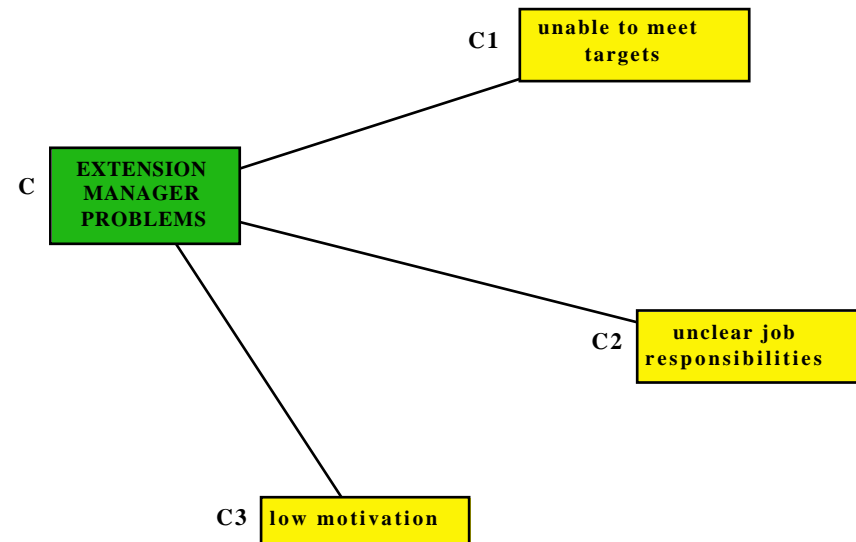




C: EXTENSION MANAGER'S PROBLEMS

Extension managers are often well prepared as extension specialists but are rarely given much training and support in **management** issues. At times, therefore, they can find themselves frustrated and disoriented, facing administrative and management problems which they have not been trained to solve. Planning effective and achievable operations, managing time and resources, promoting a team spirit and ensuring good coordination of activities, are just a few of the areas where problems may occur.

Even when specific problems have not been detected, however, increasing managerial efficiency can significantly contribute to the achievement of extension objectives. Many of the ideas and concepts in this section may be useful to the extension manager to either modify or directly introduce into the management practices of the service.





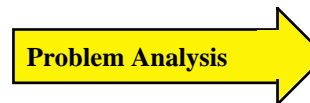
C1 unable to meet targets

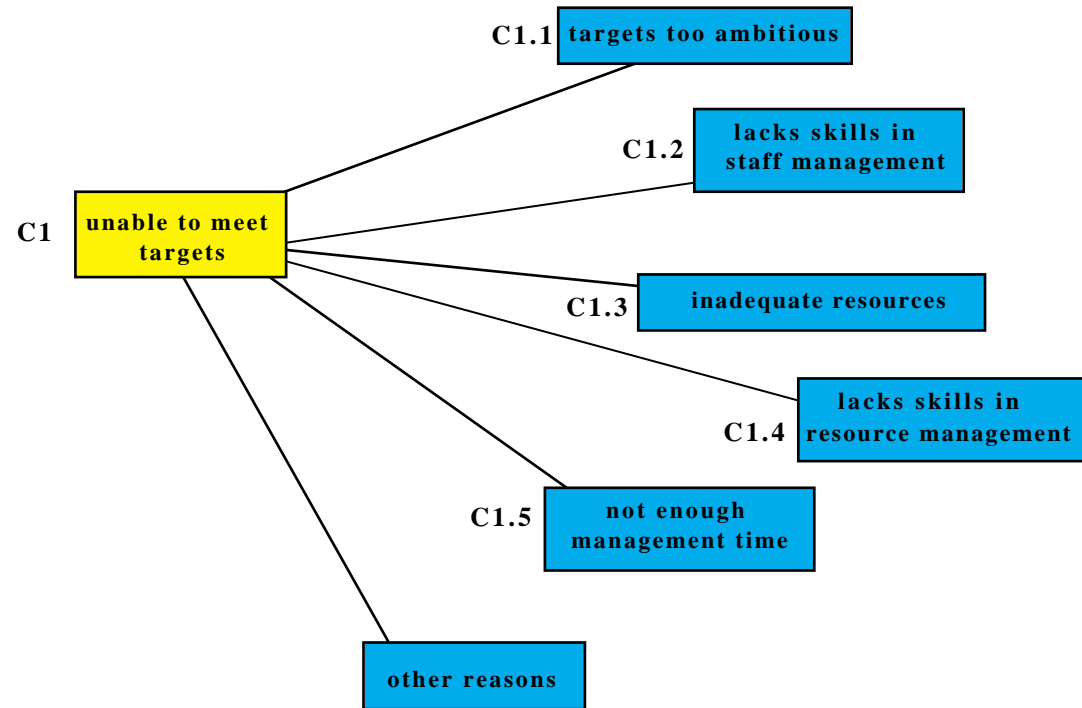
Inability to meet targets can be a sign of low efficiency of the service and of low contribution to the achievement of the higher extension goals. In some cases it may also be that the targets are not practical or appropriate. Consistent failure to meet targets can be a cause of frustration for managers and lowers staff morale. It is often felt that the limited achievements are caused by external factors beyond the extension manager's control, and the conclusion reached and accepted is that "unfortunately, nothing can be done". Resources are however never as great as a manager would like and the issue should be how to develop efficient solutions to make the best possible use of the resources which are available and how to improve planning to ensure targets are practical and not overambitious while still contributing to the objectives set.

In analysing the reasons for the inability to meet targets, it may also be useful to review other aspects and resources, to identify those which may have a surplus. For example, lack of transport may be seen as a cause for not achieving targets. No more vehicles can be bought since there are no funds. However, there may, for example, be some under-used administrative staff which could be allocated some of the paperwork of the field workers. This could then leave field workers with some extra time, enabling them to use public transport instead. The principle is that if one resource is lacking, are there any ways around the problem by making more use of other resources? In some cases, a constraint in one area may also be an opportunity in another. For example, limited availability of transport may require better planning of activities and hence result in better use of staff time.

Questions to consider should include:

- why were objectives not met?
- was this an isolated instance or does it occur often?
- can the constraint be removed?
- how could its effect be minimised? Can an improvement in other areas limit the negative effect of this constraint in the future?







Problem (targets not met)

C1.1 targets too ambitious

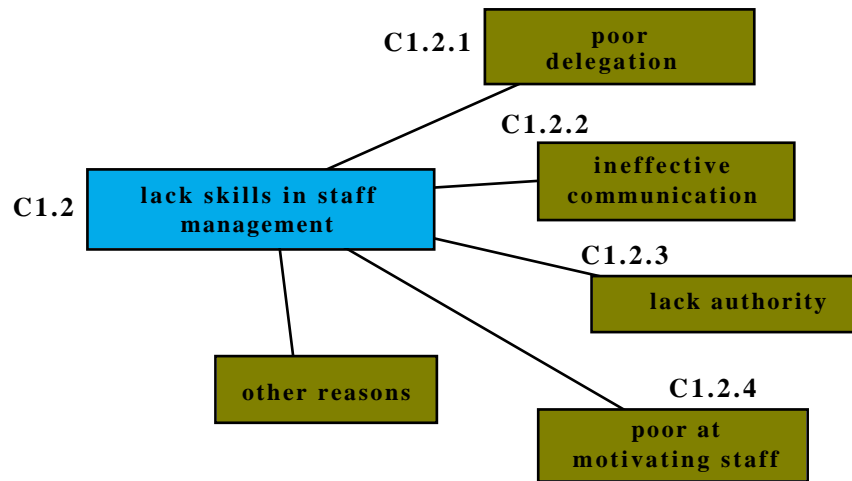
Suggestions

- Review targets - are they really too ambitious?
Why?
What is the constraint to achieving them?
Consider all the other reasons given in the section before concluding that the targets need to be changed.

Consider also whether the objectives are clear
see C2.1 unclear objectives

- other suggestions







Problem: (targets not met)

C1.2.1 poor delegation

Suggestions

- discuss with managers at similar levels
- consider underlying reason for poor delegation
 - is it due to fear of losing control?
 - is it due to lack of trust in your staff?
 - is it perceived incompetence of other people?

- other suggestions

In determining which tasks could be delegated it may be helpful to list all your tasks as a manager on a piece of paper, then to consider which could be delegated, taking in to consideration staff availability and competence. Which would then be the most appropriate way to delegate will depend on your situation. Perhaps relatively minor tasks could be first delegated to increase the confidence of the staff and of yourself in their abilities if this is a problem. How much supervision would be needed should also decrease as staff show competence and responsibility. How much would you need to discuss options with staff and how much would need to become a regular part of their tasks as opposed to ad hoc delegation? Would terms of reference need to be changed?





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.2.2 ineffective communication

Suggestions

- Consider what might be the root cause of the poor communication
 - could it be lack of authority or respect? Is this due to perceived incompetence in some area? Could it be the opposite - that staff fear you and do not volunteer information?
 - is the problem due to physical communication difficulties - transport, telephones, postal service etc?
 - depending on the root cause of the problem, look at other relevant sections of this guide.
- discuss problem with managers at similar levels
- consider study course or self study of staff management issues

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.2.3 lack authority

Suggestions

- discuss with other managers at similar level
- consider root causes of lack of authority
 - are they due to ineffective lines of command - i.e. no authority given in the post (see that section)
 - or due to ineffective use of authority of the position/lack of respect by staff?
 - If due to lack of respect, is this due to lack of competence in some area or other reasons?
- consider training/self study on staff management
- consider assertiveness training course/self study
- review your role and tasks - is an authoritarian approach necessary or appropriate? Perhaps greater participation or delegation of tasks to other staff may be more appropriate?

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

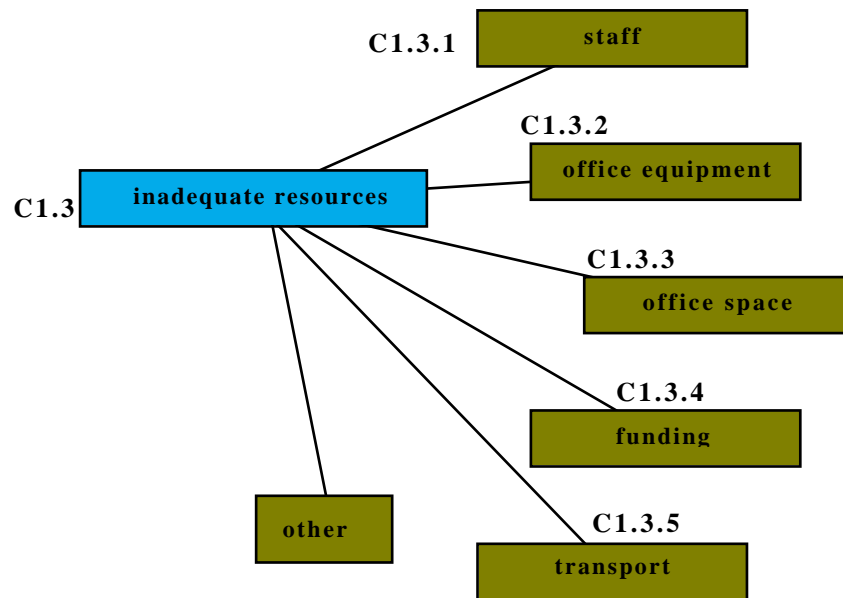
C1.2.4 poor at motivating staff

Suggestions

- consider root causes of low staff motivation (see that section)
- consider whether the problem is one of lack of team spirit - could more team work activities help. These may be social as well as work activities.
- consider how other staff members could help in staff motivation/developing team spirit
- discuss problem with colleagues at similar level
- could the problem be usefully discussed with the staff in an open meeting?
- Would an anonymous suggestion box help find out the reasons for lack of motivation?

- other suggestions





Lack of resources here refers to genuine long term lack of resources and not a temporary problem or where more resources can be obtained relatively easily. If more resources can be obtained through grants, loans donations or increased central

funding, this would (in most cases) be the best solution. Funding sources may not necessarily have to be central ministry funds however.





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.3.1 too few staff

Suggestions

What may seem to be too few staff can sometimes be more a matter of inappropriate management of existing staff and other resources rather than too few staff as such. Consider how much responsibility is given to the staff for their actions. How much are they involved in setting priorities? How much are the clients or rural people involved in deciding what is needed from the extension system? Is there too much central control by the extension manager? If so, why? Perhaps the manager fears lack of control of the work, or distrusts staff capabilities. Delegating responsibilities to staff and rural people can make limited time and resources more effective.

- review staff activities - set priorities?
- schedule activities to make best use of time and staff available?
- consider whether staff and/or rural people could be given more responsibility for their actions
i.e. could more tasks and responsibilities be delegated?
- consider how else the tasks could be achieved - more use of mass media? More use of non-extension staff?

- shift administrative tasks from field workers to secretarial staff effectively increasing field workers' time for extension activities?
- consider additional staff for the non-extension aspects of work to allow extension staff to concentrate on extension duties?

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.3.2 lack of office equipment

Suggestions

- review alternatives - consider renting equipment?
- could commercial services be used?
- could essential equipment be borrowed?
- is all equipment necessary? can activities be reorganised?
- could other equipment be used instead?

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.3.3 inadequate office space

Suggestions

- consider conducting non-administrative activities at another location?
- review which activities need to be conducted at present site and consider conducting others elsewhere?

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.3.4 lack of funds

Suggestions

- consider how waste could be reduced - what non-essential costs might be cut?
- consider alternative sources of funds - loans, grants, outside assistance, rural people paying part of the costs, or repayment in kind?

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

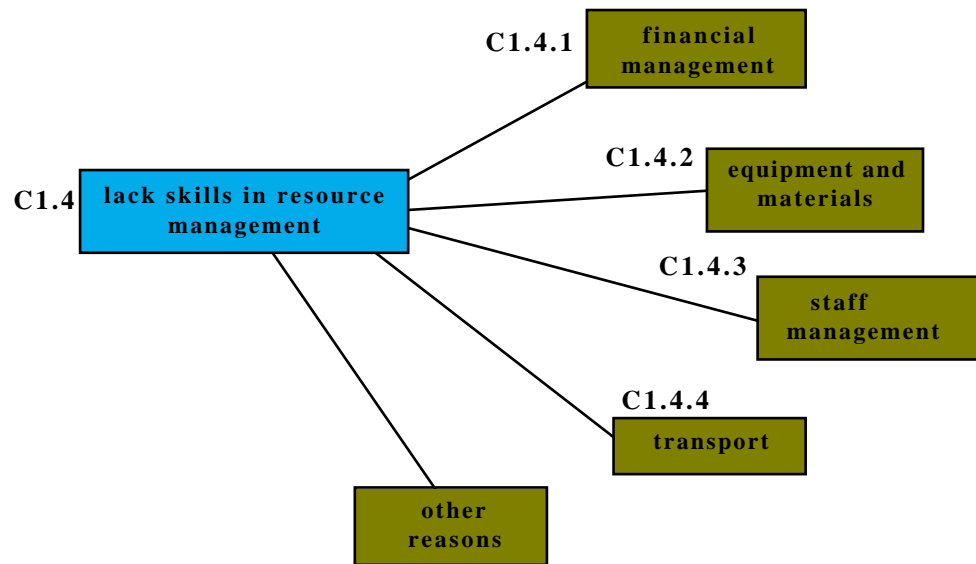
C1.3.5 lack of transport

Suggestions

- consider use of private or public transport?
- extension workers own transport?
- better/more efficient use of existing transport?
- station extension workers closer to their work?
- assign extension workers areas which are close to their home?
- make more use of mass communications and rural people's groups for extension work?

- other suggestions







Problem: (targets not met)

C1.4.1 poor financial management skills

Suggestions

- consider short course training on financial management
- consider self study of financial management publications
- discuss with and observe other extension managers in similar positions
- consider whether this function could be better done by/in cooperation with another staff member

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.4.2 lack of skills in managing equipment and resources

Suggestions

- discuss with other staff at same level?
- look through any relevant publications on operations management available?
- observe other more successful managers - in any field?
- review use of equipment/materials and requirements:
how could the existing equipment/materials be better organised to match requirements?

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.4.3 poor management of staff

Suggestions

- discuss problem with colleagues
- consider study course/self study on staff management issues
- see also C1.2 lacks skills in staff management

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

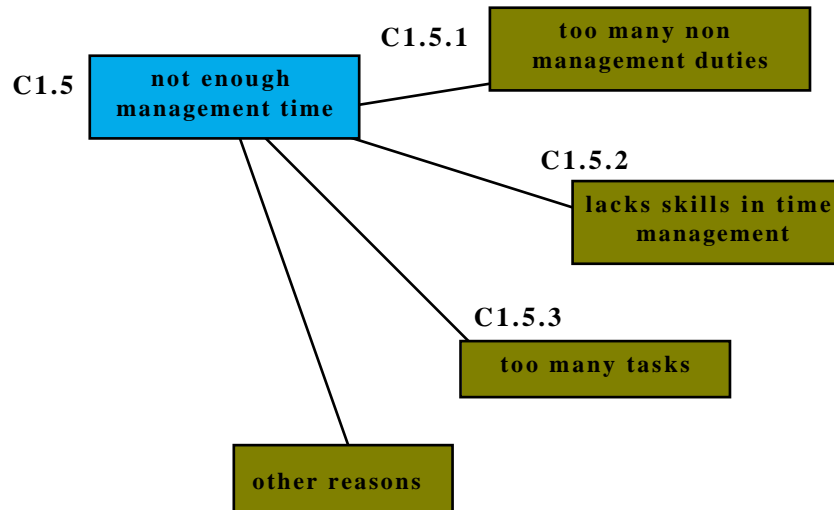
C1.4.4 poor management of transport

Suggestions

- review present use of transport and requirements
could any existing transport be reallocated or shared?
- could extension workers use own transport at times?
- could extension workers share transport at times?
- could extension workers be stationed closer to their work?
- could their work schedules be reorganised to make better use of transport?
- could extension workers be assigned areas which are close to their homes?
- could more use be made of mass communications and rural people's groups for extension work?

- other suggestions





Shortage of management time may also mean lack of management skills, rather than lack of time as such.

Consider also the points in

C1.2 - lacks skills in staff management and

C2. unclear job responsibilities





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.5.1 too many non management duties

Suggestions

- review daily activities - reduce/delegate those not connected with management?
- review problem with colleagues/ supervisor
- see also section 2 (unclear job responsibilities)

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.5.2 lacks skills in time management

Suggestions

- discuss with other staff at same level?
- review activities and schedule them according to priorities?
- be more rigid over scheduling?
- see also next two points below & section on low motivation?

- other suggestions





Problem: (targets not met)

C1.5.3 too many tasks

Suggestions

- could delegation of tasks be increased?
- prioritise tasks?
- reduce wasted time - list essential tasks?
- learn to be more decisive?

- other suggestions

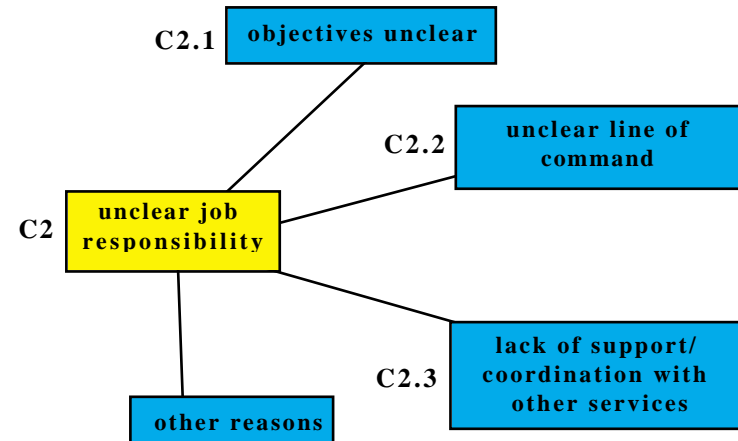


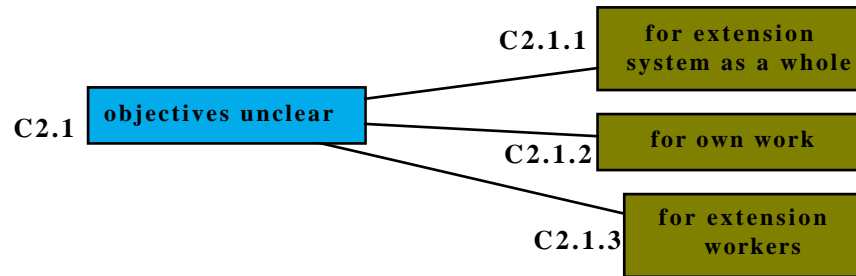


C2 unclear job responsibilities

Unclear job responsibilities can cause duplication of efforts, conflicts and a general lowering of efficiency of the whole service. The problems apply both for the manager's own responsibilities and for the field staff. Responsibilities should be well defined, allocated according to competencies and to contribute to the achievement of the extension objectives. Extension objectives themselves, should also be well defined and clear for all staff.

Confusion may also arise where the line of command is not well defined, resulting in staff being answerable to more than one person who can make conflicting demands on their time. Similarly lack of clarity as to which service is responsible for what, can lead to problems between services instead of encouraging a constructive cooperative effort.





When objectives are unclear it is difficult to prioritise work and to monitor and evaluate. Without knowing specifically what is expected to be achieved, activities tend to expand to fill the time available without achieving any specific purpose. It is therefore of critical importance that the objectives are clear for all extension workers whether the objectives are to increase the well being of rural people or to increase production or to preserve the forests. In many cases there will be several objectives and sometimes these may conflict with each other such as for example to increase forests conservation while increasing crop

production. In these cases the objectives need to be prioritised with the lower level objectives are only remaining valid as long as they do not conflict with higher level objectives. Objectives then determine what activities can or should take place in order to achieve them. It may be the case though that objectives can best be achieved by methods out of the reach of the extension service. e.g. higher standard of living in many cases may be achieved by moving to cities and not through improved agroforestry techniques.





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.1.1 unclear extension objectives for system as a whole

Suggestions

- raise issue at next meeting of senior staff?
- if objectives not clear, prepare proposed objectives in consultation with rural people (clients) and request agreement/discussion/correction?

- other suggestions





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.1.2 objectives unclear for own work

Suggestions

- raise issue at next meeting of senior staff?
- if objectives not clear, prepare proposed objectives in consultation with rural people (clients) and request agreement/discussion/correction?

- other suggestions





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

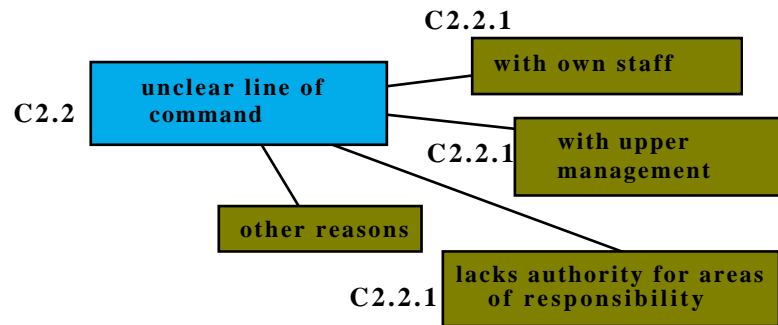
C2.1.3 objectives unclear for extension staff

Suggestions

- ensure overall extension objectives (C2.1.1), are agreed first, then prepare objectives and terms of reference for extension staff and discuss with them?

- other suggestions





Unclear line of command - when staff or management are answerable to more than one person - can lead to confusion and conflict over who is in charge. This can easily lead to an undermining of authority. It also leads to lack of accountability, areas of overlap of responsibility and often areas of concern not being covered by anyone. If an area is no particular person's responsibility, it may be thought of as everyone's responsibility, but in practice, no-one ensures that anything is done.





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.2.1 unclear line of command with own staff

Suggestions

- decide areas of responsibility, and put in writing?
- discuss issue with staff?

- other suggestions





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

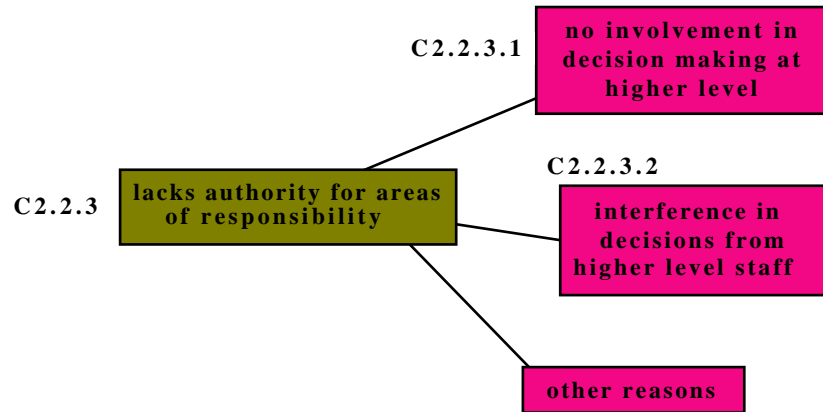
C2.2.2 unclear line of command with upper levels of management

Suggestions

- discuss with supervisors/upper management who is responsible to who - i.e. what is the line of command?
- request an organisation chart - and determine own and higher level positions?
- if no chart exists, prepare own version and discuss with supervisors?

- other suggestions





Lack of authority is a particularly difficult area where a very autocratic management style is practised. In many cases, there is little contact with senior staff and there is little directly that can be done if senior staff contradict junior staff. The most difficult situations are when junior staff by-pass the middle manager and the senior staff make decisions opposite to those made by the mid-level manager. This can be very damaging to morale and authority. Extension managers should avoid this situation wherever possible, ensuring that all decisions are taken with the knowledge and agreement of intermediate staff and that junior staff are not given directives without the consent of their immediate supervisors. Sometimes middle managers may wish to promote participation of rural people in decision making but are constrained by lack of understanding by supervisors or by a general autocratic environment. Such issues may need to be discussed in general meetings or other feedback channels.





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.2.3.1 no involvement in decision making at higher levels

Suggestions

- discuss problem in meeting with higher level managers if possible?
- maximise use and impact of areas where authority does match responsibility?

- other suggestions





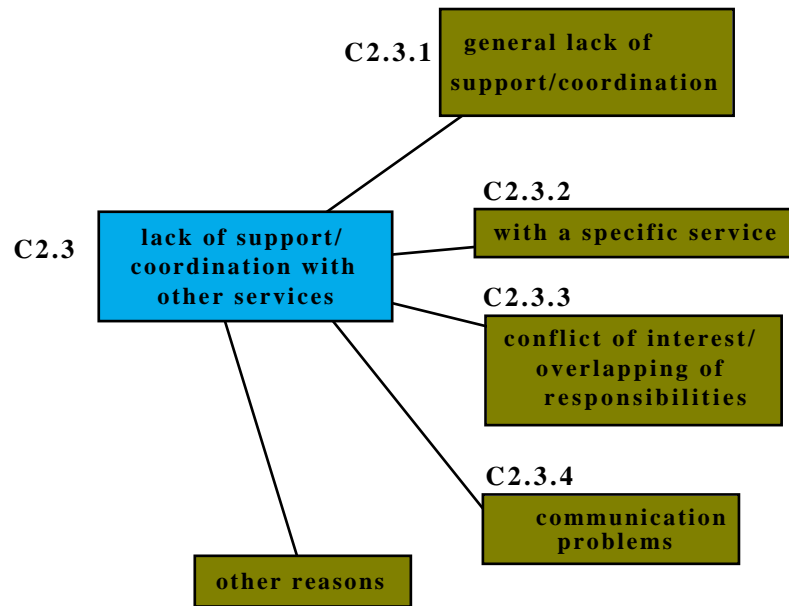
Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.2.3.2 interference in decisions from higher management levels

Suggestions

- discuss problem in meeting with supervisors if possible?
 - avoid most sensitive areas where interference is most likely/
ensure compliance in these areas?
 - try to compromise in areas of lesser concern?
- other suggestions
-
-
-
-







Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.3.1 general lack of support/coordination with other services

Suggestions

- review situation in meeting with other management staff/supervisors?
- suggest co-ordinating meeting be held at own level?
- make formal/informal contact with other services?
- plan joint activities with other services with their involvement from the planning stage?

- other suggestions





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.3.2 lack of support/coordination with a specific service

Suggestions

- contact management staff of that service?
- suggest planning joint activities?
- ask supervisors to raise the matter at a higher level?
- arrange informal/social contacts with other service?

- other suggestions





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.3.3 conflict of interests/ overlapping of responsibilities with other services

Suggestions

- arrange joint meeting with other service?
- ask supervisors to raise the matter at a higher level?
- concentrate on areas of co-operation?

- other suggestions





Problem: (unclear job responsibilities)

C2.3.4 communication problems to other services

Suggestions

- request assistance /raise issue with senior level staff?
- request co-ordinating meeting?
- consider visiting other service offices/stations more frequently
- consider encouraging your staff to visit service offices more often?
- consider encouraging their service staff to visit field together with your extension staff?

- other suggestions

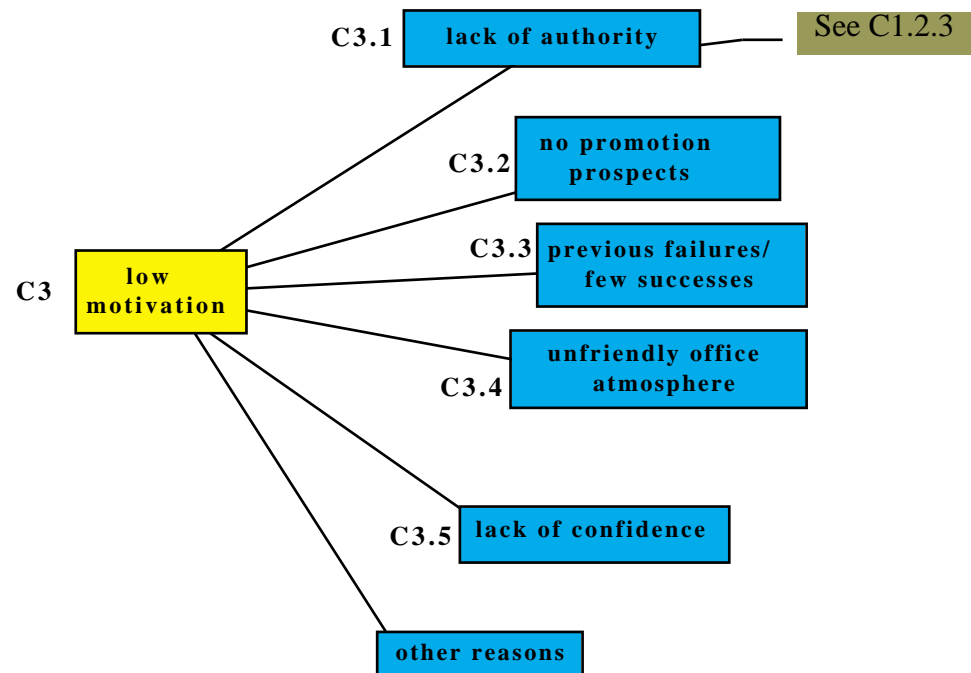




C3 low motivation/interest in own work

Like field staff, extension managers can also experience problems caused by low levels of motivation. The implications of low motivation at their level, however, can be more disruptive, since a demotivated manager will cause staff to lose interest in the work, also.

It is usually possible to identify the underlying reason/s for the lack of motivation, i.e. the aspects of the work that are the area of concern. This may be due to a general issue such as poor promotion prospects or due to one or more specific situations (e.g. when dealing with staff management issues, or when chairing a meeting, or when launching a new activity). Once the causes are clearly highlighted, the action planned to improve the situation will be more likely to be effective.





Problem: (low motivation)

C3.2 no promotion prospects

Suggestions

- raise issue with supervisors/senior staff?
- consider alternative employment/ sideline work?
- request transfer to area /field where promotion prospects better?
- identify and spend more time on activities and areas of work you enjoy (where possible)?
- concentrate on areas where achievements are visible to maximise what promotion prospects do exist?

- other suggestions





Problem: (low motivation)

C3.3 previous failures/ few successes

Suggestions

- build on successes - concentrate where possible on activities likely to be successful?
- minimise involvement in areas where failure occurred previously until successes gained in other areas?

- other suggestions





Problem: (low motivation)

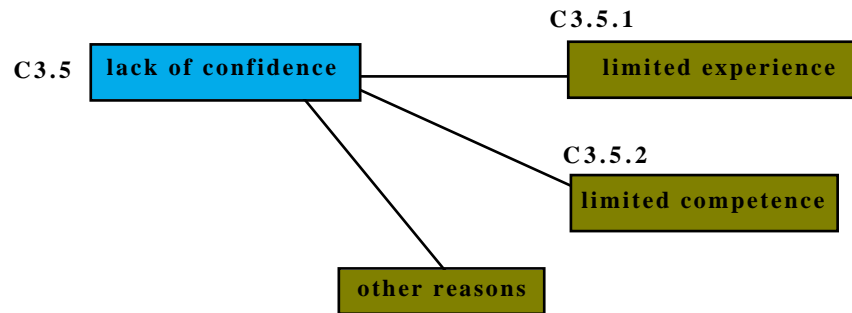
C3.4 unfriendly office atmosphere

Suggestions

- organise social/informal meetings and activities?
- spend less time at the office and more in the field?
- analyse reasons for unfriendly atmosphere and what might change things?
- take a personal interest in others in the office (this often results in an improved atmosphere)?

- other suggestions





Confidence is built up when more activities are a success than a failure. If failures have undermined motivation, emphasising activities which are a success and minimising areas of failure may help build up confidence to a level where the less successful areas can be taken on again.





Problem: (low motivation)

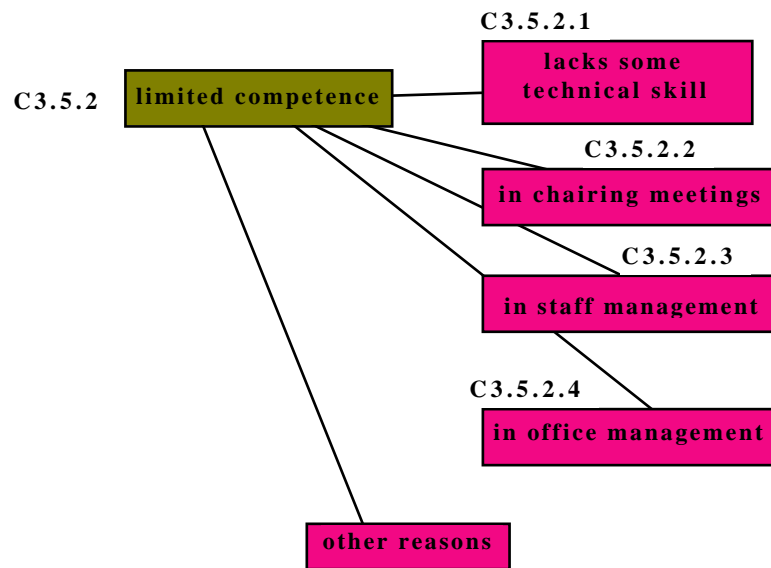
C3.5.1 limited experience

Suggestions

- rely on experience of others until own experience built up?
- discuss/review situation with other staff?
- listen more than speaking?

- other suggestions







Problem: (low motivation)

C3.5.2.1 lacks some technical skills

Suggestions

- practice/study skills in own time?
- rely on staff as experts in their field (may be more useful)?

- other suggestions





Problem: (low motivation)

C3.5.2.2 limited competence in chairing meetings

Suggestions

- observe others chairing meetings - take notes?
- rotate chairmanship of meetings among staff?

- other suggestions





Problem: (low motivation)

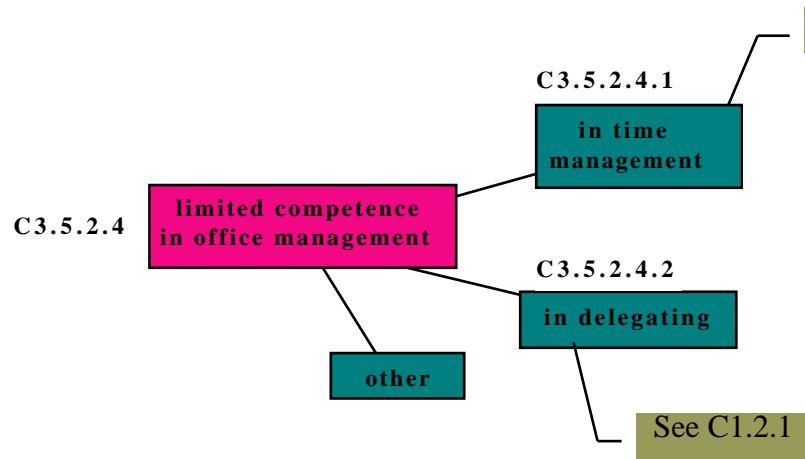
C3.5.2.3 limited competence in staff management

Suggestions

- discuss specific problems with other managers at same or higher level?
- read publications on the subject/self study?
- See C1.2 lack skills in staff management

- other suggestions





Limited competence in office management may be more a matter of lack of organisation and concentration on the issue than actual lack of competence. Prioritise tasks and allocate some to specific staff may help deal with the problem. It may also help to remember that the managers job is to overseeing and direct rather than to do everything him/herself. Consider discussing the problem with other managers and look also at the areas of:

C1.2 C1.2 lack skills in staff management and

C1.3 inadequate resources

