

***A TROUBLE-SHOOTER'S GUIDE TO
FORESTRY EXTENSION PROBLEMS***

Food and Agricultural Organisation Rome, 1996

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Written and developed by
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Preface

Extension for sustainable forest management is an ongoing process taking place in a range of institutional and social settings. Often, the design and creation of a new extension service is a luxury that organisations cannot afford. On the contrary, small scale refinements and means to overcome daily obstacles are needed, if the extension functions and structures are to be improved and made more effective and efficient. The “Troubleshooter’s Guide to Forestry Extension Problems” is meant as a practical aid to resolving common problems encountered in working together with local people and promoting sustainable forest management. The audience for such a guide includes field level forestry extension workers and managers, village leaders and village extension workers, and others involved in natural resource extension programmes. It should be useful to a range of organisations from governmental services to NGOs and from local associations to international donors. While it taps a wide range of experience and expertise to give suggestions and options for addressing problems, its main aim is to assist in developing the problem-solving process. Solutions to most extension problems must be found locally, by systematic problem solving, tapping local knowledge and skills and the application of relevant experience and expertise.

Work on the guide was initiated and supervised by Jon Anderson, Forestry Extension Officer, Forest Resources Division. The guide was written and developed by Jonathan Cook and Ester Bonitatibus. Many people, both inside and outside of FAO provided useful comments.

The guide will hopefully be a useful and dynamic tool. It will be made available both in hard copy and electronic versions. Since the Guide is process oriented we look forward to hearing from colleagues with suggestions and comments.

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Comments and suggestions on this document are welcome.
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Introduction

Purpose of this guide

In most countries, extension systems have now been operating for some time and problems within them will often require a refinement of the existing system rather than design of a new system from scratch.

The purpose of this guide is to provide forestry extension managers with a simple approach to analysing common extension problems. In most cases, suggestions are then given for possible actions to consider in investigating the causes of the problem further and ultimately in overcoming it. However the primary purpose of the guide is not 'to give solutions to all known problems' but to assist the extension manager in analysing problems to find their root cause (or causes). The guide is designed to be simple and easy to use, and thus cannot do justice to the complexity of all the problems and situations faced by extension personnel.

Many different approaches might be used to organise this process and information. The guide has tried in all cases to begin with noticeable problems and by analysing these through an hierarchy or problem tree, help users to analyse and reach their own conclusions as to the best solution.

It is important to recognise that all forestry extension systems necessarily differ to some extent due to climatic, cultural and economic differences between countries and regions. Within a given agroforestry system the problems and their solutions are to some extent unique to the particular people and circumstances

under consideration. This guide should therefore not be seen as a recipe book - it cannot provide specific answers to problems. Rather it aims to provide a tool to the forestry extension manager to help him or her correctly analyse the situation and pin point the reason or reasons behind problems and hence find possible solutions. What may be a sensible practical solution in one area could be entirely inappropriate in another. Suggestions for actions should in all cases therefore be seen as just that - suggestions. These ideas are intended to assist the extension manager in thinking of his or her own appropriate solutions according to circumstances. In most situations there will be a number of possible courses of action or further investigation which could be undertaken. Also in many cases, problems may have more than one cause and will not exist in isolation but have a number of other related problems. In all cases, having arrived at a possible cause for the problem, the user of the guide should ask whether the problem could also relate to another area and consider alternative causes and actions to take.

While the guide covers analysis of a large number of potential problems, in all cases the user is urged to consider whether there may be other reasons for the problems not listed and not covered elsewhere in the guide. i.e. at each branch of the problem tree, the user should consider whether the issue is covered or if a further branch is needed in their particular case. In most cases, problems should be further analysed by the user beyond the points given.



To Map pages

To instructions for use

The guide is divided into three sections reflecting the various actors in an extension system as seen from the point of view of the middle level manager:

- the rural people
- the field extension agents
- the extension manager him/herself.

Within each of these areas, a number of common problem areas are identified. These problems are then further subdivided in an hierarchical way leading to possible root causes from where suggestions are made for possible actions to take.

In all cases, the guide begins with the assumption that the forestry extension system exists to achieve certain objectives and therefore the problem areas are those which prevent the system from achieving its objectives. While it may be the case that the objectives of the extension service itself are inadequate or impractical, this is outside the scope of this guide. Such issues deal with the design of the extension system itself which is covered elsewhere.

If all problems therefore can be seen as stemming from lack of progress in achieving extension objectives, it follows that many of the issues commonly thought of as problems are not necessarily a problem unless there is no alternative way to achieve the objective except by overcoming that obstacle. For example, lack of transport is not in itself a problem except in as far as it prevents the extension system from reaching the rural people with who they work. Inability to reach the rural people with the advice and assistance needed is the fundamental problem and this could be overcome in a number of ways such as for example better use of mass media, group extension approaches, public transport, setting up extension offices closer to where they are needed or making better use of local people as extension agents themselves.

There is inevitably some overlap in both problems and possible causes. In all cases consider whether the problem may lie in other areas which need to be considered in analysing the problem which may suggest quite different causes and hence different actions to be taken. It is ultimately up to the user to decide the best solution. Clear analysis of the problems is the first step in finding solutions which in most cases will need to be specific to the situation of concern.

Comments and suggestions for improvement and development of the guide from those actively involved in the management of forestry extension systems world-wide are welcomed.





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How to use the guide

For any given problem:

- 1 Follow through the hierarchy by clicking on appropriate 'problem boxes' to trace possible causes of the problem.

Look through suggestions for the specific problem identified.

Suggestions are intended as examples of alternative course of action only - in any given situation it is likely that there is more than one possible course of action.

- 2 Return to the map page and consider alternative reasons for the problem - trace these problems through the problem trees - their may be more than one underlying cause for the problem.

Click on the symbol above which takes you to the overall map page

This symbol is used throughout the guide and will always return you to the map page



Navigation

Clicking on any text box at the top of a particular problem tree will move to a higher level tree (until you reach the highest level)

Clicking on a text box at the lower end of a particular problem tree will move to a lower level tree or to suggestions for solutions to the problem.

IMPORTANT

When the mouse is moved over an area which is linked to another section of the guide, (a hotspot) the cursor changes to a pointing finger. Clicking on these hot spots will always jump to that point in the guide. Where there is no hot spot, the cursor will remain as a flat hand or magnifying glass. To magnify text do not click on a hot spot with the magnifying glass.

Note: The boxes labelled 'other causes' do not have further subdivisions and so are not 'hot spots' - they are there simply to remind the user that not all causes may be listed. This is true of all levels and all branches of the problem trees whether specifically stated or not)

Clicking on text blocks will enlarge them and each click of the mouse will then take the user through the text block until the end when the page will be returned to the default size.

Clicking on titles of problems will return to the previous problem tree.

Clicking on the back arrow at the bottom of the page will also return to the previous level problem tree.



A contents list is included with the map page. To access the contents list, click on 'Table of contents' on the map page, then click on the appropriate entry to jump directly to that page.



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Tools and buttons

The toolbar contains tools for selecting and viewing documents. Select a tool by clicking the tool icon. To hide or show the toolbar, choose Hide Toolbar or Show Toolbar from the Window menu.

The toolbar contains the following tools and buttons:



Click the **Page Only** button to close the overview area of the window.



Use the **hand** tool to move a document page on-screen when it does not fit within the window. Drag the hand tool in the direction you want to move the page.



Use the **zoom** tools to magnify and reduce the page display by a factor of 2.



Use the **Go Back** and **Go Forward** buttons to retrace your steps in a document, moving to each view in the order visited. Go Back also returns you to the original document after you click a link to another document.



Click the **Actual Size** button to display the page at 100%.



Click the **Fit Page** button to scale the page to fit within the window.

Click the **Fit Width** button to scale the page to fill the width of the window. Pressing this button and the Option (Macintosh) or Control (Windows) key fills the window with only the visible text and graphics on the page.



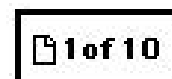
Click the **Find** button to search for part of a word, a complete word, or multiple words in a document.



Note: The Guide is made up of a number of documents. This command can only find words in the particular document which is active.

Status bar fields and controls

The status bar contains the following fields and controls:



The **page number box** displays the current page number and lets you go to a specified page in a multipage document. Click the page number box to display the Go To Page dialogue box.



The **magnification box** displays the current page magnification and lets you select various magnifications.

Using links

Links connect part of one document to another part of the same document or to another document. The Guide is made up of a number of documents connected by these links.

To use a link:

Click any text or graphic that is identified as a hypertext link. The pointer changes to a pointing finger when positioned over a link.



To return from a link to a PDF document:

Click Go Back or choose Go Back from the View menu to return to the previous page view.

Further details for using Adobe Acrobat are included in the Help file (in the Adobe Acrobat folder).