

# Farm Business School

## Training of Facilitators Programme South Asia



## Handbook





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### **South Asia**

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## Preface

Dramatic changes are taking place in farming worldwide as a result of globalisation, liberalisation, and rapid urbanisation. Farmers are intensifying existing patterns of production and diversifying their farm enterprises in an attempt to improve their livelihoods. Technical know-how is not enough. In order to be competitive and take advantage of the new opportunities that are arising farmers increasingly have to adapt their farm business to market changes and improve efficiency, profitability and income.

The desire to increase income by taking advantage of market opportunities requires farmers to become better decision makers and better at competing in this new environment. The emphasis on the market and the need of farmers to be competitive, calls for better farm management skills. Marketing and farm management have rapidly gained predominance globally over the last two decades. Farm business management skills and knowledge is recognised as important for farmers to effectively respond to present day farming challenges. Farm management advice helps farmers to make the right choice between crop enterprises according to individual levels of financial, labour and land endowments and at their level of risk adversity.

In response to these changes, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has developed a number of specialised training manuals in market-oriented farm business management. One of them is a set of training programmes for extension workers to help their farm management skills so they, in turn can assist farmers. Manuals are available for the Pacific, Caribbean, Asia, South Asia, Africa and Latin America. These publications provide training course guidelines, extensive theoretical and practical exercise material, case studies and Power Points.

The aim of the Farm Business School is to build farmers' capacity in entrepreneurial and management skills. It does this through a "learning by doing" approach. The Farmer Business School concept operates at village level. It enables farmers to learn and improve their knowledge, change their attitudes and enhance their skills toward improved farm commercialisation - while working on their own farms. The materials for the FBS are specially designed to work with limited resources. Participants need to be basically literate and numerate, but they do not have to have had any significant formal education.



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## Introduction

This handbook has been designed to guide potential Farm Business School (FBS) facilitators - extension workers or farmers - in the establishment of schools in the field. The Training of Facilitators Programme has been designed to cover the following areas:

- 1. Understanding the FBS concept;**
- 2. Developing communication and facilitation skills;**
- 3. Understanding and planning the FBS curriculum; and**
- 4. Mobilizing and organizing farmers into business schools.**

The programme is intensive but is designed to be fun. The contents cover a lot of material some of which will be familiar to the participants and others new. Each participant will be responsible for his or her own learning which is expected to follow a process of discovery through discussion, reading, practice and reflection.

On completion of the training it is expected that the more capable participants would be selected as trainers at the community level. The handbook summarizes the core messages covered in this training and is expected to be used by the facilitators as reference material when organizing their own FBS programmes in the field. It is hoped that the participants of the training programme find the material included here relevant, useful and practical. The best test of its usefulness will be the quality of the schools that will be set up in the field.

We wish you success in your efforts.



## Session # 1: Getting to know each other

### Instructions:

Work your way around the room to find someone who fits each statement below. Have that person write his or her FULL NAME in the space below.

### Key Tasks

- No person may write his/her name more than once in any single form.
- You may NOT sign your own form.
- The person who collects the most names wins a special prize!

1 Speaks more than three languages

2 Has travelled to Central Asia

3 Has six siblings

4 Can play a musical instrument

5 Has held a political post in the past

6 Owns a farm

7 Has survived a major accident

8 Is wearing BLUE clothes

9 Has eaten a scorpion

10 Owns a garment business

11 Has cats as pets

12 Has had dinner with a film star

13 Has married twice

14 Has jumped out of a plane

## 15-Day Training of facilitator's programme

### Objectives

By the end of this 15-Day training program, participants will be able to:



- Understand key concepts used in the Farm Business School programme
- Improve their facilitation and communication skills
- Facilitate effective FBS meetings
- Prepare a community orientation plan
- Plan an FBS curriculum

### Suggested Agenda:

#### Day 01:

- **Session 01:**  
Getting to know each other
- **Session 02:**  
Introduction to the Farm Business School (FBS) initiative

#### Day 02:

- **Session 03:**  
Communication skills
- **Session 04:**  
Effective facilitation

#### Day 03:

- **Session 05:**  
Understanding the FBS curriculum

#### Day 04 - Day 13:

- **Roll-out of FBS meetings**

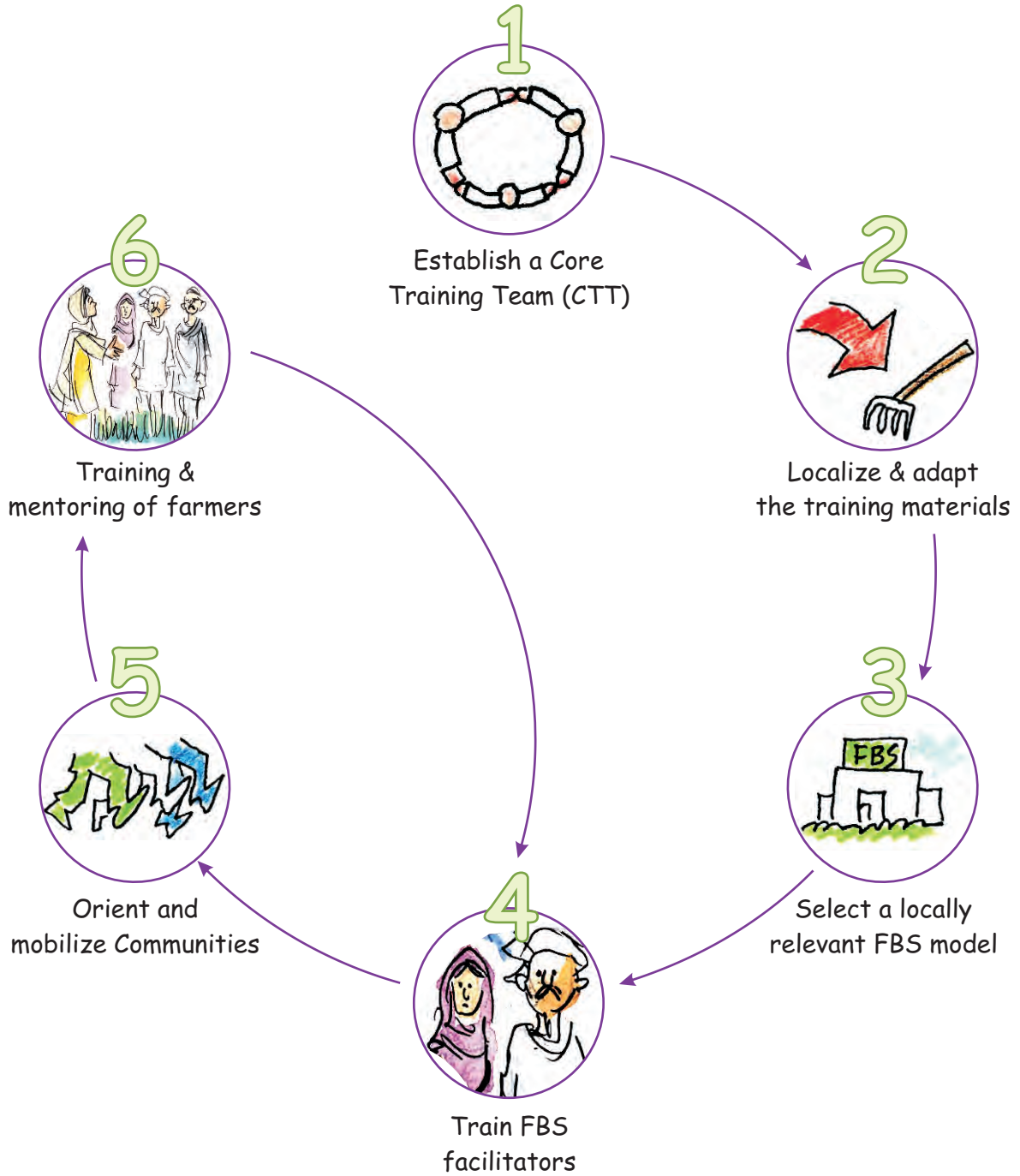
#### Day 14:

- **Session 06:**  
Orientation & mobilization of communities
- **Session 07:**  
Organizing & managing the Farm Business School

#### Day 15:

- **Session 08:**  
Planning the FBS curriculum
- **Session 09:**  
Evaluation & close

### Developing a Farm Business School programme



## What is the Farm Business School?

1 What do you understand by a Farm Business School?

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2 What do you think is the purpose and advantage of a Farm Business School?

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3 What is different about a Farm Business School as compared to other training programmes available for farmers?

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4 What are your specific learning expectations from participating in this Farm Business School?

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## Session # 2: Introduction to the Farm Business School (FBS)

The Farm Business School enables farmers to learn and improve their knowledge, change their attitudes and enhance their skills toward improved farm commercialisation. This learning takes place at village level and farmers' capacity in entrepreneurial and management skills is built via a "learning by doing" approach. Extension officers and lead farmers are trained as facilitators and then organise seasonal training courses, where farmers work in small groups at their own pace using materials that have been specially designed for the schools.

**In a nutshell, a Farm Business School (FBS) is...**

... a **programme** of learning designed to help small holder farmers in producing for the market making their farms work profitably

... a **venue** that brings farmers together to carry out collective and collaborative action to address business and marketing problems and opportunities.

...a **group** of like-minded farmers who want to develop their skills and know more about producing for the market.

...a **forum** for sharing knowledge between farmers through discussion, practical exercises and self-study

### Note

— A FBS is not intended to teach farmers how to produce certain crops or manage livestock. It is assumed that they will already have this knowledge or can acquire it through other sources.

— A FBS is not a set of lectures. Exchanges of information and knowledge are facilitated through the meetings/sessions, with observations, dialogues, and discussions.

## Key characteristics of a Farm Business School

### Focus on content not the training facility:

The Farm Business School 'classroom' can be a classroom in a school, a formal training venue, a meeting room in a cooperative, or even outside under a tree. Equipment is kept to a minimum. A white board or chalk board, markers, chalk, pencils and exercise books make up the majority of the teaching and learning 'equipment'.

### Experiential learning:

Participants in the Farm Business School learn by doing. This includes exercises in the 'classroom', field trips, visits, presentations and demonstrations.

### Farmer to farmer learning:

There are no experts who know everything or have all the right answers. Most of the participants have something to share and something to learn. They draw from their personal experiences. They help one another understand how things work in the real world.

### Matching the farm season:

The programme is organised to match the activities of the farm season. Planning is done before the land is ploughed or new livestock is purchased. Marketing is addressed as a part of the planning what to produce, but it is also looked at again before the harvest is due.

## FBS learning principles

### Facilitation not teaching:

Farmers who participate in the FBS learn by working together. Each participant, including the facilitator, is responsible for his or her own learning. The role of the facilitator is to make sure all the materials and activities are in place and to guide the learning process.

### Learning by doing:

Learning in the FBS is a process of discovery through discussion, practice and reflection. Practical exercises are conducted during the school period around a single enterprise and reinforced by application to the individual farm enterprises managed by the participants on their own farms.

### Demand responsive and interactive:

While some of the subjects to be covered are set by the FBS programme, the FBS will adapt to the new needs that arise and ideas that are generated from the participants. They can help choose subjects and exercises for inclusion, as well as areas of concentration for the training programme.



## Roles & responsibilities of the FBS facilitator

Your role as a FBS facilitator is to “make a difference” and run a FBS programme so that:

the participants feel it is adding value to their knowledge and opportunities as farmers;

all the resources available to the FBS are focused on achieving the goals set;

the FBS is run with a minimum level of conflict and a maximum level of participation.

### Key Tasks

- Create awareness and identify and select potential FBS participants.
- Design and organise a number of farm level training programmes amongst interested farmers. The training programmes will each be held at a specific location and will run for a whole season.
- Recruit and train farmers as FBS facilitators to help you with subsequent rounds of farmer training.
- Mentor farmer groups and give them back-up support as and when needed. Additional guidance and support will be provided by the Core Training Team (CTT)
- Keep in touch with other FBS facilitators and the CTT to collectively identify opportunities for further training as well as reflect on lessons learned and areas of improvement for the next FBS rollout.