

## Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP)

### RAMP GUIDELINES FOR GATHERING INFORMATION ON FARMERS AND KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

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## **RAMP GUIDELINES FOR GATHERING INFORMATION ON FARMERS AND KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

These guidelines are intended for job order bidders and contractors to use if they are working with farmers and key field level stakeholder groups. RAMP will provide a short term consultant to advise and help job order contractors to implement these guidelines. The introduction and sections 1 and 2 provide background information on why collecting information from farmers and key stakeholder groups can facilitate the adoption process. Sections 3, 4 and 5 are guidelines contractors should use in gathering and using this information. Section 4 contains some examples of actual questions that can be asked to farmers and stakeholder groups.

RAMP through these guidelines are not recommending job order contractors do large audience studies. Rather, these guidelines are intended to give contractors some practical suggestions on the types of questions to ask farmers and stakeholder groups to help understand how to facilitate their adoption of best practices.

Working with the job order contractors and their field staffs will present an opportunity for RAMP to gather information on farmers and key stakeholder groups related to their adoption processes. This communication support task describes how to collect and use information on knowledge levels of best practices, attitudes towards them, and what actual practices farmers are currently using and why. This is called KAP (knowledge, attitude and practice) information. It is useful to gather this type of information for the recommended best practices from farmers and key stakeholder groups such as input dealers and their salesmen, market buyers and maybe others such as extension workers. This communication support task also recommends gathering information from farmers on how they seek information and what groups are most influential on their adopting new practices.

- 1. Why Important** – Farmers are generally very good at assessing risks when deciding to adopt a new practice or not. They cannot afford a failure as it could affect the livelihood of their families. If the job order contractors are to be successful in diffusing best practices to farmers they must understand how farmers think and how they make decisions on adopting new practices.

The KAP analysis is a way to monitor the diffusion/adoption phases – which are (1) awareness, (2) interest and information seeking, (3) trial, and (4) adoption. The knowledge level fits the awareness phase. If a farmer has not heard of a best practice it is certain he wouldn't adopt it. At this awareness phase mass media is often effective for informing farmers about a practice. Understanding attitudes is important for the information seeking and trial phases. If a farmer has a positive attitude towards a practice, then he will probably proceed through to the adoption phase. The practice measurement lets you know when a farmer does actually adopt a best practice and it is useful to try and find out why the farmer adopted the practice. As a farmer moves from the awareness phase towards adoption then interpersonal (face-to-face) communications become much more important. Farmers will consult with neighbors, input dealers, family members and other groups they respect to seek information and advice.

The KAP information gathered from farmers is important to guide the communication program directed at farmers and deciding what channels of communication to use. Since the later stages of the adoption process relies on interpersonal communication it is important to find out who these influential groups are. Therefore, the second part of information gathering from farmers is to find out where they get their information and what groups influence their decision making process. Once that is known then the job order contractors should work with those influential groups providing them information on the best practices and encouraging them to communicate it to farmers. These influential groups are often input dealers, market buyers, school teachers, etc.

When working with the influential groups, it can also be helpful to measure their KAP on a best practice. This can guide the communication activities directed towards these influential groups.

2. **Target Groups** – Information should be gathered by the job order contractors from:
  - **Farmers** – these are the farmers who are targeted for the recommended best practices. KAP and information seeking patterns information should be gathered from them.
  - **Influential Groups** – the information seeking patterns data gathered from farmers should identify who are the groups that they respect and will follow their advice – those who influence farmers’ adoption of new practices. Once these influential groups are identified they should be engaged in the communication program directed towards farmers. It can be very helpful to begin that process by gathering KAP information on these influential groups. They must be knowledgeable about the best practices and believe they are good before these people are going to recommend them to farmers.
  
3. **Guidelines on How to Collect the Information** – in the case of the RAMP job orders, we are not recommending or requesting that contractors conduct large complicated KAP and information seeking studies. The purpose of this communication support task is to help the contractors better understand farmers and key stakeholder groups so that their communications activities are most effective. Effective communication is a two-way process. Therefore, we are recommending the first step be to listen to farmers and the stakeholders. The more we understand about them the better we can design and implement our communication program. The following are ways to gather information from these groups. The job order contractors can use one or more of these methods for gathering information from farmers and key stakeholder groups.
  - **Survey** – a simple questionnaire can be designed (maybe with 10-15 questions) and given to the job order contractor field teams to interview farmers. The number of farmers need not be large – maybe 30-50 total. You may want to do the interviews in different regions to make sure their KAP and information seeking patterns are similar. The questionnaires should be summarized and program planning sessions be held with the participating field staff so they can share additional information and insights they gained from the interviews. The surveys need to be summarized in a report for use by the job order team and for giving to the RAMP team, who will share the information with other groups.

- **Focus groups** – this approach can be done by bringing 6-10 farmers together in a meeting and asking them questions. They should be encouraged to also interact asking each other questions. A person on the contractor team needs to record the KAP and information seeking information. Focus groups are also good for getting their recommendations on how to communicate with other farmers. It is recommended that several focus group sessions be held with different farmers to ensure that the information does apply to farmers in general. Reports need to be prepared summarizing the KAP and information seeking findings of the focus groups and recommendations they made in communicating to other farmers. This report should be used by the job order team and given to RAMP to share with other groups.
- **Informal interactions and recording responses** – as part of designing and implementing the program job order contractor team members will have contacts with farmers and key stakeholder groups. The survey and focus group guidelines should be given to the team members so they know what types of information to gather. The team members should record the responses they get from the farmers and stakeholder groups. One person on the team should collect these notes and put them into a report for the team to use and to provide to RAMP.

**4. The Types of Information to Collect** – This section describes the types of questions that can be developed and used for gather KAP and information seeking information from farmers and key stakeholder groups. You should not use all these questions, but to select from the list and adapt to your situation. Obviously the exact questions will vary according to the best practice being recommended. Therefore, the questions below are examples that need to be adapted to the specific practice and audience group. For these example questions, gathering information on Variety X is used.

- **Knowledge level** – the following are types of questions that can be asked to learn more about the knowledge level of a best practice:
  - Have you heard about Variety X?
  - Do you know if any of your neighbors are using Variety X?
  - What variety are you currently using?
  - What varieties are your neighbors currently using?
  - What variety do you think is best?
- **Attitude level** – the following are some examples of questions you can ask to assess their attitudes towards a best practice. This assumes they have knowledge or are aware of the recommended practice, but have not adopted it:
  - Are you interesting in using Variety X on your farm? If not, why? If yes, why?
  - Have you talked to your neighbors who are using Variety X?
  - Do you think Variety X would give you higher yields?
  - Do you think it is harder to grow Variety X?
  - Is the cost of the Variety X seed a problem?
  - Do you think there is a market for Variety X?

- **Practice level** – this is the third level of questions assuming they are aware of the practice and have a positive attitude towards it:
  - i. Are you planting Variety X on your farm? If no, why aren't you planting it? If yes, what was the main reason you decided to plant Variety X?
  - ii. Are you happy with Variety X? If yes, explain why? If no, explain why?
  - iii. Would you recommend Variety X to your neighbors?
- **Information seeking patterns and identifying influential groups** –
  - i. Where did you first learn about Variety X?
    - \_\_\_ another farmer/neighbor
    - \_\_\_ seed dealer
    - \_\_\_ other input dealer, who \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_ market buyer
    - \_\_\_ radio
    - \_\_\_ extension agent
    - \_\_\_ teacher
    - \_\_\_ other, who \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Of these different people you heard about Variety X, who do you feel was the most important source of the information and the one you believed the most?
  - iii. Did you ask others for more information about Variety X? If yes, who?
  - iv. When you have a problem on your farm or with a crop, who do you ask for advice and information?
  - v. What neighbors do you think are the best farmers?
  - vi. Do you follow the advice input dealers (seed, fertilizer, chemicals, etc.) provide to you when you buy their products? If not, why? If yes, do you find their advice correct and helpful to you?
  - vii. If a neighbor asked you a farming question which you don't know the answer, who would you recommend he should talk to?
- **Interviewing key stakeholder groups** – the KAP questions need to be adjusted for specific stakeholder groups and how they interact with farmers. The main thing is to find out if they are aware of the practice, if they have a positive attitude towards it, and if they would recommend the practice to farmers. You need to also assess if they understand the practice well enough to be able to promote it to farmers and be able to explain to farmers how to use the practice.

**5. How the Information Can be Used** – The information gathered from farmers and key stakeholder groups can be used by the job order contractors and others in several ways:

- **Serve as a baseline for measuring progress** – KAP studies often are done at the beginning of a project so that baseline data can be collected. After a year or an appropriate time the communication program has been operating a follow up KAP study is conducted. The changes in KAP will give you an indication if progress is being made in diffusing the best practices or if you need to redesign your communication program.

- **Determining what messages farmers need and want** – the information gathered from the above questions can give you guidance on what to communicate to farmers. If they are unaware of a practice, then you need to explain what it is and what benefits they would receive by using the practice. If they are aware and have a positive attitude towards it then your messages should be more on how to use the practice. If you find out why they are not adopting the practice, then you can focus on correcting any misunderstandings.
- **Designing your extension/communication program** – the KAP information will tell you what stage the farmers are in the adoption process which will help in identifying channels of communication – radio, field days, interpersonal communication, etc. The information seeking patterns findings will guide you on what influential groups to involve in your communication program.
- **Determining how to enlist influential groups in the communication program** – the KAP information gathered from the key stakeholder group(s) should be very valuable for helping you to enlist these influential groups. It will also guide you on what types of information they need so that they can effectively communicate correct messages to farmers.