



Extension Workgroups

Tips & Facts Sheet

What is an Extension Workgroup?

We define an Extension Workgroup as a team of people working together to **identify and prioritize critical agricultural issues that need to be addressed**.

They do this by:

- Linking with a range of stakeholders across the production-value chain, and
- Serving as a focal point for research, service and education programs to help focus research, extension and policy on actions to resolve key issues.

Note: Workgroups are usually started by an organization or a group of individuals with a strong interest and commitment to a particular topic or problem.

Things to consider when forming and managing workgroups:

- 1) **Focus**
 - a. Identify what topic the workgroup will focus on (Will it focus on a commodity? – e.g., wheat - or a specific thematic problem? – e.g., water management, weed management or product quality/post-harvest and markets) (A participatory planning workshop or similar exercise can help identify priorities.)
- 2) **Diversity**
 - a. Establish a workgroup (often five to 15 members) drawing from the government (extension, research, universities, etc.), non-government, commodity (if relevant) and private sectors.

Note: Diversity is important since workgroups should be both a visible and real representation of the program to the community.
- 3) **Key players.** Identify key people and organizations to recruit. Consider
 - a. Knowledge and extent of engagement in the workgroup topic
 - b. Socio-economic factors such as ethnicity, income, gender, views, etc.
 - c. Community leaders (e.g., Informal, grassroots or other high visibility leaders)
 - d. People with experience to help with group management, public awareness and fund raising.

Note: Workgroup participation is voluntary. Sometimes funds might be raised to support meetings, provide food, etc., however, workgroup members should understand it is in their best interest to be part of the workgroup.
- 4) **Message**
 - a. Create a simple, clear message that helps people understand the group's goals and why they should get involved with the workgroup
- 5) **Output focused**
 - a. **Be active.** Meet regularly and have annual conferences
 - b. Have clear common goals and set target outputs
- 6) **Management**
 - a. Elect people within the workgroup to chair or co-chair the workgroup
 - b. Set clear expectations of members; develop a task list for workgroup members to make sure all members are involved.
 - c. Establish a schedule for meetings and trainings
 - d. Consider any support staffing and meeting site needs
 - e. Send minutes out right after the meeting; be sure to summarize the decisions and remind people of their task and of future meetings.



Horticulture workgroup in Afghanistan