

SECTION A

**Forming the working group  
for preparing animal  
breeding strategies**





# Overview

## RATIONALE

The animal breeding strategy component of a country's livestock policy is the main formal instrument for that country's AnGR development and genetic improvement. The process of forming the working group that will formulate the livestock breeding strategy is critical for the subsequent effectiveness, credibility and legitimacy of the strategy. The working group needs to define its own working methods, agenda and responsibilities. It will also need to bring together additional stakeholders and expertise to help with particular aspects of the development and implementation of the strategy. This section provides advice on forming the working group and developing its working agenda.

## OBJECTIVES

Establish a working group to formulate a livestock breeding strategy. Set its working agenda and assign responsibilities. Develop an inventory of stakeholders and other potential contributors to the development and implementation of the breeding strategy.

## INPUT

Information on governmental and private institutions related to livestock policy and breeding strategies is needed, along with expert advice and collaboration.

## OUTPUT

The outputs will be an operational working group that has a working plan and is prepared to prepare a livestock breeding strategy in a given time period. An inventory of all stakeholders who will need to be involved in the process should have been prepared.

## TASKS

The following tasks need to be undertaken in order to achieve these objectives:

1. Establish an inventory of stakeholders.
2. Identify key stakeholders and representatives, and form the working group.
3. Discuss a working plan with the members of the working group.
4. Assign responsibilities to the members of the working group.



# Tasks and actions

## TASK 1: ESTABLISH AN INVENTORY OF STAKEHOLDERS

It is assumed that an influential start-up group of persons will be aware of the importance of developing a livestock breeding strategy. This group is likely to be small and include some key stakeholders, such as the head of the country's Department of Animal Production or equivalent governmental institution. It may also include members of the National Consultative Committee established for the preparation of the country report on AnGR and the National Coordinator for the Management of AnGR. The start-up group will appoint a leader or chair from among its members. They may need to appoint a working group coordinator, who will be responsible for conducting the entire process of establishing and coordinating the working group.

Establishing the actual working group requires the input of all key stakeholders, in particular those who will be responsible for the development and implementation of the strategy. This will not only ensure a useful breeding strategy, but also contribute to its credibility and legitimacy. Livestock keepers are among the most crucial stakeholders and should therefore be represented in the working group. Other stakeholders may be important at specific stages in the development of the document or the implementation of the strategy. Therefore, the start-up group's first task is to establish an inventory of all stakeholders who may contribute to the working group or the implementation of the breeding strategy. The leader or chair of the start-up group may develop the inventory; alternatively, it may be assigned to someone else, such as the working group coordinator.

Information gathering and writing the livestock breeding strategy will be time-consuming and costly. The costs need to be projected, and it may be necessary to prepare a project document that outlines the budget for the working group's activities (honoraria, meeting expenses, communications and travel, etc.).

The choice of stakeholders to be included in the inventory will depend on the scope and type of breeding strategy being planned and on its stage of development. All stakeholders who will be responsible for the development and implementation of the strategy must be included. The following paragraphs identify potential candidates and describe their possible contributions to the breeding strategy. Table 1 provides a checklist that may help identify relevant stakeholders.

### **National organizations**

**Farmers' and livestock keepers' associations.** Livestock keepers are the key to the success of any breeding policy, and it is therefore essential that they be involved from the start. Their interests, goals and perspectives should be represented throughout the planning process. Farmers' and livestock keepers' associations, the main objective of which is to promote the interest of their members, exist in various forms ranging from lobby organizations to



**TABLE 1**  
**Examples of national and local, regional and international stakeholders**

Category	Organizations
National and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animal health authorities</li> <li>• livestock conservation organizations</li> <li>• breeder associations and companies</li> <li>• consumer organizations</li> <li>• education and training establishments</li> <li>• environmental agencies and associations</li> <li>• extension agencies</li> <li>• farmers' or livestock keepers' associations or unions</li> <li>• financing institutions and credit facilitators</li> <li>• marketing and trade organizations</li> <li>• ministries</li> <li>• departments or divisions in the national government</li> <li>• providers of breeding services (e.g. transport, artificial breeding, performance recording)</li> <li>• research establishments</li> <li>• rural development agencies</li> <li>• other national or local organizations including NGOs</li> </ul>
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)</li> <li>• Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD)</li> <li>• Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)</li> <li>• Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)</li> <li>• Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)</li> <li>• Southern African Development Community (SADC)</li> <li>• other regional organizations including NGOs</li> </ul>
International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)</li> <li>• International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)</li> <li>• International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)</li> <li>• International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)</li> <li>• World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)</li> <li>• Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)</li> <li>• World Bank (WB)</li> <li>• World Health Organization (WHO)</li> <li>• World Trade Organization (WTO)</li> <li>• other international organizations including NGOs</li> </ul>

producer cooperatives. Where there is a strong commercial sector, as in most developed countries, such associations are usually well organized and influential. In many developing countries, however, farmers' and livestock keepers' associations are less well organized and sometimes scarcely visible. Their capacity and the size of their memberships vary. Furthermore, it cannot be taken for granted that such organizations represent the interests of all the farmers or livestock keepers in the country. For example, the interests of farmers in mixed crop–livestock systems differ widely from those of nomadic pastoralists. Therefore, a full inventory of all the country's farmers' and/or livestock keepers' associations is necessary.

Such associations are the link to the primary producers, who are custodians of the indigenous knowledge that needs to be considered in the development and implementation of the breeding strategy. They also have a role to play in promoting the breeding strategy among their members and in implementing the strategy; their roles may include practical tasks such as distribution of improved genetic material, animal recording and securing finance. As the implementation of the breeding strategy may affect gender roles, including women's labour and their access to livestock and the benefits derived from them, there is a need to check whether the associations satisfactorily serve women's interests.



**Breed societies.** These societies are important for the promotion and management of particular breeds. If no society exists for the target breed, it is worth establishing one. In addition to having responsibilities similar to those of farmers' or livestock keepers' associations, breed societies take special interest in animal recording, genetic improvement, monitoring the breed population and taking measures to protect the breed if it is threatened with extinction or genetic erosion. These societies are usually private, although some receive government subsidies, especially in developing countries. Breed societies are important for raising awareness among producers and for organizing breed improvement programmes.

**Breeding cooperatives and companies.** These organizations import semen and animals, provide artificial insemination and cryoconservation services and supply feed, veterinary products and other farm inputs. They may be owned or run by the private sector, the state or a mix of the two. They are in regular contact with producers and therefore are able to provide them with technical assistance or pass on specific technical knowledge.

**Market operators.** These profit-driven, mostly private sector entities are important in promoting the animals or genetic material derived from genetic improvement programmes. If the genetic improvement programme gives rise to branded germplasm or products, these operators will be needed for their promotion.

**Training and education establishments.** Training for livestock keepers, advisers and technicians is an important element of any genetic improvement programme. Many technical skills are required, including animal identification and performance recording, animal breeding and genetics, animal husbandry, animal health management and data collection, analysis and interpretation. Providers of training and education, such as universities and colleges, therefore have an essential role to play. As well as providing courses, they can serve as a platform for networking and help in raising awareness of the programme among wider stakeholder groups. They may also be involved in the provision of extension services. In developing countries, such establishments are usually governmental or semi-governmental, but organizations in the private sector are becoming more involved in providing workshops, seminars and other training and educational activities.

**Extension agencies.** In most developing countries, extension services are provided by the government and national universities. Some cooperatives and companies also engage in extension activities. Extension agents are crucial to the genetic improvement programme. Their interactions with the end users (the livestock keepers) address many environmental, technical and socio-economic aspects of production (e.g. how to raise a cross-bred animal, the need for animal recording, and the potential benefits of using improved genetic material).

**Financing institutions and credit facilitators.** Genetic improvement programmes are multigenerational and continue for many years. They therefore need long-term financing. For these activities, some countries set up special funds, which are financed by various organizations, including the government and foreign aid programmes. Livestock keepers may need financial support to enable them to participate in a genetic improvement programme and to pay for the improved genetic material. In such cases, the breed society or livestock keepers' association may provide collateral to facilitate the livestock keepers' acquisition of credit. Credit may be offered by specialized banks, such as livestock banks or agricultural banks, or by non-specialized banks or loan associations.



**Consumer organizations.** These private organizations represent the interests of the consumers.

**National research establishments.** These state institutions – universities, agricultural and veterinary schools and national agricultural and livestock research centres – can assist the breeding programme by researching topics such as genetic evaluation methods, breed valuation, dissemination of improved genetic material, the care of improved animals or the management of introduced germplasm. They can also provide expertise on production systems, socio-economics and gender issues, thereby helping to enhance the sustainability of the breeding programme.

**National animal health authorities.** Veterinary services need to be involved in all genetic programmes to ensure that germplasm is imported and disseminated safely and to provide the additional care needed by improved stocks. In developing countries, veterinary services have been mostly provided through the public sector. In many cases, however, the government does not have adequate resources to run them satisfactorily. Veterinary services are therefore increasingly offered by the private sector, although quarantine and import/export certification are still carried out by the government services.

**Relevant national government ministries or departments.** Government and legislative bodies are crucial to the success of genetic improvement strategies. Government ministries or departments will play a key role in identifying the LDOs that the strategies must address. An appropriate legislative environment and body of legislation are needed to ensure the smooth running of a breeding programme. In addition to its legislative and regulatory responsibilities, the government issues and supervises licences for activities such as importing and branding.

### **Local stakeholders**

The responsibilities of local stakeholders will be similar to those of national stakeholders, but scaled down to the local level. Local responsibilities assume more importance in large countries that have varying ecologies, topographies and ethnicities. Farmers' or livestock keepers' organizations representing marginal groups, such as nomadic pastoralists or ethnic minorities, are more likely to be found at the local than the national level.

### **Regional stakeholders**

Regional stakeholders and their responsibilities vary greatly from one region to another, but they generally contribute to research, training, development and sometimes financing. Regional stakeholders may also play important roles when the breeding strategy involves a genetic resource common to a number of countries in the region (e.g. Simmental cattle in Central Europe, Boran cattle in East Africa and Awassi sheep in the Near East). In such cases, regional consultation and coordination are needed, and the relevant organizations should be included in the stakeholder list.

### **International stakeholders**

International stakeholders may be important when the breeding strategy involves international collaboration, such as the transfer of genetic material and associated information



from one country to another. A number of different international intergovernmental organizations are mandated to deal with various areas of policy and technical development.

## **TASK 2: IDENTIFY KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND REPRESENTATIVES, AND FORM THE WORKING GROUP**

Drawing on the stakeholder inventory (Task 1), relevant stakeholders should be contacted and invited to a workshop that focuses on a broad discussion of current and potential future livestock policies and breeding strategies. At the workshop, the stakeholders should discuss their perspectives on livestock policies and their potential roles as these policies are taken forward. Agreement should be reached on the need for a livestock breeding strategy. In order to reach mutual understanding and acceptance, it is important to identify the decision-making perspective and time frame of each stakeholder (Box 2).

The establishment of a working group should be proposed and the workshop participants should agree on key institutions that should be asked to join the group. The proposed institutions should be formally invited to become members of the working group and asked to nominate representatives. A list of names, contact addresses and potential contributions should be drawn up. If the list is long, it will be useful to record keywords for each contact in order to help identify her or his potential contributions. The individuals included on the

### **BOX 2**

#### **Decision-making perspectives and time frames**

**Decision-making perspectives.** If a national policy-maker is asked what direction livestock production should take, the answer will differ from what is offered by an individual livestock keeper. Neither is wrong; they simply view the question from different perspectives. Logically, the national policy-maker is concerned with the national economy and the availability of food for all, while the individual livestock keeper is concerned with his or her family and with the profits and other benefits that can be obtained from his or her herd or flock. *Thus, the answer to any question is likely to depend on who is asked.*

**Decision-making time frames.** If a veterinarian asks a livestock keeper what needs to be done during a visit, the livestock keeper may indicate that a sick animal needs treatment for a bacterial infection. On the next visit, the livestock keeper may say that the animals in the herd regularly suffer from the same infection because it is endemic to the herd and that he or she wants assistance in identifying animals that suffer subclinically from the infection. Over time, the veterinarian and the livestock keeper may set up a management programme to reduce the risk of clinical infections. If the veterinarian asks the livestock keeper what he or she will need in the future, the answer may be selection of resistant animals that will be easier to manage. The decisions and actions will change according to the time horizon considered. *Different stakeholders with varying time frames may come to different but equally valid conclusions.*





list will constitute the initial working group that will be directly involved in developing the breeding strategy.

Normally, the working group will be too large to be effective in writing documents, making it necessary to select from among the members a smaller writing group of from three to seven members. The other working group members should be called upon to participate in the major decisions regarding the content of the document and to review the draft.

As the working group will have to discuss and agree on a range of issues as the breeding strategy is developed, it may need input from additional stakeholders and experts. Therefore, the composition of the working group may change. Throughout the process, however, a core group of members that includes the coordinator should remain in order to ensure continuity and accountability (Figure 2 and Box 3).

One workshop should be sufficient to allow distribution of responsibilities within the working group and the smaller writing group.

### **TASK 3: DISCUSS A WORKING PLAN WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP**

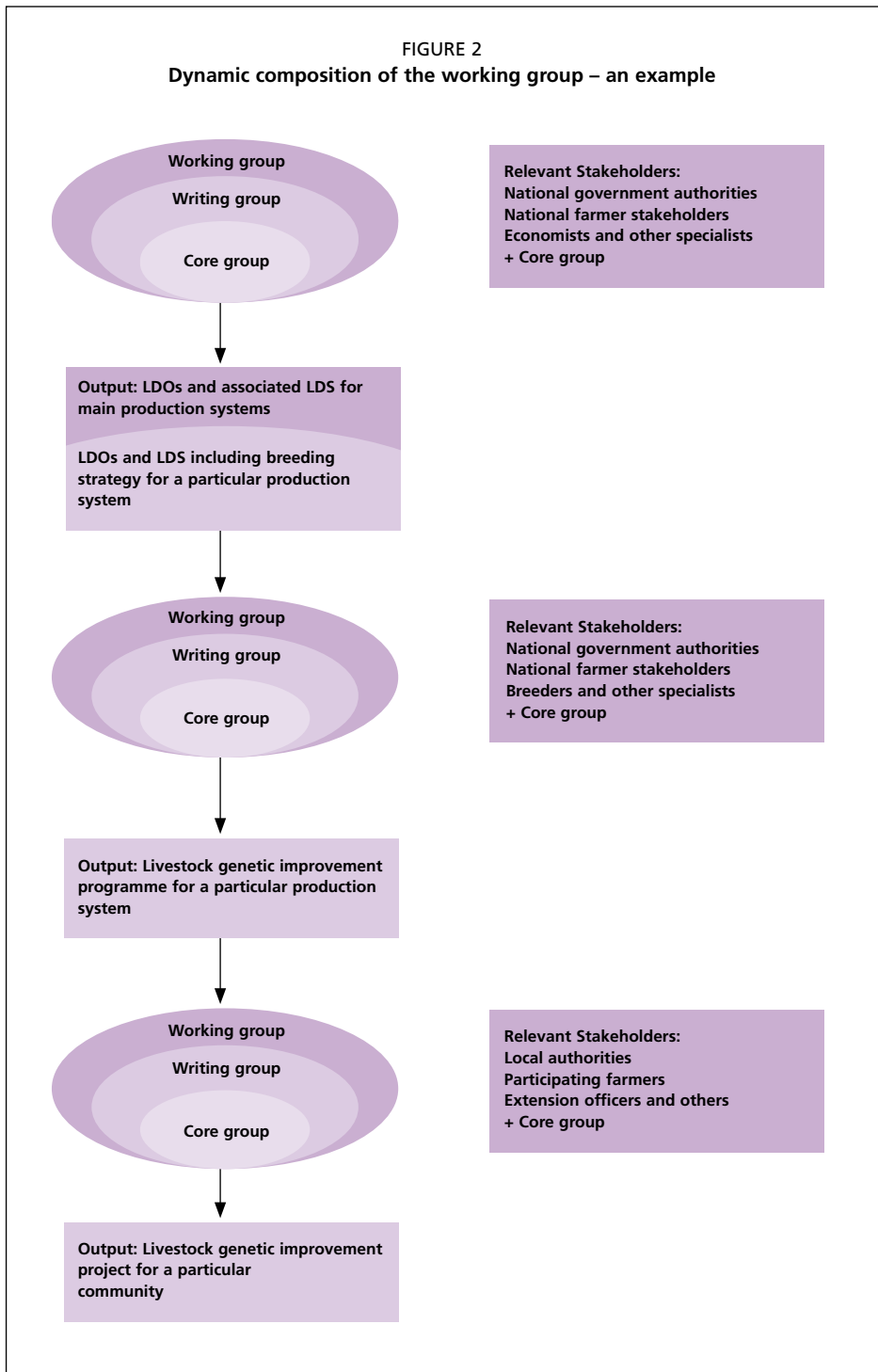
Working group members should be invited to a second workshop to discuss a working plan for formulating the livestock breeding strategy. At this workshop, the objectives should be clarified, and the duties of the working group and its writing subgroup should be described and agreed upon.

The working group must establish its own working plan. Although it is impossible to suggest a universal format for such a plan, it is likely to include the following key elements:

- **Time schedule.** Typically, the final policy document should be ready for implementation in less than one year. This will help maintain stakeholder interest and will mean that decision-makers and investors are given an up-to-date document to consider.
- **Budget.** As mentioned under Task 1, operational costs of the working group must be projected and funding secured in order to allow timely delivery of a high-quality final document.
- **Stakeholder involvement.** The commitment of stakeholders must be ensured. Their roles in the working group should reflect their expected roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the breeding strategy. Participation and consultation must be organized so that all stakeholders, including those not directly participating in the working group, are able to express their opinions.
- **Availability of inputs from experts.** Terms of reference for experts' reports, seminars, specific training or other contributions to the process should be prepared.
- **Expected outputs and persons in charge.** This element of the plan is part of the discussion of the next task.

Because national stakeholders usually prefer to have few meetings, the schedule for working group meetings needs careful planning. The writing group may meet more frequently. Questions and doubts that arise while writing the document may be presented for discussion at working group meetings. Minutes of each meeting, including agreed points, should be kept.





## BOX 3

**Composition of the working group**

As the strategy is developed, the composition of the working group may change slightly: a subgroup of its members will remain while new experts and specific stakeholders join the group.

**Example 1:** Typically, the working group in charge of identifying a country's livestock development objectives will include policy-makers, livestock officials and economists, who have access to a wide range of technical experts, such as veterinarians, social scientists, economists, statisticians and livestock development specialists. The working group discussing the genetic improvement programme for a particular species in a particular production system will include local officials, animal breeders and livestock keepers. If possible, breeders and livestock keepers should be represented by their respective associations. Both working groups will benefit from the participation of sociologists and persons knowledgeable about minority groups and gender issues.

**Example 2:** Assume that the initial working group has prioritized the development of two livestock production systems – dairy production in fertile valleys and sheep production in high rangelands. The working group may then split into two subgroups (with some overlap in their memberships), each of which will deal with the formulation of the breeding strategy for one of the two targeted production systems. Representatives of artificial insemination centres and dairy breeders' associations may participate in the dairy subgroup and local wool buyers and rangeland officials will be in the sheep subgroup.

**Example 3:** Assume that a genetic improvement programme in a particular production system involves more than one project. The writing group preparing the strategy document for a particular project may include a subset of the stakeholders involved in the working group for the programme as a whole, and additional experts may participate as necessary. Alternatively, the work may be delegated to a breeding company, cooperative or university. The working group may also consider other relevant ongoing or planned projects and describe them in the document if details are available and if they are consistent with the development objectives and strategy.

As the preparation of the breeding strategy progresses, target production systems will be identified and specific genetic improvement programmes will be addressed. At this point, it may be advisable to bring in additional experts and to provide the working group with specific training. Participants' knowledge and experience should therefore be assessed. Special attention needs to be paid to gender-related issues. If necessary, invest in coaching for the participants. This can be done, for example, through workshops at which presentations are made on current breeding plans, designing breeding programmes or other relevant topics.



Avoid an overly technical focus and pay attention to issues such as the socio-economic changes likely to be brought about by the breeding programmes.

There may be a need to contract experts to undertake tasks, such as collecting market information, performing investment analyses or assessing gender impacts. Funding for these contracts and for other working group operations may be sought nationally or internationally.

#### **TASK 4: ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP**

All members of the working group should be committed to developing a successful livestock breeding strategy. The group's coordinator will be responsible for the implementation of the working plan and should report to policy-makers. Most working group members are likely to be selected for inclusion on an ad hoc basis by their respective institutions, to which they will report. The writing group will be expected to complete its task on time. Therefore, even though responsibilities are straightforward, they should be described explicitly in the working plan.

A distinction must be drawn between the responsibilities that representatives and stakeholders have in the operations of the working group and the writing group and those that stakeholders will have in the implementation of the planned animal breeding strategy. The latter responsibilities should be formalized in letters of agreement or similar binding documents.

#### **BOX 4**

##### **A task force for formulating livestock breeding policy – an example from Kenya**

In May 2007, the Kenyan Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development (MoLFD) appointed a Ministerial Task Force to formulate a livestock breeding policy as an integral part of the National Livestock Development Policy of 1980 and established its terms of reference. The Chief of Animal Production at MoLFD was appointed chair of the task force, and representatives of MoLFD, the Agricultural Development Corporation, the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, International Livestock Research Institute, the University of Nairobi, Egerton University, the Kenya Livestock Breeders Organization, and FARM-Africa (an NGO) were appointed to participate.

After various field visits and two regional workshops, the writing group of the task force produced a first draft of the National Animal Breeding Policy. Two other regional workshops were held and the views of the stakeholders were incorporated into the draft document. A national forum was scheduled for wider consultation. Funded jointly by the Smallholder Dairy Commercialization Programme (supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development) and the MoLFD, the project was expected to be completed in one year. Due to an extra round of consultations, however, the project was extended.

Provided by Cleopas Okore.



**TABLE 2**  
**The main tasks and responsibilities of the implementing organizations**

Organization tasks	Livestock keepers' associations	Breeders' associations or breed societies	Breeding cooperatives and companies	Training and education institutions	Market operators	Extension agencies	Financing institutes and credit facilitators	Consumer organizations	Research institutions	Veterinary authorities	Relevant government ministries or departments
Policy-making	✓	✓					✓				✓
Legislation/regulations											✓
Finance	✓	✓					✓				✓
Training and education				✓							✓
Extension			✓	✓		✓					✓
Technical			✓	✓					✓		✓
Marketing	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Consumer orientation					✓			✓			
Environment considerations	✓	✓				✓			✓		✓
Conservation		✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Service provision			✓								✓
Animal health services				✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Public relations	✓	✓						✓			
Gender impact and gender issues	✓			✓		✓			✓		✓

Establishing a sustainable animal breeding strategy requires coordinated efforts among many actors. The type of stakeholders involved and their responsibilities will vary depending on, *inter alia*, the country's system of government, its degree of development, the capacity of the private sector, and the species and breed(s) targeted. In low external input production systems in developing countries, local and national governments can be expected to play a dominant role, at least initially. However, this may change once the strategy has become more established. Table 2 outlines stakeholders' roles and responsibilities.

