



FARMERS VOICE RADIO

Engaging External Advisors and Stakeholders in Farmers' Voice Radio projects

The Programme Reference Group is at the heart of the Farmers' Voice Radio model, with most programme content generated through the members' regular facilitated discussions. However, external advisors and stakeholders—such as technical experts, government officials, supply chain actors, researchers etc. with experience and knowledge relevant to the subject matter—have an important role to play in ensuring that radio broadcasts are accurate, current and comprehensive. Involvement in Farmers' Voice Radio projects also enables these stakeholders to better understand the perspective and needs of smallholder farmers, complementing other research tools, facilitating the delivery of more relevant services and making supply chains more transparent.

There are different options for engaging external advisors and stakeholders, from participation in a formally convened committee, to participating in regular conference calls, to providing interviews on specific topics to inform Programme Reference Group discussions. We suggest using the following steps to bring stakeholders on board with your Farmers' Voice Radio initiative.



01 Identifying External Advisors and Key Stakeholders

The training and planning workshop should include a session on stakeholder mapping after the overarching radio programme targets have been agreed. There are many tools available to help with this but we like the simple venn diagram approach on page 154 of [VSO's Guide to Participatory Approaches](#). Once all the main external advisors and stakeholders have been mapped and classified (service providers, government officers, local leaders, suppliers, buyers, research stations etc.), refer back to the agreed targets to identify which organisations and individuals have the greatest interest in and are in the best position to provide technical input on the sub-topics listed in the programme content plan.

Example:

Key stakeholders contributing to a Farmers' Voice Radio project targeting tea smallholders in Rungwe, Tanzania included a tea farmers' association, a Tanzanian tea company, the tea research Institute of Tanzania, an African Foundation focused on transformation of the tea industry, a UK tea company and a UK retailer.

It is worth mentioning that extension agents (agriculture, veterinary, fisheries etc.) are likely to be one of the most significant stakeholder groups in most projects. We do not name them specifically here, however, as they are already considered to be key members of the Farmers' Voice Radio implementation team and hopefully regularly attend Programme Reference Group meetings.



02 Engaging External Advisors and Stakeholders

Ideally, it will be possible to engage the most crucial individuals and organisations identified in the stakeholder mapping in activities such as:

- providing technical input to the radio programmes (such as content for information sheets)
- reviewing the radio broadcasts and listener feedback¹ and answering technical questions from listeners
- monitoring any changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour reported in the target communities
- advising on changes to the programme content plan going forward.

Input can be provided in a one-to-one or a group meeting, which could be a physical meeting or a conference call depending on the physical location of the group and their time commitments.

Example:

In northern Ghana, Farmers' Voice Radio is targeting shea nut collectors and butter processors. A key strategic stakeholder both in Ghana and internationally is the Global Shea Alliance (GSA), which promotes industry sustainability, quality practices and standards, and demand for shea in food and cosmetic products. Due to distance, it is not possible to have regular physical meetings to gather input from GSA to the radio programmes; however GSA training materials have provided technical content to the Programme Reference Group discussions and we have also shared radio programme transcripts and reports to gather their expert feedback. In addition, a GSA representative participated in the mid-term review to share their learning and expertise. The project has recently expanded, and the project team now also have regular conference calls to share project progress, and ensure that GSA's technical knowledge is embedded in the project.



03 Interviewing External Advisors and Stakeholders

One of the most concrete ways in which external advisors and stakeholders can contribute to Farmers' Voice Radio programme content is to provide interviews and direct advice to farmers. Again, depending on language and geographical constraints, relevant stakeholders could be invited to attend Programme Reference Group meetings where they can share their expertise on a particular topic and answer farmers' questions. Alternatively, radio presenters can record interviews with stakeholders at the studio and edit these into the radio programmes. During the pandemic and travel restrictions in northern Ghana, radio presenters also conducted telephone interviews with external advisors and Programme Reference Group leaders, that were recorded and edited in to radio programmes.

Example:

NIMFRU is a multi-partnership project which is engaging with researchers, policy makers, local councils and local farmers to improve the targeting, relevance and communications of flood warning and response in Uganda. LYF's role is to pilot Farmers Voice Radio for this purpose in the flood prone Katawki District, in partnership with local conservation NGO ECOTRUST and Ateso language radio station, ETOP FM. Because the ability to access and understand weather patterns and forecasts is so vital in increasing communities' resilience to climate change impacts such as flooding, an officer from the Uganda National Meteorological Authority participated regularly in Programme Reference Group meetings to present weather data and answer farmers' questions.

¹ Depending on the language used for radio broadcasts and is spoken and understood by stakeholders, it may be necessary to translate and transcribe the radio programmes and listener feedback into a common language. We have provided some guidance for translation and transcription in [Resource 12 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning](#).