

Agricultural Extension Manual
Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7

PLANNING FARMER RESPONSIVE EXTENSION ROGRAMMES

7.0 INTRODUCTION

The Department is responsible for providing high quality agricultural services to farmers in response to local needs. The type of service, and the way in which it is provided, is given in two ways:

- extension events *planned in advance* which form the Annual Extension Plan;
- extension events *planned in response to day to day interaction with farmers* as follow up activities.

Events Planned in Advance

Each year, staff in every thana identify farmer information needs, and prepare an extension plan for the next financial year, covering three seasons. Generally, the annual extension plan includes major items of work, such as motivational tours, method demonstrations, result demonstrations, field days and formal farmer training. The annual plan comprises three seasons, each of which is reviewed for appropriateness prior to implementation.

Follow-up Events

During the year, Block Supervisors work closely with farmers, implementing activities from the annual extension plan. In many cases, implementing these activities leads to new ideas for extension events, and for follow-up work, which was not in the annual extension plan. In order to maintain flexibility, and where these ideas involve no significant additional expenditure, they should be undertaken.

Extension staff should not confuse these two types of planning, they both aim at providing farmer responsive extension activities, one planned in advance, and one planned in response to day-to-day interaction with farmers.

For example, the annual extension plan may include a motivational tour to a research station. At the end of the tour, the extension staff and farmers may decide that it would be useful to implement a method demonstration about one of the technologies they saw on the tour as a follow-up activity. **Chapters 10 and 11** are about Extension Methods and they provide some ideas for possible follow-up activities.

This Chapter concentrates on the development of annual farmer responsive extension plans, based on the annual extension planner.

7.1 THE ANNUAL EXTENSION PLANNER

The Annual Extension Planner is shown in **Figure 7.1**. It follows a sequence of 15 steps, which should be completed within a specific period of time, in order to produce an extension plan for approval at headquarters. This sequence of steps is shown in **Table 7.1**.

Plans are produced each year. They are reviewed before each season to ensure that they remain appropriate. These reviews are conducted through the Thana Agricultural Extension Co-ordination Committee, the District Extension Planning Committee and the Agricultural Technical Committee.

FIGURE 7.1: AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PLANNER

Task	Activity	Responsibility	Kharif-II				Rabi				Kharif-I					
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J		
Farmer Information Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Problem Census, PRA BS write farmers problems in BS diary, regularly 	BS	[Shaded bar from J to J]													
Thana Agricultural Extension Co-ordination Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review FINA results and performance of extension programmes Brief review of forthcoming extension programmes Review organisational responsibilities and collaborative programmes, and develop proposals 	TAO		Rabi & Annual						Kharif-I					Kharif-II	
Collect & bring together Planning Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Seasonal Extension Monitoring System results Review Technical Audit and KAP results Collect credit, marketing, input and other information Collect information on other organisations working in the area 	TAO	Annual													
Thana Agriculture Extension Planning Workshop (Annual Thana Extension Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review FINA results and develop agriculture extension plans Check plan with farmers 	TAO			Annual											
Prepare documents of Thana Annual Extension Plan and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Form A1 Send Form A1 to district 	TAO				Annual										
District Extension Planning Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise Thana Annual Extension Plans (Form A1) Review and revise programme for forthcoming season Review and revise proposals from TAEC for collaborative projects 	DD (District)			Rabi				Annual		Kharif-I				Kharif-II	
Prepare Annual In-Service Training and Media Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide what in-service training & national media support is required Send requests for in-service training & media support to Director FSW 	DD (District)							Annual							
Prepare Consolidated Annual District Extension Plan and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add thana plans (Form A1's) together Prepare Form A Send set of thana plans + Form A to District 	DD (District)								Annual						
Agricultural Technical Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review & revise technical content of district plans Review programme for forthcoming season Review proposals for research and collaborative projects 	AD (Region)			Rabi					Annual	Kharif-I					Kharif-II
Advise Annual District Extension Plans and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts make final adjustments to plan and budget Send to Additional Director, Region 	DD (District)									Annual					
Prepare Consolidated Annual Regional Extension Plan and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Region compiles District Annual Plans into regional plan and budget Submit regional consolidated plan and budget to headquarters 	AD (Region)									Annual					
Conduct In-Service Staff Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget for extension programme received before season Train staff before start of season 	TAO DD			Rabi						Kharif-I					Kharif-II
Implement and Monitor (SEMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal implementation and monitoring Regions conduct technical audit Complete SEMS Districts conduct supervision for thanas 	All Staff		Kharif-II						Rabi						Kharif-I
Evaluate Last Years Extension Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge, attitude and practice surveys Prepare SEMS summaries and evaluation reports 	TAO & DD (District)		Kharif-II						Rabi						Kharif-I
Develop Estimated Budget for Next Year Report of Last Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline budget sent to region for compilation & AD send to DAE HQ District prepare previous years activities report 	DD (District)		Next Budget	Report											

TABLE 7.1: ANNUAL PLANNING STEPS

<p>1. Farmer Information Needs Assessment</p>	<p>Working with male and female farmers, operating small and large farms, to identify problems and information needs, using the Problem Census, PRA, meetings and the Block Supervisor Diary.</p>
<p>2. Thana Agricultural Extension Co-ordination Committee meetings</p>	<p>Sharing information about farmer needs, available resources and ideas for collaboration between all local Government and Non-Government extension agencies.</p>
<p>3. Collating planning information</p>	<p>Combining / Merging background information, monitoring and evaluation data, results of KAP Surveys and Technical Audits and FINA results to help in planning.</p>
<p>4. Thana Planning Workshops</p>	<p>Developing an extension plan on the basis of FINA and planning information, by involving all DAE extension staff in the thana, and inviting other organisations if appropriate.</p>
<p>5. Preparing thana planning and budgeting documents</p>	<p>Writing up the results of the Thana Planning Workshop and preparing documents including Form A1.</p>
<p>6. District Extension Planning Committee meetings</p>	<p>Reviewing and approving thana extension plans.</p>
<p>7. Preparing annual in-service training and media requests</p>	<p>Preparing requests for national level mass media and in-service staff training programmes.</p>
<p>8. Preparing annual district extension plan and budget</p>	<p>Preparing a plan of district level activities (Form A), then sending them to regional level.</p>
<p>9. Agricultural Technical Committee meetings</p>	<p>Conducting a technical review of extension plans at regional level, with research participation.</p>
<p>10. Adjusting district extension plans</p>	<p>Adjusting thana and district extension plans on the basis of ATC reviews.</p>
<p>11. Preparing consolidated Regional Extension Plans and budgets</p>	<p>Consolidating all thana and district level extension plans and budgets on computer at regional level, and sending these to headquarters for approval.</p>
<p>12. Conducting in-service training</p>	<p>Training staff in the necessary technical and extension skills prior to implementing the extension plan.</p>
<p>13. Implementing and monitoring</p>	<p>Implementing extension activities as planned, and using the Seasonal Extension Monitoring System and Technical Audits.</p>
<p>14. Evaluating last years extension programme</p>	<p>Evaluating extension programmes using Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Surveys. Analysing SEMS and Technical Audit results.</p>
<p>15. Developing budget for next Financial Year and reporting last years extension programme.</p>	<p>Estimating budgets which will be required for next year, and preparing a brief annual report for last year.</p>

7.2 FARMER INFORMATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Extension programmes concentrate on meeting the needs of farm households, in particular helping them solve the key technical problems they face in farming and homestead activities. Most extension messages and activities are based on needs, problems and potentials identified at farm level. Identification of farmer needs is vital for planning an effective extension programme. On the basis of the needs identified, messages can be developed and targeted at specific groups within the farming community. The methods by which DAE identify farmer information needs are described in detail in **Chapter 6**.

Compiling FINA Results for Annual Planning

In each thana the Block Supervisors conduct meetings, discussions and Problem Censuses with farmers throughout the year, and record the results in their diary and on Problem Census result sheets. They may also be using some of the PRA techniques. Results of PRA techniques are also recorded in the diary. Once a year, this information is brought together to help in making a Thana Extension Plan.

FINA results are compiled in the annual planning and seasonal review process. For annual planning, the Agriculture Extension Officer is responsible for compiling a Thana Master List from PC results sheets. A guide for preparing Thana Master Lists follows.

PREPARING THANA MASTER LISTS

The easiest way to make a Thana Master list is to follow the tasks below:

1. *Separate the Problem Census sheets into 4 piles:*
 - small female farmers;
 - large female farmers;
 - small male farmers; and
 - large male farmers.
2. *For each of these target groups prepare a Master List using the guide below:*
 - take one problem census result sheet from one of the piles. Use this as a master sheet to write on;
 - mark every problem on the sheet with a tally mark;
 - look at all the other sheets in the pile. Each time the same problem appears mark another tally mark beside it;
 - add new problems to the bottom of the master sheet as they appear;
 - mark new problems with a tally mark;
 - when all the sheets in the pile have been looked at, add up all the tally marks on the master result sheet. Write the total beside each problem. This will provide the **frequency** or importance of each problem;
 - repeat this exercise for all target groups. If Problem Census were not conducted for female farmers operating more than 1 ha collect problems which have been recorded in BS diaries;
 - add additional problems listed by BS from their diaries.
3. *Summarise the Master Lists:*
 - on a clean piece of paper make a grid:

Problem	F (L)	F (S)	M (L)	M (S)	DAE can Address

- look through the problems on each master list and try to group similar problems together;
- write all the problems from each master result sheet in the first column (if you have grouped problems try and list them in their groups);
- if the same problem appears do not write it again;
- for each target group write the frequency of each problem;
- assess the whole list. Decide which problems DAE can address alone and place a ✓ for each one in the last box. Leave the box blank if DAE cannot solve the problem alone (these problems are those which may require collaboration with other extension partners and should be discussed at the TAECC meeting).

7.3 THANA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEES

The Thana Agricultural Extension Co-ordination Committee (TAECC) has been established to assist in implementing the New Agricultural Extension Policy. It has no executive function for the Department, and acts instead as a place where extension partners can share information, ideas and resources, and develop ideas for collaboration and partnership. The TAECC meets at **least** three times each year:

August	To review farmer needs and ideas for programmes for the coming Rabi season, and for the next annual extension plan
January	To review farmer needs and ideas for programmes for the coming Kharif-I season
May	To review farmer needs and ideas for programmes for the coming Kharif-II season

The TAECC agenda may also include other items where co-ordination between extension providers is needed. TAECCs may also have a role in developing specific ideas for collaboration between agencies and approving and monitoring collaborative projects.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the TAECC include:

Review Farmer Information Needs Assessment results

Information about farmer needs should be shared between partners. Any information which local partners have, and which is available to DAE, can be used for planning. The TAECC is a good place to discuss such information. For example, DAE can use TAECC meetings to find out whether other agencies have FINA results, or whether they learned important lessons about what works well (or does not work well) locally. DAE should briefly present their FINA results and provide partners with copies of the master list of problems and frequencies. The problems which cannot be addressed alone i.e. those which require partnership should be noted.

Review past, present and future extension programmes

Each partner should present a briefing of what programmes are on-going, the experiences with these programmes, and what is planned for the future. For example, DAE could present their programme for the coming season as well as SEMS / KAP and Technical Audit results. Other partners should be encouraged to do the same.

Identify possibility for collaborative GO-NGO or GO-GO programmes in response to FINA

Problems which cannot be resolved by any one agency should be discussed. The potential for collaborative programmes within existing resources should be identified. These should be submitted to the District Extension Planning Committee.

Discuss staff training programmes and identify scope for joint training / participation

On-going and future in-service staff training should be discussed to see whether there is scope to include staff from partner agencies in training courses or whether there is scope for DAE staff to attend training organised by other organisations.

Maintain joint information halls

Resources available with each partner, and how these are accommodated should be discussed. There may be potential for developing joint mini-libraries or joint resource centres. It may also be possible to share training materials or visual aids.

Liaise with Thana Development Co-ordination Committee

The representative from the Thana Development Co-ordination Committee (TDCC) should present the minutes of TAECC meetings to the TDCC meetings and vice versa.

Membership

Membership comprises the DAE Agricultural Extension Officers, selected Block Supervisors if appropriate, a representative of the TDCC, and representatives of extension partners at thana level, including fisheries, livestock and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). Provision for farmer representatives (from crop, livestock or fisheries sectors) is also provided. TAECCs are chaired by each of the senior core members in rotation. DAE acts as the member secretary.

NGOs are selected by the Thana Nirbai Officer according to the following criteria:

NGO PARTICIPANTS

NGO must have:

- Government registration;
- at least three years agricultural experience;
- current agricultural programmes;
- an office in the thana;
- extension activities with women farmers in the thana;
- at least Diploma Agriculture staff who will attend the TAECC;
- technology transfer programmes;
- current liaison with NAEP partners;
- separate credit activities.

7.4 COLLATING PLANNING INFORMATION

High quality plans are made on the basis of relevant high quality information. Thana and district extension staff are expected to use the following information when planning:

Information about the current situation in the thana:

- market price of agricultural outputs;
- population data;
- agro-ecological information;
- cropping patterns;
- current agricultural production and market situation; and
- farmer needs and problems (FINA).

Information about the performance of extension programmes:

- monitoring results such as the Seasonal Extension Monitoring System (SEMS);
- evaluation results such as Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Survey;
- technical audit results; and
- an understanding of partner agencies in the area and their strengths and weaknesses.

Information about national policies:

- current agricultural policy;
- the New Agricultural Extension Policy;
- any national DAE initiatives or priorities; and
- current DAE planning and budgeting criteria.

Using Monitoring Data for Extension Planning

Chapter 12 contains details of procedures for monitoring and evaluating extension programmes. Two techniques are described; the Seasonal Extension Monitoring System (SEMS), and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice surveys (KAP). A third management technique, the Technical Audit is described in **Chapter 2**. All three techniques yield information about performance and it is essential that this is taken into account when planning. Both chapters also describe how monitoring data can be interpreted.

7.5 THANA PLANNING WORKSHOPS

A thana planning workshop is held once each year in September/October to prepare the annual thana extension plan. All DAE staff in the thana should attend the workshop, under the management and facilitation of the Thana Agricultural Officer.

KEY FEATURES OF THE WORKSHOP

- Planning information is collated before the workshop, to guide participants in preparing a high quality plan. Collated information should include, as an absolute minimum, FINA, SEMS, KAP, Technical Audit results, the output from TA ECC meetings and information from extension partners.
- The workshop is participatory, and all staff have an equal opportunity to contribute to the decision making process, under the facilitation of the TAO.
- The workshop can involve other extension partners if the TAO feels this is appropriate. For example, if the fisheries department and DAE decided to work together on rice-fish programmes then it would be worthwhile inviting the Thana Fisheries Officer to the workshop.

The workshop has three sessions:

- Session 1: Consideration of planning information;
- Session 2: Generation of objectives, indicators and means of verification; and
- Session 3: Selection of activities.

In each session, the TAO divides workshop participant into smaller groups of 5-6 people, and asks them to prepare ideas for presentations in a plenary session. During the presentation, conclusions should be reached about the planning information, objectives and activities. At the end of the workshop, the TAO should be able to use these conclusions to finalise the planning documents (using Form A1). Form A1 is described later in this chapter.

Consideration of Planning Information

During this first session, participants review the information from FINA, SEMS, KAP, Technical Audit and other extension partners to decide what the key features of the thana plan should be. Useful questions to assist this process include:

- What are the core problems that farmers are facing? (the answer to this should be derived from the Thana Master List);
- Are there specific technologies that are no longer appropriate? (SEMS and KAP results can help answer this question);
- Are there specific technologies which definitely need to be included? (SEMS and KAP analysis may help answer this);
- Are there certain extension methods which have not worked well in the past, and need to be improved or dropped for a while? (SEMS and KAP analysis should help answer this question);
- Are there certain extension methods which proved cost-effective and successful, and should be included again? (again SEMS and KAP analysis can be used);
- Are there important areas (technologies or extension) where staff need extra training? (SEMS, KAP analysis and Technical Audit can be used).

Generation of Objectives, Indicators and Means of Verification

On the basis of the planning information, and the answers to the questions above, this second session determines the overall objectives required for the plan and, for each objective, how can success be indicated.

Indicators should be **SMART**:

Specific and **S**tretching
Measurable
Agreed and **A**chievable
Realistic and
Time-bounded.

Thana plans should also demonstrate how each indicator will be measured or verified. Examples include, information recorded in the Block Supervisors Diary, SEMS, KAP or Technical Audit results. **Figure 7.2** shows two examples of objectives, indicators and means of verification, using the thana plan format (Form A1).

FIGURE 7.2: OBJECTIVES, INDICATORS AND MEANS OF VERIFICATION

Description of Objective 1	Indicators of Achievement of Objective 1	Means of Verification of Objective 1
Increase the capacity of female farmers to grow homestead vegetables	200 female farmers in 100 groups, five in each block, produced high quality homestead vegetables by June 1999.	Tick from the following: <input type="checkbox"/> BS Diary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEMS <input type="checkbox"/> KAP Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Audit
Description of Objective 2	Indicators of Achievement of Objective 2	Means of Verification of Objective 2
Increase the capacity of staff to conduct FINA accurately and effectively	30 Block Supervisors each worked with 4 groups of farmers, covering all target categories and identified specific information needs, and recorded these in their diary by July 1999.	Tick from the following: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BS Diary <input type="checkbox"/> SEMS <input type="checkbox"/> KAP Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Audit

Selection of Activities

Once objectives have been selected, the workshop should decide what activities are required. This happens during this, the final season. For every objective, there should be sufficient activities to ensure that the objective is achieved. TAOs can divide workshop participants into groups, one for each objective. The task for each group being to develop a list of activities.

Thana plans should include one activity for each group that participated in the problem census. This means that during this session BS should review their diaries for the top five problems recorded during each PC. Participants should agree suitable activities for inclusion in the plan. These are recorded under the suitable objective by the AEO or TAO during the final plan preparation.

All project activities and special programmes should be included in the thana plan. To assist in ensuring that thana plans meet DAE's requirements the following list can be used by the AEO and TAO after the workshop. Where there are any gaps or areas which could be strengthened, the AEO and TAO should make minor changes to the plan.

MEETING REQUIREMENTS
<p>Thana Plans should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequately address farmer needs; • define enough objectives to meet farmer needs; • use SMART indicators; • include activities required to achieve each objective; • show how staff training is built into the extension plan; • show the use of a range of extension methods; • show how DAE will work in partnership with other agencies; • provide extension services to all target groups; • demonstrate cost-effectiveness and sensible use of resources; • not have a negative environmental impact.

7.6 PREPARING THE ANNUAL THANA PLANNING FORM

After the Thana Planning Workshop, thana level staff can complete the Thana Planning Form A1, which is shown in **Annex VIII**. The sections in the form correspond to the sessions of the Thana Planning Workshop.

Section 1: is for objectives. The form makes provision for six objectives, but this should be adapted to local needs. Sometimes there may be less objectives and sometimes there may be more.

Section 2: is for activities. A separate Section 2 should be completed for each season. The form is based on MIS Codes which are described in DAE's annual planning instructions. There are codes for each extension method. There are codes for each type of technology. There are codes for each crop. Codes for method, technology and crop are combined to create a code for every planned extension event.

Section 3: is simply a budget summary showing how funds have been allocated. Part B of this section is only relevant to those projects whose target criteria are the same as DAE Policy. These are given in the DAE Planning Instructions which are published annually. In the future however, all projects will conform to the same targeting criteria.

Form A1 contains details of all planned activities for the next year. However, a complete plan should include the following items:

- **A Cover:** to identify the Thana, with the DAE logo (monogramme);
- **An Introduction:** a brief summary of the main activities included in the plan and a brief description of the type of information used to make the plan. This should not be a detailed background account of the Thana. The focus of the introduction should be about the reasons why the planned activities have been selected.
- **SEMS / KAP / Technical Audit Summaries:** a written summary of evaluation results and lessons learnt which have contributed to the plan should be included. For example, successes and failures recorded by SEMS. SEMS forms should not be included in the document.
- **The Thana Master List of Farmer Problems:** the Thana Master List should be included.
- **Form A1:** Sections 1, 2 and 3 should be completed clearly and accurately.

A copy of the completed Thana Planning Form is retained in the thana office. Block Supervisors are responsible for re-visiting some of the farmers who participated in the Problem Censuses, to make sure that planned objectives and activities really do meet their needs. They should therefore record the planned activities for their PC groups in their diaries.

Another copy of the plan is sent to the district office, to be assessed by district staff before the District Extension Planning Committee meeting.

7.7 DISTRICT EXTENSION PLANNING COMMITTEES

The District Extension Planning Committee (DEPC) also forms part of the chain of committees which assist with the implementation of the New Agricultural Extension Policy. The main functions of the DEPC are to: review Thana Plans before submission to regional offices for approval and consolidation; review the activities in Thana Plans prior to each season; and to plan District level activities. The key to organising and managing successful DEPC meetings is to create an environment whereby partner agencies are able to contribute to the review and planning process.

Before the annual DEPC meeting, thana plans should have been reviewed by one of the District Officers to ensure that they have been completed correctly. This will save time during the meeting.

The DEPC is a forum for partnership and discussion. The DEPC itself cannot consolidate or implement plans. This is done under the management of the respective agency. However, in DAE's case, the DEPC is an executive committee with the authority to approve thana plans for submission to the ATC for technical validation.

Terms of Reference

Review and approve thana extension plans

Each TAO should present a brief summary of the thana plan, concentrating on Form A1, which should be reviewed by participants, amended if necessary and approved. When reviewing thana plans, participants should refer to the thana planning workshop checklist described in **Section 7.5**.

Prepare consolidated district extension plans and forward to ATC

The DEPC as a committee cannot consolidate plans. This task must be conducted by the Deputy Director, District, after the meeting, using Form A. Form A is where district level activities can be added, and a budget summary prepared. The Deputy Director should bundle all thana plans together and attach Form A, a copy should be retained at the district office and the plan sent to the region. This is the only type of consolidation that is required.

Implement extension programmes, and oversee monitoring, supervision and evaluation

The DEPC as a committee cannot implement programmes. This is done by the staff of DAE and other agencies, as per plan. However, before each season, the DEPC should check that forthcoming programmes remain valid. The DEPC should assess the quality of on-going or completed programmes by reviewing SEMS, KAP and Technical Audit results and making recommendations for improvement.

Publicise extension programmes through regional radio

Approved programmes should be sent to the regional radio station. Radio stations should be encouraged to broadcast items which are related to the technical content of extension programmes. Radio staff should be encouraged to accompany extension staff at specific events such as farmers rallies or fairs. The Additional Director (Region) is responsible for liaison with Bangladesh Betar, as described in **Chapter 11**.

Provide technical co-ordination for arranging district fairs

The DEPC is the perfect forum for partners to share ideas concerning the content, schedule, funding and other logistical arrangements for district fairs. All the extension partners could contribute to the cost of fairs, as they provide a benefit to all participating organisations.

Provide technical advice for other development activities

Where the DEPC has been approached for advice outside the field of agricultural extension, assistance should be given wherever possible.

Review proposed collaborative programmes in thana plans

Where there is a special proposal for a collaborative programme from a thana, this should be presented by the Thana Agricultural Officer, and reviewed by DEPC participants.

Identify scope for meeting farmer needs through collaboration at district level

The DEPC should identify information needs and farm level problems which have not been addressed in the DAE thana extension plans, plans of other partners, or collaborative programmes. If possible a district level collaborative programme can then be proposed, agreements developed, and these sent to the ATC. Collaborative programmes should, wherever possible, be implemented within existing resources.

Discuss staff training events, and identify scope for joint training / participation

Partners who have on-going or forthcoming staff training programmes, or who are planning future programmes, should present details. Wherever possible, and where appropriate, staff from other partner organisations should be invited to attend such training.

Maintain liaison with District Development Co-ordination Committee (DDCC)

The representative from the DDCC should present the minutes of DEPC meetings to the next DDCC meeting, and vice versa.

Composition

The DEPC is chaired on a rotation basis by senior core members. These include: the Deputy Director, DAE, District Livestock Officer, the District Fisheries Officer, the Executive Engineer Water Development Board, the Deputy Director (Seeds) BADC, and the Deputy Director, BRDB. DAE acts as the member secretary. Other participants include:

- the DAE District Training Officer;
- Thana Agricultural Officers;
- representatives from NGOs;
- representative from Bangladesh Betar;
- research representatives especially the Senior Scientific Officer, Soil Research Development Institute (SRDI), and others where there is a local research station;
- a representative from the lead bank;
- private sector representatives.

NGO participants are selected according to the following criteria:

NGO PARTICIPANTS

NGOs Must Have:

- Government registration;
- at least three years agricultural experience;
- current agricultural programmes in the District;
- an office in the District;
- extension activities with women farmers in the District;
- at least BSc Agriculture staff who will attend the DEPC;
- technology transfer programmes;
- current liaison with NAEP partners;
- separate credit activities.

DEPC Schedule of Meetings

The DEPC meets four times each year, after the TAEC meetings and the Thana Planning Workshops as follows:

December	To review and approve plans for the next financial year
February	To review and approve plans for the coming Kharif-I season
May	To review approve plans for the coming Kharif-II season
September	To review and approve plans for the coming Rabi season

The meeting in December, to review and approve plans for the next financial year, should be a rigorous in-depth assessment of the quality of plans. At all other meetings, in September, February and May, the plan for the coming season will have already been approved. In this case, the DEPC should ensure that:

- the activities which have been approved are still relevant;
- there are no urgent problems which should be addressed in the coming season;
- new ideas which have arisen over the last few months can be included in the plan (but only at no or very low cost).

7.8 PREPARING ANNUAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND MEDIA REQUESTS

A key area of the revised extension approach is decentralisation. This means that much of the work of planning and managing extension programmes is done by thana and district staff, rather than headquarters. Headquarters now has more of a support function.

In-Service Training Requests

In-service training is planned locally in the same way as extension activities - on Form A1 Section 2 (see **Chapter 8**). However, some of the training that staff may need to implement activities or respond to new needs may not be possible to arrange locally. In this case, these needs should be submitted to the Director, Training Wing, in order for them to be included in the Master Training Plan.

Media Requests

The Media Cell described in **Chapter 2** is responsible for providing media support to field staff. It has co-ordinated a large number of productions, including seed videos, flip charts and posters, and the Annual Extension Planner. The Media Cell is a responsive service for field offices and will consider requests from thanas and districts. For example, some field staff have requested media support for seed extension activities and the Media Cell has provided material in response. Once each year, at the time of preparing the annual extension plan, districts should send media requests to the Media Cell.

7.9 PREPARING THE CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT EXTENSION PLAN

The District Planning Form A is provided in **Annex IX**. There are two parts. Part 1 is for district level events. Here, the district staff itemise extension activities to be implemented at district level to support the thana plans. Examples include preparing district bulletins, district agricultural fairs, and training of thana level staff.

Part 2 is a budget summary and contains a summary of Thana budgets from planning forms (A1).

The consolidated district extension plan comprises a copy of each Thana Plan plus a copy of the District Planning Form A, bundled together. It should be sent to the Regional DAE office for presentation at the ATC.

7.10 AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the function of ATCs and how they provide a linkage between research and extension. In terms of planning, ATCs have a key role as they are responsible for reviewing potentially inappropriate technologies included in district plans.

Detailed guidelines on schedule, planning and management of Agricultural Technical Committees, which are chaired by senior core members on a rotation basis, follow.

These have been specifically prepared for DAE. If other organisations chair the meeting then it is up to the Additional Director to ensure that the ATC meets DAE's requirements.

GUIDELINES FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF ATCS

The Role of the ATC for DAE

ATCs have a vital role to play. They are where extension and research staff come together. Research-extension linkage is a two way process, as DAE needs to stimulate research ideas (via unanswered farmer problems) for research institutes, and the Research Institutes need to promote the transfer of new technologies to farmers. The purpose of the ATC is to:

- ensure that technologies offered to farmers, in response to the problems they have identified, are the most appropriate;
- discuss possible solutions to farmers problems that have not been solved adequately by the Thana or District office;
- promote a two-way flow of information between the Research Institutes and DAE;
- promote co-operation and understanding between DAE, other extension providers and research institutes.

ATCs are not the place to discuss how District budgets are allocated or how each individual event relates to FINA. ATCs are not the place to go through each Districts extension activities one by one. These functions are performed by the District Extension Planning Committee.

The chairman is responsible for ensuring that the Agricultural Technical Committees fulfil their Terms of Reference. So, they must:

- prepare carefully for ATC meetings;
- chair ATC meetings efficiently; and
- follow-up on ATC meetings promptly.

Preparing for the ATC

As shown on the Annual Planner, ATCs meet four times a year, in **January, February, June and September**.

In order to ensure that the ATC fulfils its terms of reference at each of these meetings, the chairman must:

- review district plans as they arrive, before the meeting, and assess the appropriateness of technologies used;
- produce an agenda and invite relevant participants; and
- encourage invitees to attend.

Reviewing District Plans

All Districts should be asked to submit a copy of their District Plans in advance of the ATC meeting. It is the responsibility of the Additional Director to review the plans and note the technologies that: a) require further guidance/clarification, and b) appear potentially inappropriate. These are **questionable technologies**. It is also the responsibility of the Additional Director to confirm that planned extension activities relate directly to problems identified by farmers in FINA. If not, this matter should be raised with the relevant Deputy Director during the meeting.

Producing an Agenda

The chairman should produce an agenda including details of the questionable technologies. In order to promote co-operation between all ATC members the agenda should also allow for other members to discuss their objectives for the coming year/season. The chairman will need to telephone ATC members to see what they would like to include on the agenda. The final agenda is then sent to all relevant ATC members with an introductory letter and an invitation to attend, at least one week before the meeting. The invitation should include:

- a letter of introduction, including the date, location and time of ATC;
- a list of technologies to be discussed;
- details of any FINA results requiring further research or action in partnership;
- a request for invitees to attend with details of their own activities for the coming season.

An agenda will encourage participants to attend as they will be aware in advance of the subjects to be discussed. Furthermore, requesting the ATC members to present their own activities for the coming year/ season allows areas for co-operation to be explored and makes the meeting more relevant to all those attending. Sending the invitation in advance gives participants time to review the technologies and prepare comments for the ATC.

Encouraging Participants to Attend

An ATC is Technical Committee and as such should restrict its activities to discussing the technical contents of district plans. This allows all the extension partners invited to the ATC (e.g. Research Institutes, Livestock, Fisheries) to comment on whether the technologies being offered to the farmers are the most appropriate and up to date. The key to getting invited ATC participants to attend is to make sure that they feel they have a genuine contribution to make and that the ATC is important for their organisation. To make the ATC relevant, ensure that all participants have the opportunity to present their own activities and limit discussion to technical issues. During the week before the ATC meeting, telephone ATC participants to ensure that a) they have received the invitation, b) they have read the list of questionable technologies, c) they prepare a brief presentation of their own activities, including issues where they need assistance from DAE. Making sure that only relevant people are invited will also make it more likely that they come to the meeting.

Chairing the ATC Meeting

Use the following tips for chairing the ATC meeting:

- ensure that refreshments are organised before starting the meeting;
- once participants arrive, start promptly by summarising the purpose of the meeting, and summarising the agenda;
- during discussion of each agenda item, restrict the discussion to appropriate subjects;
- ensure that each DD gives only a brief summary of the technologies they have planned and the reasons they have chosen that particular technology. If presentations are too long participants will get bored and time will run short. Each district presentation should be no more than 15 minutes, and budgets should not be included;
- after each DAE district presentation, ask committee members for their comments and suggestions. Where modifications to the technology are agreed the Deputy Director District should note the relevant change. During the discussions opportunities for collaboration between extension providers can be explored. Make sure that the technologies identified during preparation for the ATC meeting as being questionable are discussed, and that the appropriate action is decided. Questionable technologies could be a) deleted, b) modified, or c) retained as planned;

- allow each partner, (including NGOs, Livestock, Fisheries, Research Institutes etc.) an opportunity to present to the committee what they will be doing over the forthcoming year/season;
- once all the presentations have been made, raise any unsolved farmer problems, which were identified during FINA. If a solution is not available these can be recommended for further research. ATCs play an important role in identifying research topics. If a subject requiring further research is identified this should be recorded in the ATC minutes. The Chairman of the ATC should send a written proposal, outlining details of the problem, to the relevant research institute and DAE headquarters. This will then be considered by the Agricultural Research Institute;
- Headquarters. Other unsolved farmer problems might need the assistance of other organisations - such as NGOs in the case of credit, or livestock in the case of poultry;
- discuss any requirement for, or arrangement of research/extension workshops;

After the ATC

Once the meeting has concluded, follow the follow-up tips:

- make sure the member secretary prepares and circulates the minutes as soon as possible to all the invitees (even those who did not attend) and to Additional Director (Monitoring) Field Services Wing, Khamabari;
- ensure any research proposals are submitted to the appropriate research institute and DAE headquarters;
- make necessary arrangements for the next Research/Extension Workshop;
- ensure District Extension Plans are adjusted, before compiling them and submitting them to headquarters.

7.11 ADJUSTING ANNUAL DISTRICT PLANS AND BUDGETS

The ATC is responsible for reviewing potentially inappropriate technologies included in district extension plans. In some cases, district plans may include ideas which, when reviewed by specialists from research and other agencies, may be deemed inappropriate. The Deputy Director (District) is a member of the ATC, and therefore participates in the meetings.

The Deputy Director knows what decisions were made, and receives copies of the minutes. The Deputy Director is therefore responsible for adjusting District Form A and Thana Form A1, in accordance with decisions taken at the ATC. Adjustments could be of the following types:

- deleting activities;
- adding additional activities;
- adjusting the detail of existing activities.

Any adjustments made should not deviate from FINA results.

Adjusted plans are sent back to thana staff as technically valid. The only adjustments that might occur after this would be as a result of budget review at headquarters. All plans are sent to the Regional office for consolidation.

7.12 PREPARING CONSOLIDATED REGIONAL EXTENSION PLANS

Regional consolidation of District Extension Plans has been introduced by DAE to reduce the work load of Headquarters staff who were previously responsible for checking and consolidating 64 different plans. Since consolidation has been decentralised to regional offices staff at Headquarters only have to review nine plans, once per year, giving them more time to support District and Thana officers.

District plans are consolidated at regional level by the Statistical Officer (SO). The Additional Director Region supplies all District and Thana Plans to the SO. The SO types each one of the forms (Form A and Form A1) onto the planning computer using Extension Planning Software. During the data entry stage, the SO checks each planned activity to make sure that it has the correct unit cost and the correct code number. If there is any doubt about any activity on any of the forms then the SO should telephone the concerned District or thana for necessary correction.

Once data entry has been completed the SO prints a report. Two copies are supplied to the Additional Director (Region). One copy is retained by the AD whilst the other is sent to the Management Committee for final approval. The regional plan is also copied onto disc and sent to Headquarters. The Management Committee review the regional extension plans and makes any amendments if they see fit. Budgets are disbursed after the Management Committee has reviewed and approved plans.

7.13 CONDUCTING IN-SERVICE TRAINING

This section briefly describes the requirement for and the need to plan local in-service training. A detailed description of DAE's approach to training is given in **Chapter 8**.

Extension plans and the activities which comprise the plans, can only be implemented if staff have the required skills. Broadly, there are two types of skills:

- technology skills; and
- extension skills.

This means that staff must have the technology and extension skills necessary to implement the activities in the plan. If staff do not have these skills then they require training. Staff training and development is a continuous process. However, a specific effort to ensure that staff are trained to implement the activities in the coming season is important. By evaluating staff skills during the planning process Thana and District staff are able to decide local training needs for inclusion on Form A or Form A1.

7.14 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Implementing extension activities from the plan and follow up activities recorded in the BS diary is the key to successful extension work and takes place throughout the year. However, in order to provide necessary feedback so that planners (at Thana and District) can assess which activities are particularly successful or to identify areas of weakness it is necessary to record how each event took place. This is known as monitoring. The systems which DAE have devised for monitoring are described in detail in **Chapter 12**. It is important to recognise that monitoring data collected during implementation is an essential component of the planning process.

7.15 EVALUATING LAST YEAR'S EXTENSION PROGRAMME

Evaluation includes analysing the monitoring information recorded during implementation. Evaluation should take place after each season to:

- check whether objectives have been achieved;
- check whether objectives were appropriate;
- identify any particular strengths;
- identify whether there were weaknesses.

This information is then fed into the planning process. It helps planners decide appropriate activities and training for the next year's plan.

7.16 DEVELOPING ESTIMATED BUDGETS AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Advance Budgeting

Advance budgets are prepared by Deputy Directors annually during August. These are sent to DAE Headquarters so that it is able to include extension activities in its request for funds to the Ministry of Agriculture during September / October for the next financial year. Steps for preparing advance budgets follow.

STEPS FOR ADVANCE BUDGETING

1. Take the total figure from the current extension plan (Form A).
2. Assess the extent to which extension service costs can actually be reduced (e.g. by planning more low or no cost events and using more mass media).
3. Reduce the total figure in Form A by this amount.
4. Decide whether there are additional activities that may be implemented in the next financial year.
5. Draft a cost for these activities and add it to your new total.
6. Submit recommendations with a simple justification in a letter to the Director Field Services Wing, copied to the Additional Director (Region).

Preparing Annual Reports

To complete the annual planning process each District is required to submit a simple annual report covering the previous financial year to DAE Headquarters. The report should contain:

- description of achievements against targets. This should include a summary of SEMS and KAP results; and
- a note of actual expenditure for extension activities against planned expenditure.

The report should be prepared by the Deputy Director and submitted to the Director Field Service Wing during September. A copy should also be sent to the Additional Director (Region).