

Memorandum Reference No. M17-06-279

Guidelines on the Crafting of Agricultural and Fisheries Extension Operational Plans or AFE Oplan June 1, 2017

The memorandum aims to provide a system for the formulation of harmonized AFE operational plan/s in the regions. Specifically, it aims to:

- Identify extension interventions that are relevant to the needs of the community;
- Craft an individual agency Work and Financial Plan (WFP) focusing on extension support, education and training services (ESETS);
- Come up with the AFE convergence initiative as RAFEN;
- Ensure complementation of activities, beneficiaries, coverage, and schedule of activities between and among RAFEN member agencies to achieve efficiency and productivity; and
- Promote synergy and unity in the implementation of the AFE services.

Salient Extension Provisions

III. Governing Principles

The following principles underpin the AFE OPlan:

- Within the Framework of the AFE Strategic Plan 2017-2022. This guideline shall be operationalized within the framework of the AFE Strategic Plan as an integrating paradigm to unify and harmonize all interventions to be implemented. The AFE Strategic Plan maps out the contributions that AFE stakeholders have agreed upon to steer the development of the agriculture and fisheries sector for the next six years starting 2017.
- Focused on priority commodities and consistent with color-coded maps of the Duterte Administration. Consistent with the directive of the Secretary of Agriculture to focus on cereals and high-value crops, extension interventions shall be accordingly redirected to support the goal of increasing productivity of these priority commodities. The stakeholders can access or use this in determining priority commodities consistent with color-coded maps.
- The collaborative mechanism in planning. The Institute shall involve the RAFEN member agencies which comprise of the national government agencies (NGAs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), LGUs and the private sector throughout the whole planning cycle. Moreover, plans are well represented when it is well-coordinated with agencies that are at stake. With its underpinnings of collaboration, inclusiveness, and empowerment, a participatory approach embodies the ideals that form the foundations of most grassroots and community-based organizations.
- Bottoms-Up and Participatory approach in planning. Community Needs Assessment (CNA) assumes that the extension efficiency of planning is gained by focusing on the expressed needs of the target community. It is highly flexible as it allows for adjustments in the focus of interventions based on needs.
- Ensuring Sustainability. The ultimate objective of the project is to ensure the sustainability of the system in harmonizing the AFE services at the regional level. For this to be realized, RAFEN member agencies shall express their commitment in the AFE planning process.

IV. Implementation Strategies and Mechanisms

The crafting of AFE OPlan shall consist of 4 main phases namely: i) Conduct of Needs Assessment; ii) Formulation of AFE OPlan; iii) Harmonization of AFE OpPlan, and iv) Consolidation of AFE OPlan.

Phase I: Conduct of Needs Assessment

To ensure the efficiency in planning, RAFEN member-agencies (NGAs, SIJCs, LGUs, and Private Sector) are encouraged to conduct a community needs assessment before they come up with their respective AFE programs, plan, and activities. It is a critical process which will help determine the training and extension needs of their targeted community. This will then enable member agencies to address the gaps with appropriate and relevant AFE interventions.

The following are the proposed steps and guide questions in the conduct of community needs assessment:

1. Determine and Define the Objectives of the Needs Assessment Activity. (What is your purpose in conducting the needs assessment?)
2. Identify the Target Audience. (From whom are you going to collect information and data?)

3. Establish a Sampling Procedure. (How are you going to select a group of individuals who will represent your target population?)
4. Data Collection Methods. (How do you plan to collect data?) (Who are the persons involved in Data Collection? Do they have the capacity to elicit the information needed?)
5. Instruments and Techniques. (What appropriate instruments and techniques will you use to collect data?)
6. Conduct of Actual Needs Assessment or Data Collection? (How will you facilitate the conduct of data gathering?)
7. Data Processing and Analysis. (How will you process/categorize the information gathered?) (What are the findings and observations?) (How will you prioritize the training and extension needs?)
8. Identification of AFE intervention and Decision Making. (What are the proposed AFE interventions to address the needs? Is it relevant/appropriate?) (Do the agency/institution have available resources (manpower, budget) to implement the intervention?)

These steps are provided for the RAFEN member-agencies to have a general perspective of the process of conducting their community needs assessment. Further, it is within their discretion to follow or modify these steps, if deemed necessary.

Also, the following are some of the methods and approaches in determining needs which can be adopted by RAFEN member-agencies:

- Survey. A way of collecting information representing the views of the community or group that the agency/institution is interested in. Depending on resources (time, budget and manpower), surveys may take in various forms - through questionnaire or interview (individual or group). The common surveys done in the community are the area profile as well as the household and farming survey (see Annex 1.1 and 1.2).
- Focus Group Discussion. A small group discussion with the community to elicit ideas about their needs through the guidance of a trained leader or facilitator. Generally, group composition and discussion topics are carefully planned.
- Observation. This method is used to gather qualitative information in the community that cannot be captured using quantitative data. It is a systematic walk along a determined path across a community wherein the project staff/enumerator explore the area by observing, listening and looking to gather information needed for the project (see Annex 1.3).
- Assets Inventory. This surveys information on the community's available resources. In broad terms, a community asset is anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life. It is similar to community resource and also referred to as a strength but the term "asset" is used to emphasize that this can be tapped to propel development; it can be used as the foundation for community development (see Annex 1.4).
- Participatory Rapid Rural Appraisal. It is used to enable targeted beneficiaries to analyze their own situation and needs for them to develop a common perspective on agriculture and fisheries at the community level.

Phase H: Crafting of AFE OPlan

Once the RAFEN member-agencies have identified the relevant extension interventions based on the result of needs assessment, they shall translate these into programs, plans and activities (PPAs) that their agency will plan to implement and put it in the prescribed WFP template (see Annex 2.1 and 2.2). The identified PPAs shall be categorized functionally according to six (6) strategic goals or commonly known as AFE thematic programs as identified in the NEAP and the AFE Strategic Plan for FY 2017-2022 (see Annex 2.3). It shall also reflect the overall physical (targeted outputs) and financial (estimated obligations/expenditures) plan of the RAFEN member-agencies, broken down by quarter. The specific Programs/Projects/Activities (P/P/As) that will be identified will significantly help in complementation of extension services among RAFEN member-agencies and will then contribute to achieving agriculture and fisheries development goals of the country.

To further ensure that interventions among agencies and institutions are synchronized, a set of performance (output) indicators for extension are attached in this guideline for reference (Annex 2.4). This shall serve as a guide for planning and targeting of AFE PPAs as well as monitoring and evaluation of AFE accomplishments in the future.

Phase III: Harmonization of AFE OPlan The AFE OPlan shall be presented in one of the RAFEN Quarterly Meetings to determine the possible collaborations that member-agencies/units can engage in. This would also be an opportunity to harmonize and complement the training and extension interventions of the RAFEN.

Once crafted, the head of the agency shall affix his/her signature on the updated WFP to signify his/her support in the implementation of extension interventions.

Phase IV: Consolidation of AFE OPlan

The individual member-agencies shall furnish to their respective ATI-RTCs both hard and soft copies of their AFE Oplan. The ATI RTCs through their planning officers shall consolidate the plans submitted by the member-agencies and come up with one document constituting the AFE OPlan. This shall be submitted to the ATI-CO through the Policy and Planning Division for incorporation in the overall APE OPlan. The document shall serve as a reference and supporting document during budget deliberations in the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and in both Lower and Upper Houses of Legislature.

RAFEN Convergence Initiative

Beyond their regular activities as an agency or institution, RAFEN member-agencies are encouraged to develop a special program or convergence initiative that will involve various members. This will foster inter-agency coordination and undertake collaborations that are designed to address the needs and concerns of the extension client system. This will also facilitate the sharing of resources (i.e. expertise, finance, facilities, etc.) in pursuit of common goals and objectives. Program for collaboration may arise from the result of the individual member-agencies needs assessment. However, if they want to conduct a community needs assessment prior to the development of a particular program, the steps in Phase I of the Crafting of the APE OPlan in these guidelines may be adopted.

Source:

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