

TCP/SAF/0067

December 2000 – June 2002

TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Terminal Statement

prepared for
the Government of South Africa
by
the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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1. Introduction

1.1. Project Background

Following the changes from apartheid to a democratic society, South Africa is undergoing major political, economic and social changes, all of which have an impact on education and training policy. The South African Government has adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as its national strategy to combat poverty and unemployment, viewing the development of human capital as one of the cornerstones of the programme (RDP, 1994). The RDP within the National Department of Agriculture (NDA) involves broadening access to agriculture for those who previously lacked access. This is known as BATAT (Broadening Access to Agriculture Thrust), a strategy developed by the NDA to, amongst others, “broaden access to education and training to social groups which were disadvantaged or excluded under apartheid and to provide a balanced service for all farmers” (Njobe, 1995).

As a result, the Agricultural Education and Training (AET), extension and research systems started restructuring and reorienting their services to allow for a new democratic focus and expanding client base, recognizing the need to reorient the education and training system to deliver services to small and medium scale farmers, female farmers and farmers who are facing resource, land, information and market constraints, those who were previously denied access to education and training. The current formal AET system is the result of attempts to bring together, in an uncoordinated way, two separate AET systems. Previously, there were dual systems of education and agriculture, the “privileged” and “underprivileged”, determined on the basis of colour and race. In order to tackle endemic problems of inequality in education the Government gave first priority to the development of a National AET strategy.

Many institutions provide AET in South Africa. Since 1994, various attempts were made to transform and restructure the previous dual system of AET to give access to those who were previously denied access. On the one hand, there was a general feeling that most of these attempts have been concerned with redesigning the old system. On the other hand, most of the efforts had been undertaken independently and in an uncoordinated way and often focussed on one aspect of the AET system only, like colleges or universities, and ignored farmer training and basic skills education. As a result, no integrated coherent picture of AET emerged.

The Human Resources Department (HRD) is one of the seven key priority areas of the Ministry of Agriculture set in June 1999 for the next five years. To assist this process of capacity building, the NDA accorded high priority to developing an HRD strategy for the agriculture sector. Within the NDA, a Human Resources Development Directorate (HRDD) was established. In early 2000, an HRD Task Team was established at ministerial request and given the task to formulate a strategic vision for AET for the sector and to put forward policy proposals designed to ensure the development of a well-

planned and integrated human capital development programme in the medium and long term.

Although national expertise in the field of AET in South Africa exists, the NDA felt that the staff of the newly created HRDD (now Agricultural Education and Training Directorate) had little experience in developing participatory methodologies for planning an AET strategy, which meets the needs of small-scale farmers. Similarly at provincial level, where most of the information needed for developing an AET strategy would be collected and AET priorities identified, a critical need for capacity building with staff was identified. The nine provinces have a great deal of autonomy; they are all different with diverse populations, infrastructure, economic development and social needs. Taking into consideration that it is in the provinces where agriculture education and training activities take place, where the gaps in provision can be identified and where a strategy once developed would be validated and implemented, it was recognized that the involvement of the provinces in and ownership of the developed strategy would be fundamental to success.

The NDA, in line with other Government departments in South Africa, accorded high priority to HRD. Following an official request from the Government of South Africa for assistance from FAO in developing an HRD strategy for the agricultural sector, a mission, comprising an International Consultant for Planning Agriculture Education and Training Systems and the SDRE/SAFR officer, was fielded under advanced allocation in November 2000.

After consultation with the NDA and other stakeholders, as well as visits to the provinces, the mission formulated a TCP document designed to assist the Government to address the specific and urgent problem of how to develop a National AET strategy through capacity building of staff in the NDA, the nine Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDAs) and involvement of all relevant stakeholders to develop a sustainable methodology for a national AET strategy for agriculture and rural development. The methodology will be based on an integrated and participatory process, involving the economic and social sectors, as well as the public and private sectors.

The strategy will be developed by people in South Africa using participatory planning methodologies. The project's activities will mainly take place within the nine provinces and will bring together many stakeholders (providers and clients) at national and provincial levels to outline general trends and skills needs in the country and to identify gaps and priorities for AET. The provincial findings will be brought together into a National Forum where, by sharing information and exchanging ideas, priorities for a national strategy can be developed. A strategy which recognizes differences between provinces and regions, but which provides national direction and co-ordination.

1.2. Outline of official arrangements

The assistance was approved in July 2001 under the Technical Cooperation Programme project TCP/SAF/0067(A) “ National Strategy on Education and Training for Agricultural and Rural Development”, with a financial contribution of US\$ 190,000. Project activities began in November 2001 and ended in November 2003.

The National Department of Agriculture was designated the national counterpart organization. The project’s immediate counterpart was the Agricultural Education and Training Directorate (former Human Resources Directorate), but the project also worked in close relation with the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, the Department of Education, the Department of Labour, as well as with other stakeholders.

1.3. Objectives of the project

The **development objective** of the project is to achieve improved livelihoods through greater access to an effective AET system, which develops the capacity of all people working in the agriculture and rural sector.

The **immediate objective** is to develop a sustainable methodology for a National Strategy for AET, which will ensure the maximum participation of all stakeholders and which will develop the capacity of staff of the HRDD of the NDA.

As a result of FAO assistance, the following outputs are expected:

- An appropriate methodology for developing a National AET strategy, which reflects the diverse needs of stakeholders, especially small scale farmers, around which organizations and individuals can unite for the betterment of the agriculture sector.
- A group of personnel in the National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture who are able to develop and use a demand driven approach for developing a national strategy for AET, which meets the needs of the agriculture sector in South Africa.
- Greater participation by stakeholders, at national and provincial level, public and private, at different levels of the education and training system including primary, secondary and higher education, the producers and the community, in planning a National AET strategy.

1.4. Project implementation

The project, which was approved in August 2001, started end November with the first mission of the International Consultant for Planning Agriculture Education and Training Systems and the SDRE/SAFR officer, during which special emphasis was put on establishing the NSFT and to prepare the work programme for the project.

The work activities of the project were supposed to cover a period of 12 months and consist of:

1. Establishing national and provincial fora/bodies, representing a wide range of stakeholders in AET, as part of the integrated and participatory process of developing a sustainable methodology for a national AET strategy. The National Strategy Formulation Team (NSFT) made up of key stakeholders from provincial and national levels and the Provincial Agricultural Education and Training Task Teams (PAETTT) are made up of key stakeholders from provincial level.
2. Training key personnel, Provincial research Officers (PROs) and National Research Officers (NROs) in data collection, analysis and interpretation, as well as report writing at two training workshops with follow-up support in the provinces
3. Production of 9 provincial and 1 national AET reports by the PROs and NROs, giving an outline of general trends and skills needs in the country and identifying gaps and priorities for AET based on the data collected
4. Organization of a National Forum, which brings together the findings from the provinces and from the national level, followed by a workshop for the NSFT where guidelines for a National AET Strategy will be developed.

Further, the project was supposed to provide the services of one international consultant, a planner in AET for 10 weeks, one retired expert in non-formal education for nine weeks, one TCDC expert in formal education for 9 weeks, as well as two national consultants (2 weeks each), national resource persons, and advisory/supervisory services from SDRE/SAFR (4 weeks).

1.4.1 Establishment of national and provincial fora/bodies

The project brought together a wide range of key stakeholders (providers and clients) at national and provincial levels to outline general trends and skills needs in the country, to identify gaps and priorities for Education and Training in agriculture and rural development and to assist the NDA in the development of a AET strategy. Importantly, it built linkages between institutions (formal and non-formal) and between institutions and their client base. It involved stakeholders such as farmers and community groups, farmers' unions and organizations, NGOs, employers, employees and representatives of agribusiness, APAC (Association of Principals of Agricultural Colleges), University representatives, committee of Technikon Principals, Association of Agricultural High School Principals, SABETA (South African Board of Education and Training for Agriculture), SETA (Sector Education and Training Authorities), ARC (Agricultural Research Council), HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council) together with the Departments of Agriculture, Education and Labour at national and provincial levels.

For this purpose a number of national and provincial fora/bodies were appointed in consultation with the NDA and the respective PDAs.

- ◆ **The National Strategy Formulation Team (NSFT)** consists of about 30 senior persons representing a wide range of stakeholders in AET, both

nationally and from the provinces. The NSFT was fully involved in all project activities. NSFT meetings were organized at the start of the project, after both training workshops and after the national forum, where national and provincial findings were presented and the guidelines for formulating the strategy were discussed, as well as after the national forum to discuss the draft AET strategy prepared by the Strategy Drafting Team.

- ◆ In each province a **Provincial Agricultural Education and Training Task Team (PAETTT)** was appointed to give support to two **Provincial Research Officers (PROs)**, who were appointed by the Provincial Departments of Agriculture and were charged with collecting and analyzing data from as many stakeholders as possible in their respective province and to write a provincial AET report presenting their findings.
- ◆ Two **National Research Officers (NROs)**, appointed by the NDA were responsible for collecting and analyzing data at national level and to produce a report compiling their findings.

1.4.2. Training key personnel and production of AET reports

In the project document two workshops were foreseen to train the PROs and NROs. The first workshop, which took place in January/February 2002 provided the trainees with an understanding of the structure of the project and provided training in how to collect relevant data from providers and users of AET as well as secondary data. The training was facilitated by an international consultant (specialist in planning AET), a retired expert (RE) in non-formal education and a TCDC expert in formal education.

During the second workshop, which took place in June 2002, the PROs and NROs were trained in data analysis and interpretation and received guidelines on how to prepare provincial and national AET reports using the information collected with a view to the report being used in the development of a National Strategy for AET. The second training was facilitated by an international consultant (specialist in planning AET), a retired expert (RE) in non-formal education and a national consultant in formal education.

It was realized that further training would be needed in data analysis and interpretation, and especially in report writing, and in consequence two additional 2-day interim workshops were conducted by the National Consultant, the RE and the National Project Coordinator in September and October 2003, to assist the PROs and NROs in using the data they had analyzed to prepare high quality reports.

1.4.3. National Forum and NSFT Meeting

The findings from the reports formed the basis for discussions in the National AET Forum. The Forum is a new 'structure' set up during the process of participatory strategy development, which brings together for the first time,

- key stakeholder and interest groups in the agricultural sector (public, private and NGO),
- the National Strategy Formulation Team (NSFT) including representatives of the Department of Education (DoE) and Department of Industry (DoI),

- the Provincial Agricultural Education and Training Task Teams (PAETTTs),
- Provincial Research Officers (PROs) and National Research Officers (NROs), and
- the Directorate Education and Training (DirET) of the National Department of Agriculture,

to discuss and make recommendations on issues related to Education and Training for Agriculture and Rural Development in South Africa.

The 2-day National Forum was held on 21-22 November 2002 in Pretoria and was attended by approximately 100 delegates including; the NSFT, PROs, NROs, representatives of the PAETTTs and other key stakeholder groups. The purpose of the Forum was to bring together the AET findings from the provinces to identify national priorities for AET. It began with individual Provinces presenting their critical issues/gaps in AET identified during the research. These were then brought together into 'categories' of issues and discussed in relation to different stakeholder groups. National priorities (strategic interventions) for AET were then identified. At the end of the Forum PROs and NROs were presented with Certificates by FAO-South Africa in recognition of their achievements.

Following the Forum, preparations were made for the final NSFT workshop in which the guidelines for formulating a national strategy were outlined. The two day NSFT workshop was held on 28-29 November 2002 in Pretoria and was facilitated by the two consultants (IC and NC), the NPC and the FAO STS Officer SDRE/SAFM. The main topics covered during the workshop, included:

- Strategic issues and interventions to be considered by the strategy;
- Guidelines for writing a strategy;
- the information needed,
- the components of a strategy,
- The Terms of Reference for the Strategy Drafting Team
- A Vision and Strategic Goals of the Strategy
- The work schedule; the time needed, expected outcomes and persons responsible for completing the strategy

On completion of the project it was expected that the NDA would appoint a Strategy Drafting Team (SDT) made up from members of the NSFT and the AET Directorate of the NDA, to complete the writing of the Strategy. However, considering the urgent need for the AET strategy, the NSFT suggested, that in order to speed up this process funding should be made available by FAO from remaining project funds, to enable a Strategy Drafting Team to be appointed in consultation with NDA, to complete the task of drafting a strategy document based on the identified national AET priorities.

2. Results and conclusions

The purpose of this project was to develop a methodology for the preparation of a strategy for Agricultural Education and Training in South Africa. This methodology was to maximise participation of stakeholders, both providers and clients, and it was also to build up skills among staff of the Human Resources Development Division of the National Department of Agriculture. These objectives have certainly been attained by the project.

A methodology has been developed which involved very large numbers of stakeholders throughout the nine provinces and nationally. Particular emphasis was given in the consultations to Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods thus involving considerable numbers of small scale farmers. In addition, questionnaires were used in all provinces and stakeholders of all levels and backgrounds were asked for their views and concerns in the field of AET. The PROs and NROs were highly motivated and enthusiastic about the work and thus the coverage in most provinces involved a wide range of providers and clients.

Two Provincial Research Officers for each province and two National Research Officers (a total of 20) were involved in the project from January to December 2002 and received training in data collection, analysis and report writing. They acquired an excellent appreciation of the methodology, together with an understanding of the need for a demand driven approach. They will be essential partners in the implementation of the AET strategy.

The project has facilitated improved linkages and means of communication and cooperation between stakeholders within Provinces, between different Provinces and between Provinces and National level departments and organisations. It has been stated that this participatory methodology should become a model for other development programmes in South Africa.

It also created new structures to enable stakeholders (providers and clients) to come together to participate in and contribute to decisions relating to the development of a strategy for Education and Training for Agriculture and Rural Development and to be instrumental in its implementation

The methodology developed and applied by the project ensures involvement of all stakeholders and is based on provincial priorities. As a result of the project, each Province, together with the National Agricultural Institutions, has for the first time a substantial up-to-date report on the current situation regarding training needs for (different stakeholders within) the agriculture sector, agricultural education and training provision, the relevance and performance of the agricultural education and training system (including extension) to meet these demands, and the gaps which have to be addressed. These reports will be used both by the Provinces as 'stand alone' reports to inform decision making and planning related to agricultural education and training and agricultural extension services, and were used by the National Strategy Formulation Team to inform the writing of the National Strategy for Education and Training for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The project document did not foresee to contract people to draft the strategy document, as during the formulation stage it was felt that this could cause problems of ownership. Nevertheless, considering the urgent need for an AET strategy, it was agreed to use remaining project funds to appoint a Strategy Drafting Team to complete the task of drafting a strategy document based on the identified national AET priorities. The draft of the AET strategy was presented to the NSFT in June 2003 and afterwards modified according to the inputs of the NSFT. During a 2-day retreat in November 2003, the two national consultants contracted under the TCP to formulate the AET strategy, the National Project Coordinator from the Directorate of AET of the NDA and the FAO STS Officer SDRE/SAFM finalized the AET Strategy, incorporating comments from NDA and FAO.