Goal-Oriented Teamwork
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Text adapted for FAO by

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work based on:
CATAD working papers 2009, Teamarbeit und Teammanagement, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany

Coverdale, 2003, Training technique
for the

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, FAO

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1. **Goal-oriented Teamwork**
- a systematic approach to achieve aims

People who are able to bundle common aims and are able to act within the realm of their own responsibility are successful. A proven method to achieve this is to follow together the systematic approach of teamwork.

This approach is a flexible and complete instrument – and one that can be easily combined with other instruments. Thus it is possible, for example, to expand one or several phases of this approach substantially by integrating another system. The systematic approach to achieving objectives serves as an aid in the decision-making process.

Every system of co-operation functions at a minimum of two different levels: the level of the individual and the much more complex level of interaction among several individuals. A typical example of such a system is the use of an agenda for meetings, work sessions or conferences. In this situation participants work with one another and with a leader or chairperson (facilitator) by employing a system that is familiar to and accepted by everyone involved as a frame of reference they have ordinarily approved from the outset.

Generally speaking, goal-oriented teamwork has a specific starting point – recognition of the need to achieve, create or resolve something. In a sense, one might speak of a shared mission. As a rule, the frame of reference for co-operation in such a mission involves three steps:

i. Preparation

ii. Action

iii. Review
In the systematic approach those three steps are divided into seven phases.

**i. Preparation**

**Phase 1**  
**Clarify the task**  
Check to ensure that everyone involved understands the task in the same way.

**Phase 2**  
**Agreeing on aims**  
Clarification, agreement and specification of the following matters:
- What is the purpose of what we are doing?
- For whom do we do it?
- What result(s) are to be achieved until ...?
- What criteria should be used to evaluate our result(s)?

**Phase 3**  
**Gathering information**  
Collect and provide all relevant information. Develop alternatives. Assess risks.

**Phase 4**  
**Deciding what has to be done?**  
An outline or a brainstorming including a list of everything that has to be done including priorities, where plans still need to be developed. This is derived with the information that needs to be gathered to achieve the agreed aims.

**Phase 5**  
**Preparing a plan**  
A detailed catalogue of instructions for everyone involved. This should make it clear who is to do what, when and where.

**ii. Action**

**Phase 6**  
**Implementation**  
This is the phase in which the plan developed in phase 5 is carried out.

**iii. Evaluation**

**Phase 7**  
**Review**  
Evaluation of the end result(s) of our work and the process we used. The aim of the review being a simple method of seeing how we can learn from our experiences and doing the job better the next time. The results of this review could lead, for example, to a decision to initiate a new cycle in phase 2 (agreeing on aims) and repeat all of the other phases.
2. **The meaning and purpose of goals**

One of the most crucial aspects of goal-oriented teamwork is having clearly defined goals that are understood and shared by all members of the team. The process of achieving this is just as important, especially for aims that have a high priority. Thus it is essential to ensure that all key people are involved in the task or project setting the aims. This process of sitting together and defining the goal ensures common understanding and supports the process of “buy in and commitment”.

Four key questions help the team to define a goal.

- What is the purpose of what we are doing?
- Who are the participants / clients / stakeholders?
- What is our desired final outcome?
- Against which criteria are we going to measure the quality of the outcome?

A clearly defined goal helps to identify key participants and stakeholders both internally and externally at the start of the project helping you define the end result your customer or target group needs from you. This means delivering what is needed rather than having to sell an idea.

Clarification of goals can help to:

- Motivate people
- Point the way
- Recognize the purpose of a given action
- Develop a vision of the final product
- Justify action
- Protect against the judgments of outsiders
- Optimize work plans
- Identify available and required resources
- Achieve consensus and avoid unnecessary friction
- Evaluate contributions and ideas
- Relieve stress
- Discipline “trouble makers”
- Make better use of time.
The question of the "PURPOSE" - Why are we doing this?
A very clear answer should be found for this question in order to ensure that further action is focused on achieving the aim. Discussing the purpose helps a lot in the process of defining the goal precisely.

The question of “FOR WHOSE BENEFIT?”
This question establishes the link to the needs of the target group. It is important to know these people in order to draw conclusions about their needs or to engage in dialogue with them for the purpose of clarifying further details relevant to achieving the aim in question. (Participation)

The question of the “FINAL OUTCOME”
The answer to this question provides a clear picture of what is to be achieved in concrete terms. A timely understanding of the desired outcome provides orientation for necessary action.

Specifying the “CRITERIA”
The specification of criteria provides a basis for verifying the achievement of aims. Criteria enable those involved to determine as work progresses whether they are still on course or not. Once work is completed, the quality of the outcome can be assessed on the basis of the same criteria – to determine whether the work has been successful or not.