



FARMERS VOICE RADIO

Establishing the Baseline for Farmers' Voice Radio Projects

Baseline data collection establishes the situation at the start of a project and is a critical part of any Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning process. In the [Training and Planning Workshop](#) you will have agreed the targets for your Farmers' Voice Radio programme series. Before you start the Programme Reference Group discussions you will need to establish the current situation for each target – this is called the “baseline”. In some cases, you might have existing data available, such as local government statistics or from previous projects. In most cases you will need to do a survey or qualitative research to establish the baseline. Baseline data will also help inform the Programme Reference Group discussions, what local experts and stakeholders should be included and the priority topics for the radio programmes.

Example: in northern Ghana, Farmers' Voice Radio is targeting shea nut gatherers and butter processors. In the training and planning workshop, the following four targets were agreed for the radio programmes:

1) Improving the quality and volume of shea nuts and butter production; **2)** improving market information and access for collectors and butter producers; **3)** Improving the health and safety of collectors and butter producers; **4)** Improving environmental sustainability of the shea sector. Each target was then broken down into a number of sub-topics and data gathered to understand the target communities' current situation in relation to these. For example, for target two, a survey and stakeholder interviews were used to establish what market linkages were in place; whether any groups or associations existed; what prices collectors and butter producers were receiving; what finance was available; and the general level of understanding of the shea market.

Having baseline data will enable you to monitor progress or change over time and provide evidence to demonstrate that change (when you undertake a midline and endline assessment later in the project's timeline). Baseline data will also provide valuable information to inform the design of the Farmers' Voice Radio project and content of the radio programmes.

If required, LYF advisors can work with you to develop an appropriate baseline approach for your project, set parameters for the data collection and design the tools that you could use (such as a survey or interviews).

In most cases we recommend the baseline data collection is done in the focus communities where the Programme Reference Groups will be based. However, you may choose to include another listening community and/or perhaps a 'control' community (which will not receive the radio broadcasts) in order to compare results and seek to further demonstrate the impact of the project. It is worth stating that it is very hard to have a true 'control' group when using radio, as radio reach is not clearly defined, and radio messages have a multiplying effect.

In most cases we recommend that any baseline survey uses the following parameters:

- Involvement of min. 5% of the total target beneficiaries from the focus communities, including the Programme Reference Group members in each location. This should be an equal mix of women and men, and a mix of ages.
- Undertaken in the household setting. One form should be completed for each household interviewed and only family representatives over the age of 18 should be interviewed. We recommend alternating between interviewing a man in household 1 and then a woman in household 2, and taking a similar approach with ages so that there is a spread of responses.
- Conducted in local language and taking no longer than 1 hour per respondent. Participation should be voluntary, and all responses should be anonymised.

A sample survey questionnaire and accompanying data entry tool from a shea butter project in Ghana are available to download and adapt.