Multi-actors agricultural innovation platform
Guideline for master trainers
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Abbreviations and acronyms

AEAS  Agricultural extension and advisory services
AIS   Agricultural innovation system
CBO   Community-based organization
FAO   Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations
M&E   Monitoring and evaluation
MAIPs Multi-actors agricultural innovation platforms
NGO   Non-governmental organization
OINR  Research and Extension Unit of the Office of Innovation
PAR   Participatory action research
PL&A  Participatory learning and action
ToF   Training of facilitators
VC    Value chain
Foreword

Co-innovation platforms are increasingly deployed as a model for participatory and inclusive innovation to address the challenges of sustainability in complex systems like the agri-food systems. Rooted in theories and practices of complexity, innovation systems, and participatory action research (Davies et al., 2017), co-innovation platforms are considered a powerful tool to drive transformative change. The need for transformative change is becoming increasingly relevant to addressing the crises that the world is currently facing, such as climate change and the ongoing global pandemic, and thereby achieving a sustainable recovery from their impacts and adaptation to new realities. This demands game-changing solutions to attain global food security and reduce poverty while nurturing the planet.

With multi-actor partnerships being a key characteristic (Davies et al., 2017; Klerkx et al., 2013; Swaans et al., 2014) of multi-actors agricultural innovation platforms (MAIPs), MAIPs link farmers, processors and traders at the community or grassroots levels with researchers, extension agents, private enterprises, and entrepreneurs, creating a space for them to collaborate and co-innovate. This facilitates information and knowledge exchange among agricultural value chain actors and service providers, and as such creates opportunities for research, development and extension organisations to be more effective through demand-driven services.

A common lesson learned across the multitude of initiatives around the world is the importance of facilitation of co-
innovation and multi-actor partnerships (TAP, 2016). In reflection of the experiences to date, this guideline was developed and piloted in the context of the ‘Support to local initiatives to strengthen agricultural advisory services and local food promotion’ project in Azerbaijan and is presented here in a generic way for further adaptation to other contexts. The guideline was developed for master trainers to train MAIP facilitators. Main contents of this guideline, especially sections 2.2 and 2.4 and chapter 4 were adapted from the FAO publication Guide for training of facilitators of multi-actors agricultural innovation platforms (https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8278en). It should be used as a reference for MAIP master trainers to formulate context-specific training objectives, approach, learning activities and field-based action. We encourage creativity and adaptation, and welcome feedback for further improvement of this guideline.
Introduction
Innovation is important to provide all actors along the value chain with the best of opportunities that exist to achieve sustainable livelihood objectives. Innovation can be defined as:

- **an output:** An idea, practice, product or object that is perceived as new by an individual, group or organisation. With this meaning, it can be used in singular and plural form. Innovation often results from adaptive research and entails the adaptation and use of existing knowledge or technologies in novel ways in a specific context. In contrast, basic and applied research usually result in ‘new knowledge’ or ‘inventions’ that are of a more generic nature and not necessarily proven to work in all specific contexts;

- **a process:** The multi-stage process whereby organisations transform ideas into new/improved products, management, services, or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace (Baregheh et al., 2009). With this meaning, it can only be used in singular form.

FAO defines agricultural innovation as ‘the process whereby individuals or organisations bring new or existing products, processes or ways of organisation into use for the first time in a specific context, in order to increase effectiveness, competitiveness, resilience to shocks or environmental sustainability, and, thereby, contribute to food security and nutrition, economic development or sustainable natural resource management’ (FAO, 2018).

These processes involve many actors, linkages, infrastructure and institutions that operate within the particular boundaries of
the system. The agricultural innovation system (AIS) is, therefore, defined as ‘the network of organisations, enterprises, and individuals focused on bringing new products, new processes, and new forms of organisation into economic use, together with the institutions and policies that affect their behaviour and performance’ (The World Bank, 2006). Key elements of an effective AIS are:

- active involvement of the right partners;
- a common language;
- a shared vision;
- a shared understanding about processes;
- clarity about costs and benefits;
- support for collaboration;
- open interactions and trust;
- processes for managing conflict.

Smallholder farmers around the world are rarely able to be active actors in the mainstream AIS and increasingly lag behind, as innovations offered by projects or companies do not necessarily suit their needs or capacities, or are unknown or inaccessible to them. Innovation for smallholder farmers often implies adaptation and appropriation of both technical and managerial aspects of an idea, technology, or service, which requires collective learning and action of producers, processors, traders and retailers, AEAS providers, researchers, and even policy makers.

To this effect, we propose a multi-actor agricultural innovation platform (MAIP) approach as a practice model for an effective AIS to enhance community-driven, place-based innovation and value-chain development for and by smallholder farmers,
supported by local, pluralistic AEAS. MAIP processes have to be truly demand-driven, participatory and based on collective investment and action, while bringing together committed stakeholders and resulting in innovations that are technically sound, environmentally friendly, locally adapted, economically feasible for farmers, and socially, culturally and politically acceptable (Schut et al., 2018). The following chapter will explore further what the principles, proposed design and facilitation and coordination mechanisms of effective MAIPs are.
Multi-actors agricultural innovation platform
2.1 MAIP definition

A multi-actors agricultural innovation platform (MAIP) is a holistic approach to agricultural extension and advisory service (AEAS) and research that links researchers, extension agents, private enterprises, market actors and smallholder farmers. Its aim is to facilitate information and knowledge exchange and technological innovations among all the key agricultural value chain actors for sustainable agricultural development. The MAIP is a co-innovation platform established in rural communities where farmers and key value chain actors empowered through participatory on-farm research and training, new technology demonstrations, interest groups or clubs, market connections and so on.

2.2 MAIP principles

It is desirable that a MAIP should consider and meet the needs of all actors along the value chain and effectively harness their capacities as well as those of the relevant service providers. It should at best operate within defined geographical boundaries, so as to have physical spaces where meaningful and regular interactions among the various actors can take place. In order to make sure that the co-innovation process is driven by a common goal, a MAIP should focus on one value chain system, or at most several that are interrelated. To guarantee its effectiveness in promoting participatory and inclusive innovation process, a MAIP is expected to (1) be community-driven, (2) facilitate collective learning, discovery and action, (3) build partnerships, and (4) be inclusive and demand-driven.

**Principle 1: A MAIP is community-driven**

Through a MAIP, local farmers, processors and traders can take control of collective learning, discovery and action processes around the questions that matter most for them. As a community-
driven platform, a MAIP facilitates a process conducive to empowering smallholder farmers, small-scale processors and traders to solve their own issues, seizing opportunities of common interest, and determining the direction of improvement of the various links in the value chain. Through a MAIP, access to AEAS will be demand-driven and therefore more sensitive and responsive to the community’s specific contexts and needs. As a result, community members become the MAIP founders and members, providers of essential resources for innovation, co-designers and participants of on-farm innovation activities, and owners of the innovation outputs rather than the passive recipients of knowledge and technology transfer.

**Principle 2: A MAIP facilitates collective learning, discovery and action**

MAIPs promote co-innovation by facilitating processes of collective learning, discovery and action. As a multi-actor platform, a MAIP needs to support different types of interactions and collaborative processes, including farmer to farmer, trader to farmer, input supplier to farmer, processor to farmers, agricultural extension officers to farmer and input supplier, etc. These interactions and collaborations are crucial for both fostering co-innovation processes and strengthening trust and a sense of ownership among the various actors. Usually, they do not take place naturally. A MAIP should build the necessary organisational structure and allow for processes of facilitation. Therefore, a concurrent capacity building process is desirable to enhance organisational and facilitation capacities.

**Principle 3: A MAIP builds partnerships**

A MAIP brings key actors from research organisations, AEAS providers, market and farming sectors together and provides them with a collaborative space for knowledge exchanges and co-innovation. A resilient and functional MAIP has to count on an extended partnership, usually established through participatory situation analysis and problem solving. A sound
enabling environment is needed so that MAIP partnerships can be enhanced and extended to take advantage of the support from all related actors from the public and private sectors and the civil society.

**Principle 4: A MAIP is inclusive and demand-driven**

The farming community is highly diverse in terms of socio-economic profiles, needs, and agency. To serve as an inclusive and effective space that is sensitive to the various need of different groups in the community, a MAIP needs to formulate activities that are:

- **participatory** – to involve all relevant MAIP actors in decision-making and implementation processes, so as to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of MAIP activities;
- **gender- and youth-sensitive** – to ensure that marginal groups, such as women and youth, receive tailored support and be empowered;
- **able to build linkages** among MAIP members and partners – to build and foster a multi-actor network by counting on available institutional and financial support as well as strong facilitation processes.

### 2.3 MAIP design

Figure 1 shows the structure and mechanisms of a MAIP as a co-innovation platform dedicated to a particular value chain (VC-1), and the functions and various aspects of operation are discussed in the subsequent sections.

#### 2.3.1 MAIP functions

A MAIP is characterised by a structure and set of mechanisms that serve all key stakeholders along a specific value chain system, in terms of:

- facilitating processes of collaborative agenda setting and
innovation on aspects of production, processing, and marketing of a selected value chain;
• facilitating capacity building to provide a hub for knowledge exchange, collective learning and action along the value chain (marketing, processing, production);
• facilitating access to knowledge and learning opportunities by effectively channelling and integrating existing AEAS (public, private and community-based);
• facilitating advisory service to introduce production and postproduction innovations that help value chain actors respond to changing standards and norms.

Figure 1: Structure and mechanisms of a MAIP focused on a specific value chain (VC)

A MAIP will be guided by facilitators whose roles are to:
• provide guidance to MAIP establishment and operations
by facilitating the shaping of the vision, mission and implementation processes along the selected value chain;
• explore and facilitate linkages with public and private AEAS;
• facilitate capacity building of MAIP members by organising and delivering training sessions, and/or engaging external resource persons;
• facilitate experimentation, discussions and/or exchange to solve local problems and encourage technical, marketing, financial and/or institutional innovation;
• continuously monitor and evaluate processes that engage the MAIP members for adaptive management of MAIP operations.

Ideally, each MAIP has a team of two facilitators with different skill sets, for instance, technical production or processing knowledge, training/research/communication skills, and/or business skills. A facilitator can be a farmer or community leader, an extension or technical officer from a public or private advisory service provider, a project officer from a non-governmental organization (NGO) or community-based organization (CBO), or a combination of those. To prepare selected facilitators for their roles in the MAIPs, the Training of Facilitators will cover modules on (1) innovation and sustainable development, (2) MAIP establishment, facilitation, and management, (3) communication and facilitation skills, and (4) relevant technical aspects of agricultural and value chain development. The facilitators will have to complete a Training of MAIP Facilitators programme prior to initiating the establishment of a MAIP.

Innovation processes are often triggered in response to bottlenecks in production, inadequacy of technological advancements under certain conditions, market competition, policy regulations, and/or environmental and health concerns. It is, therefore, important to analyse the context causing these triggers prior to setting the agendas for learning, innovation and action through a participatory situation analysis.
2.3.2 MAIP membership and partnership

Stakeholder engagement in a MAIP is either through membership or partnership.

**Members** of a MAIP are those with a direct and active role in the value chain, including farmers, processors, and traders. Members sign up for the MAIP on a voluntary basis, after understanding its mechanisms and potential benefits. As membership of the MAIP is voluntary, it should not be remunerated, unless a role in the MAIP becomes a job. The mechanisms and activities provided should lead to benefits for those involved, which, in turn, should serve as an incentive for active engagement. Sustainable change will only be achieved if participants are empowered in the co-innovation processes, which only happens if they have ownership over the processes and outcomes. A membership fee may be charged once the members have experienced benefits to support sustained MAIP operations and enhancement, which, however, should be a decision by the membership itself.

**Partners** are those who provide services to support the collective innovation, learning and action, including AEAS providers, researchers, technical officers from a public or private organisation/company. Existing AEAS providers, both public and private, are intensively linked into the MAIPs, although not all their operations may necessarily be through MAIPs. MAIPs allow them to provide pluralistic, better integrated, and better targeted services.

There will be other external stakeholders with a potential influence on the operations and outcomes of a MAIP, such as input and finance providers and policy makers, and the relationship can be managed on a need basis.

2.3.3 MAIP management and coordination

As part of the establishment process, a MAIP will select a management team among its members and determine the portfolios for each management team office holder. To ensure
trust among the membership, it is important to have roles and responsibilities of the management team office holder agreed on and clearly described, including the procedures to select and replace the management team.

A network of MAIPs within one region is coordinated by a MAIP Coordination Unit. The MAIP coordination unit is responsible for (1) recruitment and coordination of facilitators, (2) organisation of training of facilitators, and (3) facilitating exchange across individual MAIPs, as a horizontal learning strategy if that appears to be beneficial for strengthening MAIP capacity and organisation. Coordination of the MAIP is crucial for the success of its establishment and operation and takes place at both regional and national levels. During a pilot period as part of a project or programme, the Coordination Unit could be the project team, but ideally, after evaluation of the pilot and formulation of an outreach strategy, this function is handed over to a permanent institution in the existing AIS. It is envisaged that the public AEAS institutions will be the most likely candidate to take the role of coordinator in many countries. In some instances, however, the involvement of researchers, market actors or other actors of the AIS who might be in a better position to provide guidance to the development of a particular value chain system in the MAIP coordination may be desirable. The MAIPs coordination unit will display:

- a commitment to leadership, clearly shape the vision, mission, and implementation process of the MAIP along the selected value chain(s);
- a commitment to continuously monitoring and evaluating the performance by MAIP actors;
- a commitment to integrating AIS through the MAIPs along the selected value chain;
- a commitment to enhancing technical, marketing, financial and institutional innovations for promoting MAIPs to support the AIS.
2.4 MAIP establishment and facilitation

To establish and operate a MAIP, the following four steps are to be followed:

**Step 1: Train MAIP facilitators.** Stakeholders who have been identified as and agreed to serve as MAIP facilitators are to be trained to enhance their technical, facilitation, communication, and management knowledge and skills. This is critical to enable them to support participatory innovation and promote market-oriented services through MAIPs. Training modules and methods need to be tailored based on the specific needs of the MAIP facilitators in a particular value chain and geographic region, which are to be identified in the upcoming situation analysis. The trained facilitators will continue to facilitate the following steps in the target area.

**Step 2: Conduct a participatory situation analysis as a basis for setting the innovation agenda.** In collaboration with stakeholder representatives, facilitators need to conduct an analysis to gain a sound understanding of existing roles of and relations among stakeholders along the value chain, assess their needs, and identify opportunities and constraints for value chain improvement. Five specific outputs are to be achieved following this step:

- **Output 1** — Stakeholder identification and analysis.
- **Output 2** — Identification of a specific value chain and the existing gaps between its actual and attainable outputs, as indicated by scientific research, results achieved in similar areas, and/or market potential.
- **Output 3** — Identification of information and training needs of stakeholders along the value chain, including:
  - farmers and farmer-processors;
  - processors, traders, input suppliers, and other industry stakeholders;
  - AEAS providers, relating to skills and knowledge to promote market-oriented services and processes, and facilitate innovation.
Output 4 — Recommendations for value chain- and location-specific establishment of MAIPs, including nomination of potential members and partners, processes to engage stakeholders along the value chain, options for policy development, and coordination mechanisms in support of MAIP establishment and operation.

Output 5 — An initial innovation agenda and workplan to initiate the establishment of MAIPs in the selected value chain in a particular geographic location within which identified stakeholders operate.

**Step 3: Establish a MAIP.** A MAIP is established once its membership, partnerships, boundaries, management, operations and an action plan have been defined by the key stakeholders. This is best done at one or more multi-actor planning workshops that are organised and facilitated by the MAIP facilitators. The key stakeholders to be invited to the planning workshop(s) are selected based on the results of the situation analysis (Step 2), which does not necessarily include all the actors along the value chain. The focus should be on stakeholders who produce and process the agricultural products of the value chain and key AEAS providers who can address the gaps identified in Step 2. In other words, those stakeholders who are likely to become members or partners of the MAIP. Membership or partnership is decided during the meeting on a voluntary basis.

The multi-actor planning workshop(s) should contain the following activities:

- Introduce the MAIP concept and processes:
  - the MAIP design, functions and expected outcomes;
  - the need for adjustment to the local conditions and stakeholder capacities.
- Identify membership — Key stakeholders from the farmer/processor/trader categories express their willingness to become a member of the MAIP and sign up on a membership list, indicating their names, contact details and role in the value chain.
Identify partnerships — Key stakeholders from AEAS provision and research institutions categories express their willingness to become a partner of the MAIP and sign up on a partnership list, indicating their (institution’s) name, contact details and intended support role for the MAIP.

Define the MAIP — Confirmed members and partners discuss and agree on the targeted value chain and the geographical boundaries within which the MAIP will operate.

Elect the MAIP management team — Confirmed members discuss and agree on the management roles that they require for their MAIP and formulate the management positions (e.g. general manager, secretary, treasurer, committee chairs or division managers). Nominations are called for the various management positions, after which MAIP members elect their office holders.

Formulate MAIP operations — Members, management team and partners discuss and agree on how the MAIP will operate in terms of:
- regular membership meetings for planning and evaluation of MAIP activities, including training, innovation, and collective action;
- a physical location for organising MAIP activities;
- financial support of the MAIP through, for instance, memberships fees, fund raising, levies on revenues from collective marketing;
- a coordination mechanism, including an internal communication strategy.

Develop an action plan for the first six months, including:
- a prioritised innovation agenda;
- a training agenda;
- a priority list of collective actions;
- a budget for innovation and training activities;
- a monitoring mechanism;
- a proposed activity calendar for membership meetings, innovation, training and other collective activities.
The MAIP facilitators need to cross-check whether findings and conclusions from the situation analysis in Step 2 are reflected in the outcomes of all of the above activities.

**Step 4: Operate the MAIP.** MAIPs are expected to operate as a hub for key stakeholders to introduce, test and share innovative practices and ideas that will improve production and value chain of targeted agricultural commodities. Facilitators will guide local actors to (1) formulate the right questions to overcome barriers to achieve improved agricultural systems, (2) identify potential options that can lead to innovation, (3) link with suitable AEAS providers.

Interaction and learning processes among the AIS actors should be facilitated according to the situation analysis in Step 2 and the action plan developed in Step 3. In general, different dimensions of interaction and learning processes, such as farmer to farmer, market actors to farmers, input suppliers to farmers, processors to farmers, and public advisory service providers to input suppliers, should be facilitated through the different activities of the MAIP.

The categories of activities that can be carried out through the MAIP are listed as follows:

- identifications of innovation agendas;
- partnership building;
- co-innovation activities such as participatory researches;
- knowledge generation and transfer;
- facilitation of interactions among key actors along the value chain.
3

Training of MAIP facilitators
3.1 MAIP ToF principles

The MAIP training of facilitators (MAIP ToF) course prepares the future facilitators for their various roles in establishing and facilitating MAIPs around a certain value chain, as identified in section 2.4. The specific objectives of the MAIP ToF are for ToF course participants to:

• develop an understanding of the MAIP model and related core concepts and methods;
• gain knowledge and skills related to facilitation, organisation, and management of MAIPs;
• strengthen knowledge and skills on technical and business aspects of the selected value chains;
• experience the co-design, establishment and operational workplan development of a MAIP in a pilot area.

MAIP Facilitators are expected to apply a participatory approach to MAIP design, establishment and implementation, and facilitate activities with MAIP members and partners that involve discovery learning and adaptive research. Therefore, they should learn themselves in a participatory way and experience how it is different from the way they were trained in the formal education system. For that reason, the MAIP ToF model outlined in this guideline is based on the following principles of adult education:

• learning should be aligned with the goals of and anticipated benefits for the learner;
• learning activities are designed as a process of discovery;
• learning is personalised according to the characteristics and needs of the learner;
• activities should be adapted to different learning preferences of the participants;

MAIP master trainer training facilitators during the Training Block 1 in Azerbaijan.
• activities should encourage collective learning;
• helpful feedback should be provided;
• the learning event and materials should be easily accessible, in terms of geographical location, language used, and communication platforms employed.

These principles ask for a training structure that accommodates a combination of theory, skill development, dialogue/sharing, field experience, and reflective practices. While some generic topics will be applicable in all ToF events, most of the content and activities will need to be tailored to the context, the targeted value chain(s), and, most importantly, the profile of the ToF participants with regards to their educational background, language, communication and learning style preferences, and work experiences. As such, a MAIP ToF requires a team of master trainers who, among them, have diverse knowledge, skills and experiences to effectively design and facilitate the participatory and experiential learning processes in the given context.

3.2 MAIP ToF curriculum development and preparation
The specific MAIP ToF curriculum is developed by the team of master trainers in consultation with relevant experts. The process requires an initial profiling and consultation of the MAIP ToF participants (i.e. the future MAIP facilitators). It is, therefore, very important that the full team of master trainers has been appointed and the future MAIP facilitators have been selected prior to starting the ToF curriculum development. There are three steps in the preparation process: (1) profiling of the ToF participants, (2) curriculum development workshop, and (3) logistical arrangements.
Profiling of the ToF participants

In addition to the personal information, such as age, educational background and work experiences that will have been collected in the selection process of the future MAIP facilitators, it is useful to get a deeper understanding of their motivation to become a facilitator, their experience in facilitating learning or innovation activities, their access to and preferences for communication technologies, and their wish list of topics to include in the training. This can be done by administering a questionnaire, either in hard copy or electronic format, depending on what suits their preferences best. If timing and logistics allow, it is recommended to organise a roundtable session with the candidates prior to the finalisation of the curriculum and arrangements to do a final cross-check on their learning needs and agree on the logistics of the MAIP ToF.

Curriculum development workshop

A detailed ToF curriculum that addresses the learning objectives of the MAIP ToF and the specific requirements of the value chain, the context and the facilitators’ profiles is developed during a curriculum development workshop involving the team of master trainers, the project manager and/or other relevant project staff, and relevant experts from MAIP partner organisations. During the workshop, the following elements should be considered for inclusion in the curriculum:

- MAIP concept, objectives and processes;
- co-innovation concepts and approaches, in particular, participatory learning and action (PL&A)\(^1\);

\(^1\) Several collective learning and innovation approaches adhere to the same principles as participatory learning and action (PL&A), but have been described with different names and may include somewhat different practices. These include farmer science, farmer participatory research, participatory technology development, participatory innovation development (for a comprehensive collection of resources, see http://www.prolinnova.net/publications/publications). PL&A is preferred in the MAIP context as it also involves collective action along the value chain.
• facilitation skills related to MAIP member and partner networking, and collective learning, innovation and action;
• communication, organisational and consulting skills;
• principles and practice of participatory needs assessment for MAIP agenda setting;
• technical topics relating to the relevant agricultural value chain(s), such as value chain analysis, production, processing, marketing, agribusiness development, certification, etc.;
• workplan development for the various stages of MAIP situation analysis, establishment and operation. This should include consideration of budgets.

The output of the curriculum development workshop is a documented outline of the ToF and a detailed training schedule with clarification on who prepares and delivers which session or activity, what materials and worksheets are needed for each session, and what reflection mechanisms will be employed. See Section 4 for a generic MAIP ToF curriculum.

Logistical arrangements

Logistical arrangements include (1) confirmation of the timing of training events and fieldwork activities, (2) the venue, facilities and catering, and (3) the preparation of training materials. For each of these aspects, budgetary issues need to be negotiated with the project management team.

The training venue should be at a location that is easily accessible by the participants and convenient for the type of activities that will be implemented. This can be a local hotel, school, rural community centre, or a government agricultural information centre. The training space should be large enough for the participants to both gather altogether and work in small groups, and be equipped with furniture, presentation equipment (computer, projector, screen/white wall, printer) and a white- or blackboard. A sufficient stock of coloured
markers, large sheets of paper, coloured cards, masking tape and other materials required for the training sessions need to be provided. All details regarding dates and timing, location, venue, and transport arrangements need to be clearly communicated to the ToF participants in advance.

3.3 MAIP ToF implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Like most training events, a ToF can start with an opening session and finish with a closing session, which should be organised in a way that it responds to the expectations of the various stakeholders involved in the event.

At the start of the learning session, it is recommended to engage the participants in the formulation of a collective ‘learning contract’, which provides a confirmation of the ToF’s learning objectives and planned processes. This is an important symbolic step for participants to commit to and have a sense of ownership of the learning process. It can also be used as a baseline for assessment at the end of the ToF.

The core of the training is defined by the learning curriculum. Ideally, the ToF consists of three blocks of training sessions, each of minimally two days, with several weeks of fieldwork in between to test ideas in the field and conduct the first steps of MAIP establishment. Each block will engage the participants in reflection on prior field experiences, exploring new concepts, practising skills, and developing workplans for the next period of fieldwork. Training activities should be diverse to keep the attention of the participants focused, and relevant to their realities in the field.

Regular monitoring activities needs to be conducted, either per session, or at the end of each day, to assess the participants’ satisfaction with the training content and processes. This can
be done through mood meters, questions about learning outcomes and suggestions for topics to be covered in future session. Monitoring data collection can be done either on paper sheets stuck on the wall of the training venue, on individual score sheets, or electronically (online polls or brief questionnaires). To assess knowledge gains, pre- and post-tests can be commissioned.

Evaluation is done at the end of each block, with the final evaluation being more comprehensive and assessing participants’ perceptions about achievement of the overall training objectives. This can be done through a questionnaire, a group discussion, or a combination of both.

3.4 Mentoring of MAIP facilitators

It is recommended to establish a mentoring mechanism to support the MAIP Facilitators during the periods of fieldwork and upon completion of the ToF. This can be done in the form of a chat group on a social media platform that is regularly used by all participants (e.g. WhatsApp Group, Microsoft Teams Chat, Facebook Messenger Group, WeChat Group and so on). Such a mechanism also serves as peer support and exchange.

If needed and feasible, a refresher training around six months after the establishment of the first rounds of MAIPs could be provided to further strengthen the capacity of the MAIP Facilitators and prepare for further outreach. A refresher training should start with the sharing of the various experiences of the Facilitators Teams in reflection of the principles and functions of the MAIPs, as introduced during the original ToF. Through reflective practice and exchange, the Facilitators will be able to analyse what worked for them, what they did well and what needs improvement, and also provide feedback to
the master trainers what should be adjusted in the model of the MAIPs and/or the ToF. New topics, as requested by the participants, can be introduced and plans for further outreach of MAIPs can be collectively developed.
4

Generic structure of MAIP ToF curriculum
While a detailed MAIP ToF curriculum has to be tailored according to the local context, training needs and participant profiles, the generic structure contains (1) general sessions (opening and closing ceremonies), (2) sessions dealing with topics related to MAIP objectives, processes and facilitation in three blocks, (3) sessions on topics related to the selected value chain(s), and (4) fieldwork after each training block.

4.1 General sessions

General sessions include opening and closing ceremonies. The opening ceremony is held for introductions of master trainers, participants, training objectives and session outlines. It is better to organise an opening ceremony of ToF in the form of a spot meeting, inviting local farmers, leaders, and/or relevant actors of the selected agricultural value chain to attend.

The closing ceremony is held at the end of the MAIP ToF where the trainees can review and exchange their learning experience and lessons-learnt. They can also share their vision and perspective on establishing and facilitating MAIPs after course completion. The learning contract formulated at the start of the learning session should be signed at the closing of the training course (the learning contract of the MAIP ToF should be developed based on a consensus among all the trainees). This is meant to enable them to apply the capacity and skills they have gained from the training course to establish and facilitate MAIPs after course completion.

MAIP master trainer training facilitators during the Training Block 2 in Azerbaijan.
4.2 Training BLOCK 1: MAIP Core concepts

Major MAIP related topics:
• multi-actors agricultural innovation platform – definition, principles and functions;
• actors in the agricultural innovation system of selected value chains;
• participatory situation analysis for MAIP agenda setting;
• principles and practice of agricultural advisory and consulting services;
• gender-sensitive programming and value chain development, etc.

Major value chain related topics:
• opportunities to increase production;
• small scale processing and storage techniques, etc.

Major fieldworks 1– Participatory situation analysis:
• methodology development;
• situation analysis data collection;
• socialisation of MAIP among potential members;
• presentations of fieldwork experiences and findings, etc.

4.3 Training BLOCK 2: MAIP facilitation skills and establishment

Major MAIP related topics:
• multi-actors agricultural innovation platform – establishment and facilitation;
• adult education: principles of experiential learning;
• facilitation of adult education: designing a learning experiment;
• facilitation of adult education: designing a learning experiment;
• basic and advanced communication skills;
• participatory Learning and Action - 1: principles and practice, etc.
Major value chain related topics:
• standards and marketing of agricultural products;
• agri-business development, etc.

Major fieldworks 2 – Establish MAIP:
• workplan development to establish a pilot MAIP;
• MAIP establishment workshop(s);
• presentations of fieldwork experiences and findings, etc.

4.4 Training BLOCK 3: MAIP operation and outreach

Major MAIP related topics:
• participatory learning and action – 2: facilitation, design of learning and adaptive experiments;
• use of visual aids;
• organisation and management of consulting services;
• monitoring and evaluation;
• outreach and institutionalisation of MAIPs, etc.

Major value chain related topics:
• national and international food safety standards for production, product packaging, labelling, promotion, sales, and certification, etc.

Major fieldworks 3 – Pilot MAIP facilitation:
• workplan development to strengthen and facilitate pilot MAIP;
• workplan presentations and discussion;
• pilot MAIP operations, etc.


FAO. 2018. *FAO’s work on agricultural innovation Sowing the seeds of transformation to achieve the SDGs.* http://www.fao.org/3/CA2460EN/ca2460en.PDF.


MAIP master trainer training facilitators during the Training Block 3 in Azerbaijan.
