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ACTION PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATION OF GOVERNMENT MINISTRY STAFF IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

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ACTION PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATION OF GOVERNMENT MINISTRY STAFF IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

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Author: Martin Bush, Nick Hobgood

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INTRODUCTION

The DEED project (Développement Economique pour un Environnement Durable), a project financed by USAID, started in Haiti in mid-February 2008. DEED aims to both develop and preserve the watershed zones of Limbé and Montrouis by working with local producer groups to reinforce and strengthen sustainable commercial agriculture in ways that protect the environment and improve the management of natural resources. The DEED project is implemented by Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI).

A key expected result for the DEED project is that agricultural production is increased while at the same time the natural resources base is protected. In practice, the focus is primarily on introducing new cropping systems on steeply sloped land in the upper parts of the watershed that are currently highly susceptible to erosion. The aim is to replace annual crops with perennial crops and other forms of non-erosive ground cover.

To ensure the sustainability of this approach, it is proposed that a minimum of 20 competent agriculture technicians be recruited in each watershed, and trained in providing the services necessary to change the way planters farm erosion-prone land. GOH ministry staff from the MARNDR and the MdE are to be integrated into these training programs and assist with the structure of private extension systems, where appropriate.

This report outlines an action plan for integrating ministry staff into these training activities.

APPROACH

The aim of all forms of training is to build and develop individual and institutional capacity. In order for this training to be effectively applied at the institutional level, three criteria must be satisfied:

- The skills and knowledge of the individuals working in the institution must be enhanced;
- Adequate staff, equipment and financial resources must be made available within the institution;
- There must be incentives to motivate individuals to perform at their best.

These criteria are inter-related and all must to some degree be satisfied if training is to be more than just an additional line on an individual's CV.

DEED's training activities are focused on the first of these criteria. But it is important to understand that training will not lead to more effective natural resources management unless the other criteria are also satisfied. Also, for training to lead to a successful outcome and to have a positive impact, several assumptions must be valid. The schematic below outlines the assumptions inherent in the design and implementation of a successful training program.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINING IMPACT ¹

<p>IMPACT</p> <p>Enhance institutional capacity or organizational performance</p>	<p><u>Assumptions</u> (that outcomes produce an impact)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training curriculum based on organizational needs • Human capacity building correctly identified as necessary for achievement of institutional goals
<p>OUTCOME</p> <p>Workplace behavior change</p>	<p><u>Assumptions</u> (that outputs produce an outcome)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is relevant for trainees work • Trainees understand how to apply learned skills and knowledge • Trainees have adequate resources and incentives to apply learning
<p>OUTPUT</p> <p>Learning</p>	<p><u>Assumptions</u> (that inputs produce an output)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning program based on correct assessment of present capacities of trainees • Competent trainers used • Curriculum and didactic methods appropriate for learning goals

To the maximum extent possible, DEED will try and ensure that these assumptions are valid. This approach therefore requires effective dialogue and coordination between DEED and the ministries involved: the MARNDR and the MdE.

¹ Adapted from “Using training to build capacity for development”, Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank, 2008

DEED TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Several training activities are planned and will be implemented under the DEED project between now and the end of the first phase of DEED ending in early 2011. These activities are as follows:

Table 1 Requirements and standards related to training

REQUIREMENTS	STANDARDS
R 1.3 Facilitator services developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training program for facilitators developed • A minimum of facilitators trained at a ratio of 1:6 (1 facilitator for 6 PGs)
R 2.6 Partnerships between selected entrepreneurs and SMEs and PGs strengthened, and result in increased revenue for all parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and/or technical assistance provided to a minimum of 50 promising entrepreneurs and SMEs to strengthen their operations per watershed per year
R 4.4 PGs and individual smallholders able to access reliable and competent non-project (sustainable) agricultural extension services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training program for extensionists created • A minimum of 20 competent agricultural technicians recruited and trained in service provision on a business basis in each watershed • GOH ministry (MOA, MOE) departmental and commune level staff integrated into training programs and assist with structure of private extension system
R 5.3 Community-based natural resources management supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to provide GOH personnel based in the targeted watersheds and those responsible for this sector nationally in co-management and community-based management practices • Training provided to GOH personnel in the development of simple management plans

TRAINING OF FACILITATORS AND GOH STAFF

The DEED project will organize training for Facilitator candidates who will eventually be engaged as Service Providers to Producer Groups and agricultural enterprises. This training will be in the form of seminars and will be designed and conducted under the supervision of DEED.

A Training Provider will be contracted by DEED to develop training materials and to design a curriculum that presents and explains DEED's approach that is based on significant community participation and where the Facilitators act as an interface between the Producer Groups and the markets.

Methodology

Training is designed for two categories of facilitators.

- Facilitators at level A (a lower level) effectively have the role of trainers. They are intermediate level technicians with a basic knowledge of the technical domain and field of study for which they have been recruited;
- Facilitators at level B (a higher level) are more highly qualified service providers with greater experience and competence in the technical areas required.

Therefore the approach for conducting training and the pedagogical methodology will vary according to which level of Facilitator is being trained.

For Level A Facilitators, training is based on the organization of seminars. Training is conducted in the form of presentations, brainstorming sessions, debates, and work in groups. Training is based on practical and concrete examples and will include exercises based on real case studies. Participants will therefore be divided into work groups. Restitution sessions followed by debates will then follow.

A total of six (6) training modules will be developed and used in 12 training sessions of 1 or 2 days. There will be 6 sessions in each watershed. In order to ensure effective training, the number of participants will be limited to a maximum of 30 per session. Training will take place in Montrouis and in Limbé. Table 2 provides more detail on the proposed content of the training program. Table 3 provides profiles of both level A and B facilitators for each of the topic areas that will be covered in the training modules.

It is also planned to prepare and to distribute to participants at the end of each training session, a document in Creole that summarizes the content of the training program in order to encourage further discussion within the groups and the dissemination of the workshop information within the community.

With regard to facilitators at level B, formal training sessions are not required. What is needed are workshops where participants can discuss and review different approaches relating to the objectives and strategies of the project, the role of the different actors, an overview of producer groups management and agricultural production, and an understanding of the project workplan and progress to date. Two

workshops are planned – one in each watershed. The training materials developed for level A Facilitators will be distributed to those at level B.

Table 2 Planning of training activities for facilitators

TRAINING MODULES
1. Management of natural resources (definition, indicators of degradation, causes, consequences, the solutions proposed by DEED)
2. Organization of Producer Groups (structure and participation, role of local authorities, role of membership, applicable legal instruments, working with rural communities, participatory approaches and tools, role of the Development agent, etc.)
3. Management of small commercial agricultural enterprises (business planning, marketing and commercialization, access to credit, conflict management, management of materiel and financial resources, etc..)
4. Management of irrigated perimeters and agricultural production (function of the different elements of an irrigation system, operation and maintenance, user fees and management of water users, financial planning, production planning , best practice, soil conservation, agricultural inputs, etc..),

Table 3 Role and responsibilities of facilitators

CATEGORY	LEVEL A	LEVEL B
Agent for agricultural extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving the quality of produce ▪ Increasing productivity ▪ Introducing improved techniques and sustainable practice ▪ Improving efficiency ▪ Setting up and managing seedling nurseries ▪ Training and demonstration in grafting techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing production plans ▪ Calculating the cost of production ▪ Developing and disseminating improved technical packages
Agent for institutional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing the legality of the PG ▪ Improving the management and operation of the PG ▪ Improving accounting practice and financial management ▪ Improving record keeping and management of stock ▪ Assisting with access to agricultural credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluating institutional strengths and weaknesses, and developing a plan for institutional development ▪ Analyzing business plans and advising on financial services
Manager	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing the Producer Group on a day-to-day basis ▪ Coaching and mentoring future PG managers
Agent for commercialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing supply contracts ▪ Training in negotiation techniques ▪ Improving post harvest management and packaging ▪ Identifying new clients ▪ Ensuring client satisfaction ▪ Ensuring logistical arrangements and transportation of produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying opportunities for exports, developing business plans, and facilitating exports ▪ Identifying opportunities for Fair Trade and/or Organic status and organizing this status if appropriate
Agent for irrigation system management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assisting with the management of water user associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drafting proposals for the rehabilitation of irrigation systems including mapping the systems and estimating the cost of the engineering work

Although the facilitator training program primarily targets private sector extension agents and entrepreneurs, Ministry of Agriculture extension staff will participate as both beneficiaries and resource persons in the different sessions at both levels A and B. Given that the majority of productive sector activities are linked to the natural resource base, it is important that natural resource management and training in agricultural extension service provision be closely linked. Ministry of Agriculture BAC level staff are best suited to participate in the level A training sessions where they will interface with facilitators who have been working in the field in the zones where the BAC field agents also work. Both

the BAC and the Departmental level Ministry staff will participate in the level B training sessions. This higher level training will ensure a information flow between GoH agents at all levels and potential private sector facilitators. These sessions serve partly a networking function allowing exchange between both private and public sector actors with the similar goals.

The information gathered during the level A facilitator training programs will be valuable to the trainers, comprised of contractor and DEED staff, in better understanding the relationships between the private and public sectors in terms of service provision. This information will allow DEED staff to better understand the availability of facilitator services in each of the target watersheds and tailor the second session for level B facilitators to the realities of the respective watersheds.

The training sessions will incorporate a number of topics aimed at reinforcing support to private sector lead initiatives with a close look at how the GOH can facilitate the development of business activities. GOH personnel, primarily from the MRNDR should be involved in all training activities including the training of promising entrepreneurs—since the training of entrepreneurs and SMEs is focused on improving the commercialization of (sustainable) agricultural produce and on the management of agricultural producer groups operating with regard to the conservation of habitat and the protection of the environment.

Through this approach, this training program will specifically address two standards under Requirement 4.4 :

- **GOH ministry departmental and commune level staff integrated into training programs and assist with structure of private extension system;**
- **GOH staff able to provide technical advice backstopping and oversight of technicians and help to facilitate their work.**

The facilitator training program as outlined above will also allow DEED staff to identify promising entrepreneurs and business owners in each of the respective marketsheds. These actors will serve as important private sector interlocutors capable of working closely with GOH agents in the promotion of economic activities supported by DEED.

TRAINING OF GOH STAFF IN WATERSHED AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

The first module of the facilitator program will be later expanded to meet **Milestone 5.3.1 - Training provided to GOH personnel in the development of simple watershed and natural resource management plans.** Although the details regarding this training are not to be developed until next quarter it is important to mention this training as it is part of a comprehensive plan to integrate the GOH in natural resource management activities in each of the watersheds.

DEED's approach to building capacity in natural resource management is based on working with a number of dynamic community based groups to assist them in developing local land use plans using a landscape approach with standardized planning tools. Once the number of community based plans has reached critical mass, key actors from each of the communities will be convened to create the larger Watershed Management Committee. This approach ensures that the most knowledgeable members of

the community participate in a larger framework based on their concrete experience in each of their respective areas.

The DEED team has ensured the active participation of GOH stakeholders at the community level, inviting agricultural extension agents from each BAC, Communal level authorities, Mayor’s office representatives and Departmental level staff to the community mapping exercises already conducted. This active integration of major stakeholders in each community will not only continue but will be intensified as the number of activities increases during the course of implementation.

Agricultural extension plays an important role in this process where GOH agents bring valuable information to the planning process, promoting growth in the agriculture sector while at the same time addressing natural resource conservation issues. Therefore combining agricultural extension methods, enterprise development, and the formulation of basic natural resource management plans is important given the two major DEED objectives - economic development and sustainable resource use.

ACTION PLAN

As shown in Table 1, GOH personnel are to be involved in four different training activities, each one linked to a different DEED requirement. A first step in planning these training activities is therefore to review the timing of the deliverables and milestones associated with these requirements.

Table 4 Requirements and milestones related to training

REQUIREMENTS	MILESTONES	TIMING
1.3 Facilitator services developed	M 1.3.1 Facilitators trained equivalent to a minimum ratio of 1 to 6 producer groups.	Q5
2.6 Partnerships between selected entrepreneurs and SMEs and PGs strengthened, and result in increased revenue for all parties	M 2.6.1 Training provided to a minimum of 50 promising entrepreneurs and SMEs per watershed per year	Q6, Q8, Q12
4.4 PGs and individual smallholders able to access reliable and competent non-project (sustainable) agricultural extension services	M 4.4.1 Twenty agricultural technicians recruited and trained in each watershed, operating independently	Q11

<p>5.3 Community-based natural resources management supported</p>	<p>M 5.3.1 Training provided to GOH personnel in the development of simple watershed and NR management plans including co-management options.</p>	<p>Q5, Q7</p>
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The common theme that links all DEED activities into one overarching framework is the establishment first of local community watershed management units with the goal of integrating them into a larger watershed management committee for each of the two watershed. It is therefore important to coordinate activities with the GOH throughout the process. The steps that are planned are as follows:

1. Community mapping – Stakeholders from community based organizations including interested private sector actors and local authorities from commune offices, Ministry of agriculture field agents and mayor office staff are all invited to participate in practical mapping and zoning of critical areas in their communities. Training in the development of watershed management and natural resource management plans in Quarters 5 and 7 will greatly complement these activities

2. Activity implementation - As grants are awarded to producer groups and Public Private Alliances are formed, the GOH will be consulted for potential areas of collaboration and GOH support to the activities. This coordination aims to facilitate private sector initiatives by promoting an enabling environment for doing business. The Facilitator training in Quarter 4 and the entrepreneur and SME training sessions planned for Quarters 6, 8 and 12 will provide the setting to invite appropriate GOH staff to learn more about private sector initiatives in the watershed while also providing the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue regarding potential economically viable solutions to unsustainable natural resource use.

3. Steps 1 and 2 are necessary precursors to the formation of the overarching watershed management committee. As community mapping exercises are implemented representatives will be identified by each community to participate in first sub-watershed fora and later in the larger watershed management committee. This approach ensures that participants are contributing with practical experience resulting in plans that reflect the reality on the ground. The training for GOH personnel in watershed management and co-management in Quarter 7 is a good time to begin preparing for the establishment of each of the watershed management committees in Montrouis and Limbe.

In conclusion, to ensure a comprehensive integration of GOH staff in the promotion of private sector agricultural activities, DEED is implementing an integrated strategy aimed at promoting GOH participation at all levels including providing valuable extension support to private sector actors in developing promising natural resource based enterprises while contributing to community based natural resource management plans which must also take into consideration natural resource based economic development activities.