of action of the development of the group's strategic plan. Session 3 could begin with a presentation of the format, followed by a question and answer session. Participants could then work with the format to practise how to plan using it in groups. They could then present their practical activity results in the plenary and get feedback. This would show their readiness (or lack of it) to conduct strategic planning using the simplified tool.

Sample session: Visioning (session 1)

- **Background/context:** Ask participants to summarize the history of their group addressing the following questions: Why was the group formed? What has the group achieved? What changes have taken place in the group? What changes are taking place in the operating environment?
- **Values:** Ask participants to come up with the values that *guide* their group in terms of how to: be together, work together, achieve together, work with others, govern and be governed, lead and be led, generate and share benefits.
- **Vision:** Ask participants to develop a purpose statement that is based on the values and describes what the group wants to achieve in the next 10 years or so. The question could be: Describe how you want your group to become in the next 10 years in terms of (a) how it is functioning and (b) the benefits it has created for its members and community. You can ask the group to draw a picture of the desired future or vision.
- **Mission:** Ask participants to discuss and come up with the major strategies that they want to use in order to achieve the desired future (vision).
- **Goals:** Ask participants what they want to achieve in the next three years in order to move towards their vision. These should be targets of objectives that take them close to their stated vision. Group members may need to work further on each of these strategic direction matters outside the workshop. This is because it takes a long time to come up with clear and well-connected strategic statements.
- Assign the group leader(s) to take the process forward and to bring the refined products to the next session for presentation and improvement.

Section 6: Group conflict resolution methods and mechanisms

6.1 Introduction

Conflicts are normal in any associational life because individuals have different backgrounds, interests and priorities. Conflicts may be inter-personal or task-based. When conflicts are task-based, they can harness through finding and combining creative ways of dealing with tasks. In all cases, they should be *carefully handled* so that they do not harm group functioning and performance; and whenever possible *harnessed* so that they benefit the group. Conflicts can also be internal to the group or external – between the group and others.

6.1.1 Definition and value of conflict

Conflict occurs in a group when there is disagreement between group members who believe that their values, interests, perspectives, options, needs and/or concerns are under threat. Conflict can be destructive, such as when it undermines productivity, morale and cooperation and takes away their focus on the group activities and objectives. Conflict can be constructive, especially when it is used to create better understanding, deeper communication, causes members to value diversity and benefit from it, and increases while reducing anxiety and stress.

6.1.2 Forms of conflict

There are at least three forms of conflict, which have been summarised as follows:

- *Controversies*: These are conflicts over ideas, of what is right or wrong, about how to and how not to;
- *Conflict over needs*: These are usually about resources and their distribution between and among members; and
- *Developmental conflicts*: They are to do with making adjustments to changing or dynamic situations, group direction and strategies.

6.1.3 Sources of conflict in farmer groups

There are several possible sources of conflict in farmer groups. Some of the common causes are:

- *Lack of financial transparency*: This happens when financial records are poorly kept and communicated to group members. This threatens members' trust who may feel that their financial interests have been undermined.
- *Misuse of group resources*: This arises when group resources have been put to the wrong use, which is not in the interests of the group. Such resources may include donations, agricultural inputs, machinery and farm implements. Misuse of such resources tends to undermine the needs of group members.
- *Failure to adhere to the constitution and by-laws*: Leaders or members may violate the provisions of their constitution or by-laws and this is bound to cause conflicts.

- *Not paying membership fees:* When members fail to pay their fees to the group they may become excluded from making certain decisions or from participating in certain activities. This is likely to cause conflict.
- *Unilateral and dictatorial decision-making:* This arises when group leaders take decisions without involving the members, when they are supposed to. This results in the betrayal of trust between the group members and the leaders.
- *Poor communication:* If group plans, activities, and achievements are inadequately or poorly communicated suspicion and conflict is likely to arise. Communication problems arise when interactions are infrequent; the communication channels are inadequate or poorly used. This may mean that the members do not get the opportunity to express their views, values and needs. It may also happen when members fail to give necessary feedback to the group; or when group members are not clear about what they are supposed to do and then do something else instead.
- *Unfair distribution of tasks and benefits:* This arises when members feel that some of them are doing too little and yet the benefits that they get are the same as those who are contributing much more. This may arise from failure to have a mechanism that ensures that members contribute and benefit fairly. It may also happen over how to deal with 'special' members such as those who might be ill, disabled or absent for a good reason.
- *Poor grievance handling mechanisms:* If a group does not have effective ways of dealing with conflicts and other forms of differences among its members, conflicts are likely to become worse and escalate.
- *Interpersonal relations:* Negative interpersonal relations take place when some group members fail to cooperate because of personality clashes. Interpersonal relations can become poor when some group members may feel superior or inferior to other members of the group. This could be based on individual status, wealth, education and background. At other times it happens when some members merely dislike other members in the group. But sometimes it happens when there are good reasons, such as when some members are marginalised or unfairly treated.
- *Imposition of leaders by powerful people:* Some powerful people use their muscles to ensure that certain people are included in the groups. Such members tend not to respect group values. They make subtle threats based on being well-connected.

6.1.4 Effects of conflicts

When group conflicts are not resolved, there are several possible effects. Some of these negative effects are:

- Waste of the group's time, resources and energy;
- Poor member contributions and slowing down of group progress;
- Lack of cooperation in the group or between the group and its stakeholders;
- Lack of confidence in the group or its leadership;

- Poor member contributions; and
- Collapse of the group.

However, if conflicts are handled properly, they can be an important source of positive group functionality. Resolving certain conflicts can produce one or more of the following effects:

- Keeping members alert;
- Making leaders more accountable,
- Increasing clarity of roles and responsibilities; and
- Ensuring fair distributions of costs and benefits among group members.

6.2 Approaches of dealing with resolving conflicts

There are several ways in which conflicts can be tackled in a group. Some of the mechanisms are effective and others not so effective. Below are approaches that are commonly used in dealing with conflicts in a group.

6.2.1 Avoidance

This happens when someone avoids conflict by brushing it aside, postponing it, hiding feelings, changing the subject or leaving the room. Avoidance is a good strategy if the conflict is minor, or when there is need for emotions to settle first, or when the available information is too thin to act on. But avoidance is inappropriate when the issue is important and requires immediate resolution or when postponement will worsen the situation.

6.2.2 Accommodation

Accommodation entails agreeing to move forward based on recognition of what the concerned individuals or groups have in common while ignoring their differences. It works when there is agreement on the important aspects of the issue on which there is conflict and the disagreement lies in relatively minor details. It does not work if the differences are based on what is important to either party.

6.2.3 Compromise

Compromise takes place when the parties involved in a conflict give up something and get something from the deal. However, the result can be likened to $1 + 1 = 1.5$. A compromise is appropriate when the parties involved are willing to adjust their demands and the solution meets their minimum requirements to move forward. It is not appropriate when the parties involved have to give up something that is fundamental to them.

6.2.4 Competition

Each party uses its power, arguments and influence to win in a way that makes the other party lose. It is a good approach. If the conflict is task-oriented such as how to share costs or benefits or on ideas to develop, competition can generate good ideas for the group. However, if the

competition is concerned with interpersonal relations it will divide the group and weaken it by creating losers who become dissatisfied.

6.2.5 Collaboration

Collaboration seeks to create win-win situations for those involved in the conflict and for the group. The solution tends to address the issue, its causes and effects. It is based on the integration of the wishes of both parties in relation to a common objective. It works best when the parties involved are willing to change their thinking in light of new information and options, when there is mutual trust and respect between them. The involved parties should also be willing to share their views and feelings and to act in the interests of the bigger group.

6.2.6 Elimination

Elimination entails the firing or suspension of members involved in a conflict who are found to be intentionally violating the provisions of group policies. This works best when dealing with members of leaders who willfully go against the provisions of the constitution and bylaws and have received sufficient prior warning. It is inappropriate when dealing with matters that are not concerned with the violation of group values, principles and regulations.

6.3 Tools for analysing and resolving group conflicts

6.3.1 Problem tree analysis

The problem tree analysis allows members to visualize the connection between the issue of conflict, the causes and effects of the conflict. The tree trunk represents the core conflict or problem, the roots as the causes and the branches as the effects of the conflict. The value of the problem analysis lies in the discussions, debates and dialogue among group members. In order to come up with causes of the conflict, ask the question: Why did the conflict arise? In order to identify the effects, ask the question: What are the effects of the conflict? These questions should produce answers that help the group to gain a deep understanding of the conflict. This in turn will provide a basis for developing a solution that takes account of the roots and effects of the conflict. Below is an example of a problem tree (Figure 6.1). In the tree, the:

- *Issue* is found in the stem of the tree;
- *Causes* are similar to roots; and
- *Effects* are similar to the branches, leaves and fruits.

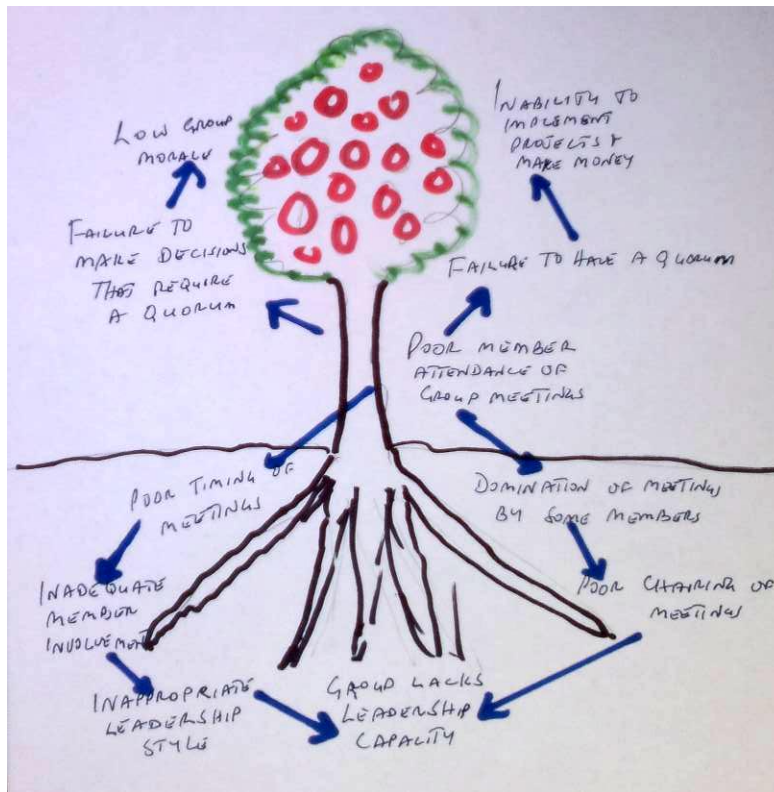


Figure 6.1: An example of a problem tree analysis

6.3.2 Collaborative negotiation

Collaborative negotiation is a recommended strategy for resolving conflicts. Its strength lies in involving the concerned parties in resolving their conflict. It should be done after conducting an adequate analysis of the conflict using the problem tree analysis tool. The following steps are necessary for collaborative negotiation:

- Individuals in the conflict *analyse the conflict* on their own to establish their interests and goals in the conflict. They then develop strategies for resolving the conflict, including areas where they are prepared to make concessions;
- Parties involved in the conflict then *meet to set the rules* of engagement. This includes the framework, negotiators, methods of negotiation (including mediators if needed), the timetable and issues;
- Parties involved separately *develop, justify and clarify proposals* that they wish to take to the negotiating table. These should avoid confronting the other party;
- Parties involved meet to *negotiate, bargain and agree* by finding solutions that satisfy both parties. Such a meeting may be face-to-face, facilitated or mediated; and

- Parties involved meet to *make commitments to implement the agreement* through developing and signing a formal agreement.

Further details on negotiation, mediation and facilitation are discussed on the next chapter. The strategies and guidelines apply to the management of both internal and external relationships.

6.4 Group promoter's guidelines

- Objectives:* By the end of the training sessions on this section participants should be in a good position to anticipate, identify and work effectively with conflicts that may arise in their group. In the end, this should enable groups to resolve conflicts in a fair and transparent manner.
- Training sessions:* Three training sessions are proposed.

Session	Suggested topics
1	Conflict, explain and discuss conflict; forms of conflict; sources conflicts and effects of group conflicts
2	Approaches to dealing with conflict
3	Tools of dealing with group conflicts

- Suggested facilitation methods:* Session 1 could begin by exploring the knowledge and experience of group members on conflicts covering the dimension identified in the manual. The group promoter could then share the training materials covered in this manual in a way that augments group results. Particular emphasis may need to be made regarding the positive value of some conflicts. The session could be concluded by identifying the conflicts that have been experienced in the group and how they have been or are being dealt with. Suggestions on how they can be creatively dealt with in the future would be a good note on which to end. Session 2 could begin with the group promoter presenting the different approaches to dealing with conflicts. A discussion of the approaches could be held, focusing on the strengths and limitation of each approach. Participants could then be asked to link the approaches to their experiences in the group and beyond the group. The session could be concluded by going back to the strategies suggested for addressing current conflicts in the group and linking these to the approaches learnt. Session 3 could begin with a presentation of the problem tree analysis followed by a practical exercise in which participants analyse the causes and effects of conflicts that the group has or is experiencing. This could then be followed by a presentation of collaborative negotiation. Participants could be asked to use a case study or two and role play it/them in order to show their understanding of collaborative negotiation. Below is a conflict case study that could be used for learning purposes.

Sample session: Internal group conflict case study (for session 2)

In the late 1990s, farmers from a village in Gokwe formed a group. The purpose of the group was to learn how to grow organic cotton because it would cost less to produce and find an easy market. The group used a Farmer Field School approach to help them learn how to grow the crop. The farmer group was lead by a farmer who had a good grasp of cotton growing and she was called a farmer leader. It was through her that extension workers and other FFS facilitators engaged the group. The group performed well until the price of cotton fell to unprofitable levels. They then decided to change the focus of group to the production and marketing of sweet potatoes, tomatoes, beans, cowpeas and pepper. The group developed a constitution that had provisions for a chairperson, secretary, treasurer, a production subcommittee and a marketing subcommittee. However, the farmer leader who was not an office bearer continued to play the linking role with group promoters and some of the stakeholders. This worked well for the first three years after the shift from cotton production.

After three years there were conflict about responsibilities:

- Between the farmer leader and the production coordinator;
- Between the farmer leader and the group chairperson; and
- Between the farmer leader and the marketing coordinator.

In order to process the case study, please do the following:

- Analyse the conflict and identify its causes;
- Suggest how the conflict could have been avoided; and
- Describe what you would do to help the group to address the conflict that it is facing.

Section 7: Building external relationships

7.1 Introduction

Successful farmer groups go beyond building productive relations among its members. They must also establish and nurture constructive relationships with their key stakeholders. These include other farmer groups, service providers, the business sector and policy makers. There are various ways of naming these relationships. This includes networking, partnerships, and policy influence. For purposes of this manual, we will use FAO terminology. FAO talks about bonding between members of the same group; bridging between different farmer groups and linking between farmer groups and their stakeholders. In addition to these relationship building mechanisms, tools such as negotiation, mediation and lobbying are discussed in this section.

Successful relationships with a group's external stakeholders tend to have the following features and qualities:

- Built around common or complementary goals;
- Have clear operational procedures, including communication systems;
- Are based on mutual respect of each other;
- Group members who are committed to achieving the goals of the network or partnership;
- Are based on equity in terms of representation and sharing of responsibilities and benefits;
- Are based on shared leadership;
- Create and use opportunities for continuous dialoguing; and
- Have mechanisms for identifying and resolving conflicts and tensions before they undermine relationships and trust.

7.2 Relationship building mechanisms

Bridging and linking build on intra-group bonding discussed earlier. Bridging and linking enable farmer group to develop capacities to make joint and informed decisions and actions, and negotiating power. This section builds on earlier guidelines on building intra-farmer group relations, structures and systems to suggest how bridging and linking can be achieved to enhance group functionality and performance.

7.2.1 Bridging

Farmer groups that work in isolation are unlikely to have impact on their operating environment. This is why they have to relate and work together with other farmer groups through networking, collaborating or partnering through bridging. Such bridging results in peer-to-peer cooperation or the formation of an apex organisation that covers a wider socio-political or geographical area. Peer-to-peer cooperation is exemplified by two neighbouring farmer groups in Honde Valley that

jointly conducted a learning tour in and near Harare. This reduced the amount of money that each group member had to contribute for transport. The formation of an apex organisation is exemplified an organisation such as the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU). The main value of bridging is that it creates synergy, which helps farmer groups to become more influential. For example, it is easier for ZFU to engage government on matters of policy than for one farmer group to do so. It is also easier for a collection of farmer groups in a given ward to approach the Ministry of Transport to mend roads than for one group to do so. Similarly, several farmer groups working together are in a better position to negotiate with service providers and with the business community. Bulking produce to meet market needs is another advantage of inter-group collaboration.

7.2.2 Linking

Based on FAO terminology, linking refers to vertical ties between farmer groups and other types of organisations that have different interests and power. The ties are often vertical because some of the involved organisations tend to have more social, economic or political power than others. The ties are also vertical in that the actors are found at different points of the value chain. Farmer group stakeholders with whom they link include agricultural research organisations, donor organisations, NGOs, companies and banks, and government. Farmer groups may link with agricultural research organisations in order to influence their research agenda or to take part in research that is important to farmers. They can also engage the private sector through contract farming. Farmer groups might also choose to form coalitions with NGOs that share similar interests. For example, farmers and NGOs involved in conservation agriculture have lobbied the government of Zimbabwe to mainstream the agricultural practice. At another level, the government could establish policy forums at which all the agricultural stakeholders meet to contribute to the development or review of relevant policy. Linking is therefore concerned with influencing other groups of actors.

7.3 Tools for building relationships

There are basically three tools that farmer groups can use to build productive relationships with their stakeholders. These are negotiation, mediation and lobbying. Each is discussed briefly below.

7.3.1 Negotiation

Negotiation involves getting what you want from others, while they also get what they want from you. It takes place when two parties who have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed. It entails joint, voluntary decision-making. A strong concern for one's own outcome (assertiveness) as well as the outcome of the other party (empathy) forms a strong motivation for cooperation that leads to joint solution creation and peaceful settlement. Good negotiations are therefore done in good faith.

a. Instances when direct negotiation is ideal

Parties involved in negotiation can speak directly with each other. Direct negotiation tends to take place when the conflict is of low intensity or when the issues are relatively narrow. This may apply to matters such as prices of specific produce, transport costs and input costs. However, if the issue is of high intensity conflict and complex such as the emotive land boundary issues, assisted negotiation is more preferable. The two commonly used forms of assisted negotiation are mediation and facilitation.

b. Possible outcomes of negotiations

Negotiations can result in win-win, win-lose and lose-lose situations. These are elaborated below:

- *A win-lose outcome* exists when one of the parties to the negotiations gets what it wants and the other does not. Such an outcome tends to emerge when the parties to the negotiation are interested in achieving victory over the other. The strategies or approaches that tend to produce a lose-win outcome tend to be competition, and not cooperation between those involved. The bargaining process that is based on competition is called distributive.
- *Lose-lose outcomes* arise when both parties end up being worse off than before. Such outcomes are undesirable when a win-win situation was possible. However, there may be instances in which a lose-lose situation is the best outcome. For example, someone in the village may cause fire that destroys gardens belonging to group members. The gardens may not have been protected by fire guards. Instead of making the person who started the fire compensate for all the losses caused by the fire, group members may contribute meet some of the costs.
- *Win-win outcomes* exist when both or all parties involved in a negotiation benefit from the agreement. Such a situation often comes from a process in which the parties to the negotiation cooperate using an integrative bargaining process. Win-win situations focus on addressing long-term interests, and on relationship building. There may also be situations when no deal is better than reaching an agreement.

c. Guidelines for achieving win-win outcomes

Negotiating win-win situations is based on the thinking that the success of a group is dependent on making both the group and its key stakeholders winners. There are four major steps that are used in creating win-win situations with external stakeholders and these are:

- Separate the people from the problem or issue;
- Focus on interests and not on positions;
- Create options for mutual gain; and
- Use objective criteria for assessing the options to adopt.

d. Tips for reaching win-win outcomes

People involved in negotiations should deliberately cultivate a certain way of thinking and engaging stakeholders if they want a win-win outcome. Below are some of the tips:

- Declare your commitment to creating win-win situation as well as to fairness. The latter is about being committed to not benefiting at the expense of the other;
- Make the necessary research ahead of the negotiations and during the negotiations so as to come up with effective alternatives;
- Listen in order to build your understanding of the other party's views. Ask non-threatening questions to establish necessary information. This will help you establish the zone where you both sacrifice the least and gain the most;
- Be open and flexible what at the same time remaining clear about what you are prepared to give up and willing to take. This is reached by establishing the best-case scenario and the minimum success scenario. The space between these two scenarios is called 'the settlement range';
- Avoid making the issue or problem personal by blaming or attacking the other party. Instead, use the disagreement to generate options. Never put the other party in a position where it/they will feel embarrassed;
- Focus on building mutual understanding, respect and trust;
- Examine and weigh options/alternatives;
- Look for solutions that address the interests of both parties (which cover real needs and wants) and not the positions (which are often mere symbols of needs and wants). Make sure that the other party wins as well by creating added value for both parties;
- Jointly set objective criteria for achieving the goals of the negotiation. Examples of objective criteria are market value, professional standards, efficiency cost, equal treatment and reciprocity;
- Close the deal when it is reached, or when it cannot be reached;
- Make commitments to implement the deal; and
- Drawing lessons from the negotiating process.

7.3.2 Facilitation

Facilitation can also be used as part of the negotiation process. But its main focus is not the development of an agreement. Rather, it focuses on developing a common understanding of a problematic situation as well as its reframing or on building positive relationships between the parties involved. Participants to a facilitation process do not have to be the decision makers. However, they should have access to decision makers. This means that they can help to lay the ground for genuine dialogue and the development of an agreement.

7.3.3 Mediation

The role of a mediator is to direct and support engagement and communication between the parties involved towards the reaching of an agreement. He/she is someone who is not directly involved in the conflict; and should be accepted and acceptable to parties involved. The parties involved in a dispute agree to invite a third part to help them to negotiate and reach an agreement. The mediator does not take a decision on behalf of the parties. Below is a form (Box 7.1) that can be used to document mediation details.

Sample Peer Mediation Contract

- 1. Mediator:**
- 2. Disputants**
 - a. Name of Disputant 1:
 - b. Name of Disputant 2:
- 3. Description of the dispute, conflict, or disagreement between the disputants:**
- 4. Rules by which disputant agree to abide by:**
 - a. I am willing and committed to solving the dispute/conflict through mediation
 - b. I will speak during my turn and will not interrupt others
 - c. I will tell the truth only
 - d. I will not yell at, fight, name-call or harm people involved in the mediation
 - e. I will keep all personal information confidential
- 5. Signatures to observe rules:**
 - a. Disputant 1:
 - b. Disputant 2:
- 6. Solution:** We have agreed to implement the following solution to address our conflict, dispute or disagreement:
- 7. Signatures of commitment to implement solution:**
 - a. Disputant 1:
 - b. Disputant 2:

7.3.4 Lobbying

Lobbying is concerned with influencing policy makers such as parliamentarians, councillors and the civil servants who provide the necessary technical advice. Lobbying involves the development and presentation of specific policy demands so that a particular point of view is included in policy or legislation. The word lobby comes from the history of policy influencing,

which was characterised by people going to the lobbies and corridors of policy makers to engage them on policy issues.

a. Main qualities of good lobbying statements

Since policy makers tend to be busy people, it is important that lobbying statements are:

- Clear and concise;
- In simple and straightforward language that is not technical;
- Well argued or justified; and
- Based on reliable sources of information.

b. Basic structure of a lobbying statement

In lobbying, there are two main things that you may need to achieve. The first one is about informing the policy maker to the issue. The second one, which forms the heart of lobbying, focuses persuading the policy maker to adopt an option or a small number of acceptable options. The structure of the argument or paper could be as follows:

- Inform the policy maker about the existence of the issue;
- Highlight the importance and significance of the issue. This includes the number of people or size of area affected;
- Analyse the issue, including its background, causes and effects; and
- Recommend option that the government should adopt to address the issue and its associated causes and effects.

c. Guidelines on meetings with people you seek to lobby

The guidelines are organised into three sections: before, during and after the meeting.

Before the meeting do the following:

- Prepare the necessary information, facts, figures and argument;
- Obtain necessary information about the people whom you will meet. This includes their interests;
- Prepare yourself to articulate your position. This could mean presenting your case to colleagues and getting their feedback;
- Dress appropriately for the audience, as well as for what you stand for when you go for the meeting; and
- Arrive on time, as this is often taken to mean that you respect the other person.

During the meeting do the following:

- Be accurate and convincing: Your credibility is dependent on the quality of arguments you make as well as on your belief in what you are saying;
- Be brief and to the point: Most decision-makers will have busy schedules and would be grateful if you make your argument concise. However, this does not mean excluding the background and explanations to your position;

- Be respectful to the other person: In presenting your disagreements and criticism, ensure that you choose your words carefully and that your body language does not betray you. Make a conscious effort to look for or build common ground; and
- Be specific if you are lobbying: In cases where you want to have a piece of legislation changed, describe the specific action that you want to be taken on it and justify.

After the meeting do the following:

- Summarise the process and outcomes of the meeting and share this with relevant people in your organisation;
- Reflect on and note down lessons learnt for the future;
- Write and send a “Thank You” letter to the decision maker(s) for making time to listen to your case or position; and
- Conduct any necessary follow-up action.

7.4 Group promoter’s guidelines

a. *Objectives:* By the end of the training sessions on this section participants should be able to apply strategies for building constructive and productive relationships with their external stakeholders. The strategies should be built on creating win-win outcomes.

b. *Training sessions:* Three training sessions are proposed.

Session	Suggested topics
1	Qualities of healthy relationships and the following terms: bridging, linking, negotiation, facilitation and mediation.
2	Possible negotiation outcomes and guidelines for achieving win-win situations.
3	Lobbying government and other decision-makers.

c. *Suggested facilitation methods:* Session 1 could be started by presenting explanations of each term. This could be followed by group discussions participants could identify local proverbs and metaphors that are associated with these terms. Stakeholder analysis and mapping could be used to identify the group stakeholders and the perceived closeness of each stakeholder group. The analysis and maps could be discussed in order to provide a basis for closer collaboration in future. Session 2 could begin with a presentation of negotiation outcomes followed by a discussion of what participants prefer and why. Participants could then go into groups and examine their past experience to come up with examples of their experiences with each negotiation outcome. This could then be followed by a plenary analysis of what enabled the achievement of win-win outcomes. The group promoter may subsequently present the guidelines for creating win-win situations that are in this manual. Session 3 could begin with an exploration of how group members have interacted with local government ministries or council and other decision makers. This could provide an entry into discussing lobbying as a strategy for negotiating with and influencing government. A presentation of lobbying guidelines could be

followed by a practical exercise in which participants identify a real issue that they want government to address.

Sample session: Negotiating outcomes case study

Your group of 20 members entered into a contract to supply 2,000 kg of organically certified chilli to a buyer in the food industry. It agreed that each member should contribute 100 kg. However, two members of the group fail to meet the target and produce 50 kg each because they fell sick. As a result, you are only able to provide 1,900 kg. The representative of the buyer tells you that he is willing to contract you again for the next season even though you failed to meet the target. But he has a condition: you must pay him a bribe. Use a role play to show how you would address the matter within the group; and between the group and the food company.

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

Given the scope of this manual, there are two main areas of interest for monitoring and evaluation. These are group functionality and performance. Group functionality focuses on group development matters such as membership, governance, leadership, group cohesion and relationships with stakeholders. Performance on the other hand is concerned with group activities as described in its project and business plans.

8.1 Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation are important for governance because they enable accountability and transparency. The scope of monitoring and evaluation of farmer groups is determined by various factors, the main ones being: the stage of group development; and the focus of their activities. Since this manual focuses on the farmer groups transition from storming to performing, much of aspects that are suggested for monitoring lie in the norming stage. This is also the stage where the primary focus is making the group functional by developing and implementing the necessary mechanisms and tools. At the same time, some guidelines on performance monitoring may be necessary in anticipation of what the groups will do in the next stage.

8.1.1 Meaning of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring refers to the regular checking or continuous assessment of progress against plans or activities and outputs. It is about keeping track of the groups and its activities by identifying progress, difficulties, problem areas and recommending immediate solutions. It involves record keeping and regular reporting. Monitoring that involves group members is called participatory monitoring. It enables group members to share control of the content, process and results of monitoring as well as in taking corrective actions. Both monitoring and evaluation are best done when there is baseline information that shows the situation at the beginning of the process.

Evaluations on the other hand are periodic and less frequent than monitoring. It is concerned with establishing the worth of what the group has done in relation to its functionality and objectives. Evaluations look at both the results (the what), and the process (the how) of the group plans and objectives. The results of evaluations include an adjustment of objectives, strategies, institutional arrangements or allocation of resources. Evaluations also help groups to learn from experiences, show the impact of its work and account to its members and stakeholders. Participatory evaluations are also encouraged for the same reasons as participatory monitoring.

Monitoring should be done by group members and leaders. The group promoter may also carry out some of the monitoring. Evaluations on the other hand can involve other people who may be assigned to do so by the group. In all circumstances the following aspects of the group should be monitored and evaluated: group functionality and group performance.

8.1.2 Purpose of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

The desired results of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in farmer groups include:

- Increased member capacity to analyse and reflect on the affairs and activities of the group;
- Identifying problematic areas;
- Collective learning and action by group members;
- Increase members' ownership of processes and outcomes in the group, which in turn increases commitment to taking corrective action; and
- Enabling accountability and transparency.

8.2 Monitoring and evaluation methods

There are several mechanisms that can be used for monitoring and evaluation. Two important mechanisms are information sources and information generating methods. These are discussed below.

Monitoring and evaluation answers the following questions:

- *Why* are we going to monitor and evaluate?
- *What* is going to be monitored and evaluated?
- *Who* is going to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?
- *When* is the monitoring and evaluation to be conducted?
- *How* is the monitoring and evaluation to be done?

8.2.1 Sources of monitoring and evaluation information

Information that is used for assessing a group's functionality and performance should be obtained from somewhere – sources. Group members should be familiar with the sources for monitoring and evaluation. There are two main sources of information: documents and people. Information that is collected and documented for another purpose, which is not the monitoring and evaluation itself is called *secondary data*. Information that is directly collected for the purpose of the evaluation and from concerned people is called *primary data*. Both types of information are necessary. It is often helpful to start by seeking secondary data, which is already in place and then look for needed, missing or additional data using primary data collection methods. Structured interviews can be used to generate quantitative data.

8.2.2 Data generation methods

There are two major categories of data generation methods: quantitative and qualitative. These are explained below.

a. Quantitative data

Quantitative data is about quantities or amounts. It answers questions to do with who, how much and how many. They are appropriate for establishing information on costs, inputs, production levels, income and profit. Quantitative data is not very helpful when dealing with human behaviour. Quantitative data collection methods are appropriate when there is need for:

- Accurate and precise data;
- Quantifying the extent of a problem or an opportunity;
- Sampling to make generalisations; and
- Identifying the characteristics of a population or a market for a group's produce.

b. Qualitative data

Qualitative data is about how good or bad something is. It addresses questions to do with how and why. Semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions and observation can be used to generate qualitative data. It is difficult to achieve objectively verifiable information from qualitative data generation methods. Qualitative data collection methods are appropriate when there is need for:

- Generating an understanding or explanation of the ways things are;
- Establishing member needs, preferences and priorities;
- Obtaining explanations to the way group members or other relevant people behave; and
- Explaining quantitative findings.

8.3 Monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines

At this stage of group development in the ASIP, it appears preferable that group members and leaders conduct their own monitoring and evaluation. The group promoters may also participate independently. It is important to note that there are many activities and outputs that a farmer group can measure and it is impossible to include all of them in this manual. Below are two examples of what to measure. One example is specific to production activities and may be compiled by the Production Sub-Committee. The other is broader, covering all the activities of a group and for use by all group members to monitor as well as to evaluation functionality and performance.

8.3.1 Data generation techniques to establish group functionality and performance

There are many techniques that can be used to establish the functionality and performance of farmer groups. Most of them should be used in combination in order to triangulate by method. Triangulation is a process by which the validity or trustworthiness of findings can be enhanced.

Table 8.1: Data generation techniques to support monitoring and evaluation

Basis of data	Associated techniques or tools
Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on group meetings • Seasonal calendars • Photo documentation • Dairies of group members and promoters • Bank and financial statements • Training records • Recording sheets and booklets
Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus group discussions and meetings • Mapping and diagramming • Trends analysis • Key informant interviews • Ranking
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use transect walks • Participant observation

8.3.2 Seasonal calendar

A seasonal calendar is a specific monitoring tool that shows various activities that farmers engage in over the course of the year while at the same time tracking the flow of money. It shows, for example, when to acquire inputs, plant, weed, harvest and market produce. Organising the seasonal calendar by month gives one a good level of detail. Some of the specific budget items that may be included in a seasonal calendar are to do with:

- When income is likely to be received, how much and from where/whom;
- When expenses are likely to be incurred, how much and for what;
- When loans are likely to be got, from whom and how much;
- When repayment of loans is to be made; and
- When savings are likely to be made and how much.

A seasonal calendar may help members of a farmer group to determine when to make contributions; when to purchase inputs; when to market produce and when to conduct learning tours.

8.3.3 Group functionality monitoring and evaluation form

Below is a group evaluation form (Table 8.2) that each group can use to assess itself. The form will produce quantitative data. It is important to note that the indicators – that is what the group is going to measure – should be developed by or in consultation with group members. The group will then discuss the outcomes or analysis of the form to seek out explanations and priorities on what to do next. The group discussion generates qualitative data.

Table 8.2: Sample group functionality monitoring and evaluation

Aspect to measure (Indicator)	Strongly agree	Agree	Sometimes	Rarely
<i>Policies and structures</i>				
The Group has a constitution and by-laws that are known to members and abided by				
The group holds Annual General Meetings				
The group has structures that have clear division of roles and responsibilities				
<i>Leadership and management</i>				
The group's leadership style is appropriate				
The members of the group hold their leaders accountable				
Office bearers are elected based on provisions of the constitution				
The group has a good pool of leaders to choose from				
The group has established necessary sub-committees consistent with its stage of development and nature of focus				
The Management Committee shows transparency in financial accounts				
The Management Committee keeps a membership register, which is up to date				
<i>Meetings and participation</i>				
Members actively participate in decision-making				
Members pay their fees and participate in group activities				
Members attend weekly and monthly meetings regularly				
The Management committee is accountable to the group				
Women actively participate in meetings				
The meetings are productive				
Records of the meetings are properly kept				
The group maintains its assets and equipment				
<i>Group cohesion and relationships</i>				
Group members are united by a common interest and goal				
Group members show mutual trust among members				
There is evidence of effective communication within the group				
Group members are happy with the allocation of tasks				
Inter-personal relations among group members are healthy				
The Management Committee effectively manages group conflicts				
The group has demonstrated capacity to solve problems				
The group has quality of relationships with its stakeholders				
<i>Direction</i>				
Group members have shared interests				
The group has developed vision and mission statements that are widely shared				
The group has established goals				
The group has developed main strategies to achieve its goals				
The group has identified its main stakeholder groups and how it plans to engage them				
The group has money saving activities				

8.3.4 Guidelines for participatory monitoring and evaluation

One of the effective ways of developing monitoring and evaluation mechanism is as follows:

- Involve all the members in the identification of the dimensions of the project that are to be monitored and evaluated;
- Agree on the final list of things to monitor and evaluate;
- Allocate scores against each criterion so that those that are more important carry more marks; and those that are less important carry less;
- Carry out the assessment individually;
- Combine and analyse the results of the assessment; and
- Make sense of the assessment by discussing the outcomes of the assessments. Pay special attention to areas with low average scores as well as areas that have a wide range of individual scores.

8.3.5 Guidelines for evaluating impact using stories of change

Most Significant Change stories is a qualitative technique used in participatory monitoring and evaluation to measure impact. It can be applied during the course of an intervention or at the end. It provides stories of change that have taken place as a result of an intervention. It is often called 'monitoring-without-indicators' because it does not use indicators unlike the conventional project approach. Below is a summary of the basis steps to take in developing stories of change:

1. Defining the domains of change	a. Identify the areas or domains of change that need to be monitored. Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member participation; • Relationships in the group; • Production; and • Income generation.
2. Defining the reporting period	a. Decide on how often the monitoring and writing of stories should be done
3. Collecting stories	a. Project staff collect stories of change from the people by asking a question such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What, in your opinion, has been the most significant change caused by the group projects?</i> • <i>Why do you consider this as the most significant change?</i>
4. Selecting the most significant of the stories	a. The stories are then analysed in the group and the best stories are selected. b. The criteria used for selecting stories should be decided by group members in consultation with a group promoter. c. The question to ask is: <i>'From among all these significant changes, what do you think was the most significant change of all?'</i>

8.3.6 Guidelines on what the group promoter may monitor

Experience by some farmer groups suggests that it is helpful to have the group promoter involved in an independent monitoring and evaluation of the group that he/she works with. Some of the group functionality and performance aspects that he/she should assess include:

- Group record keeping;
- Quality of documentation (reports);
- Savings and loan patterns and trends;
- Market trends: production, prices and volume sales by groups;
- Requests for specialised training;
- Skill formation across the groups;
- Subsidies provided to the group; and
- Income generated by the group.

8.4 Group promoter's guidelines

- Objectives:* By the end of the training sessions covering this section, participants should be able to understand and use important monitoring and evaluation tools. This should contribute to the group's learning, performance, transparency and accountability.
- Training sessions:* Three training sessions are recommended.

Session	Suggested topics
1	Meaning, value and purpose of monitoring and evaluation, sources of monitoring and evaluation information and data generation methods
2	Monitoring and evaluation tools, techniques and guidelines
3	Developing monitoring tools

- Suggested facilitation methods:* Session 1 could start with a presentation of the suggested topics. This could be followed by a discussion on sources of monitoring and evaluation information that connects with the Governance section where most of the records are covered and discussed. Discussions on quantitative and qualitative data will be important in order to underline how these complement each other. The importance of having a treasurer, production coordinator and marketing coordinator with good quantitative data generation and analysis skills may need to be emphasized. It may also be a good point at which to establish some of the training needs of the group. During Session 2 participants could be exposed to a range of monitoring tools including some that are covered under governance (membership register, financial reports etc). It would be important to present the group functionality monitoring and evaluation form and to discuss it with the group. The third session could be on the design of the group's own monitoring tools.

Sample session: Developing monitoring tools

- **Define annual objectives:** Ask group members to define the most important things they want to achieve by the end of the year and linked to their goals.
- **Establish baseline information:** For each annual objective establish the current status. For example, if the target is to jointly produce and sale 10,000 chickens to a buyer identified beforehand, establish current chicken production levels.
- **What to monitor:** Ask participants to identify what they will monitor under each objective. For example, in chicken production they may wish to monitor the number of chicks bought by group members, cost of feeds, income and profit. Group functionality will have different aspects to monitor.
- **Who to monitor and how often:** Ask participants to identify who will be responsible for monitoring objectives and their associated activities and how often this should be done. The frequency of monitoring will be determined by the nature of the activities and objective.
- **Tools for collecting information:** Ask participants to design or adopt tools for collective data under each objective. Where necessary, group members may be trained on the use of the tools.

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