



FARMERS VOICE RADIO

Establishing Farmer Programme Reference Groups

Step 01

Hold a meeting in the target community (making sure to obtain permission from the relevant village authorities) **to introduce the purpose of the Farmers' Voice Radio project and the sequence of activities.**

Use the meeting to explain:



The community may have useful feedback or questions at this point about the role of radio and type of information that is most needed.

Step 02

With the support of extension officers or other local outreach workers with good community knowledge, **identify 10-12 people from each community who will be members of the Programme Reference Group and participate in regular, detailed discussions.** This number is important: if a group is too large then discussions become unwieldy and it will not be cohesive; if it is too small, there will be a limited range of farmer types. The group should reflect a cross-section of the community, by gender, age and wealth group. Ideally, 50% of members will be women and people with disabilities should be enabled to participate. Members must be willing to attend regular meetings, to actively participate in discussions using their own experience and to put into practice the new knowledge that they gain, feeding back on the results. A full terms of reference for Programme Reference Group members is available to download.

Step 03

Ask group members to identify amongst themselves two leaders, at least one of whom should be a woman. These people should be based in the community, literate in both the local language and the language of the project team and have sufficient motivation and authority to mobilise regular meetings, particularly during the rainy season or busy periods (you will need to decide if this role is voluntary or requires a small payment). **Agree how frequently, at what time and where the group will meet,** together with the local facilitator, extension officers and radio presenters, in order to record content for 4-6 weeks of radio programmes content.

Step 04

Conduct a participatory exercise during the first visit with the newly formed members of the Programme Reference Group in order to establish a shared baseline and understanding of the challenges that members are facing in relation to the radio programme theme. We recommend using an **exercise to develop a seasonal calendar**, which could focus on one specific crop or more broadly on people's agricultural and other livelihood activities. The University of Reading's Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) field manual includes an excellent step-by-step guide to constructing a seasonal calendar on p.13/14 (<https://research.reading.ac.uk/picsa/resources/picsa-manual/>).

Through the baseline research you will have already collected detailed information on the target community, including assets, livelihood activities and farming calendar. The purpose of completing this short participatory exercise is to record what activities the farmers are planning for this coming season, based on information/experience they have at that time before the season starts.

Below is a suggested recording structure to capture the farmers' perceptions of what activities they are planning for the coming season. Content can be added using symbols or words.

	Upcoming agricultural season (let participants agree relevant time periods, e.g. months)	Considerations
Expected weather		Reflect on historical and current weather patterns, how these might have changes and what impact they have on activities
Crops to plant this coming year Draw or list crops:		Likely timing for key activities e.g. preparation, seeding, applying fertiliser / manure, pesticides / herbicides, replanting, harvesting for each crop. What expectations for sale, use, when?
Livestock activities		
Fishing activities		

We recommend that the outputs of this exercise are written up and stored as individual or shared calendars.

They may be useful later in the project to reflect on changes to practices and behaviours as farmers gain new information and knowledge through the discussions and radio programmes.

Step 05

Explain to the group that they are now expected to attend the Programme Reference Group meetings at the agreed times /dates, to listen to the weekly radio broadcasts and to reflect on how they might adapt their activities through the season. For guidance on how to run Programme Reference Group meetings see [Resource 11](#). At the end of the radio programme series, the project team will return to engage with them again to review experiences and practice. Programme Reference Group members may also be issued with a reflective diary (see template in [Resource 12 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning](#)) in which they can note their responses to the programmes. These diaries can be a valuable source of information for monitoring and a discussion tool during project monitoring meetings.

If radio access is an issue for group members, wind-up or solar powered radio sets could be provided so that the group can arrange to listen together at an agreed time. These should be available to buy locally. Some options for recordable MP3 communal radio devices can be found on the Lifeline Energy website: <https://www.lifelineenergy.org/technology/>. You may also want to consider setting up Communal Listening Sessions in target communities, that are facilitated by a Radio Champion. More information about Communal Listening Sessions is outlined in [Resoure 10 Options for Engaging Listeners](#).