

# **THE EXTENSION RECOVERY PLAN (2008/9-2010/11) : ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION REPORT**

Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

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## ACRONYMS

AES	Agricultural Extension Services
AKS/AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge Systems
ASRDC	Agriculture and Sustainable Rural Development Committee
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CIAT	Cape Institute of Agricultural Training
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CUT	Central University of Technology
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DORA	Division of Revenue Act
ERP	Extension Recovery Plan
ESO	Extension Suite Online
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITCAL	Intergovernmental Technical Committee on Agriculture and Land
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LRAD	Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
LIMPUNIV	University of Limpopo
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAFU	National Agricultural Farmers' Union
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems
NATCIM	National Technical Coordination Committee for Information Management
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NW UNIV	University of the North West
PDA	Provincial Department of Agriculture
SASAE	South African Society for Agricultural Extension
ToR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Transfer of Technology
UFS	University of Free State
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
US	University of Stellenbosch
UWC	University of the Western Cape

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Extension Services:** a service of information, knowledge and skill development to enhance adoption of improved agricultural technologies and facilitation of linkages with other institutional support services (input supply, output marketing and credit).

**Advisory service:** A service provided by subject matter specialists, private organizations or firms to support commercial interest

**Extension Recovery Plan:** A strategy developed by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) in 2007 to revitalize the state of agricultural extension and advisory services in the country

**Evaluation:** Evaluation is a selective exercise that attempts to systematically and objectively assess progress towards and the achievement of an outcome. Secondly, evaluation is developmental. It is a direct response to evolving needs for knowledge and learning that will help replicate/reinforce/expand or even drop the effort to achieve an outcome

**Reorientation:** A process that should be understood in the context of new challenges facing smallholder farmers within a changing policy, market and global system and how this impacts on the nature of agricultural development and support services they need. Whilst there was a tendency within the agricultural sector to see the only purpose of agricultural extension as that of disseminating information to raise the production and profitability of the farmers (**agricultural production performance**), a broader interpretation now sees its purpose as the advancement of the whole range of agricultural development tasks, such as credit, supplies, marketing and markets (**agricultural process development**).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Extension Recovery Plan (ERP) is government's direct response to the concerns demonstrated over the weaknesses prevalent in the South African Extension and Advisory Services. Adopting a stakeholder focused consultative approach from the start, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) started with the development of Norms and Standards for Extension and Advisory Services (AES) and went on to produce an extensive research report on the profile of publicly funded extension and advisory services. Based on this Research Report, the requirements of the developed Norms and Standards, and the outcomes of a National Extension Indaba hosted in 2008, DAFF came up with the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP), a strategy whose goal was to revitalize the state of extension in South Africa.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) started with the implementation of the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP) in 2008/09. The financial year 2010/11 thus concluded the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period in which the Extension Recovery Plan was implemented for the first time.

The purpose of the Extension Recovery Plan was to revitalize the state of agricultural extension and advisory services in South Africa through initiatives and activities that improved the policy framework for extension service provision, developed competences and capabilities of individual officers, made information and communication technologies an integral part of service delivery, whilst at the same time making it more 'visible and accountable'. The strategic long term goal was to make extension service an effective means of improving national agricultural productivity, enhancing national food security whilst providing support to national efforts towards land and agrarian reform and rural development.

Through National Treasury, DAFF availed financial resources to the sum of R555 517 million over the 2008/09 to 2010/11 MTEF period. The fund is administered in terms of the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) and is channeled to the provincial departments of Agriculture as a Schedule 4 grant.

The ERP was implemented through five pillars:

- Recruitment;
- Training;
- Provision of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment;
- Improving image and professionalism; and



- Ensuring visibility and accountability.

In line with the overall Government thrust, and due to the importance and centrality of the extension and advisory service as a support mechanism to farmers and the great investment of Government funds in the improvement of the service; the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries deemed it important to assess and evaluate the extent to which the ERP implementation has achieved its targets throughout the Provinces.

In line with the need for an independent evaluation, DAFF engaged the services of an independent organization to carry out the evaluation. Utilizing multiple tools (both qualitative and quantitative) to assess and evaluate the performance of the ERP over the given period, the organization carried out and completed the evaluation between February and May 2012.

The overall objective of the Assessment and Evaluation of the Extension Recovery Plan was to provide a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the level to which each province has achieved its targets and outcomes, as set out in the business plan of 2008/9 and potentially revised. Indeed, it was the intention of this assessment and evaluation to provide a “measure” which can be used by DAFF to continue such evaluation as part of an on going Monitoring and Evaluation Programme of the Extension Recovery Plan.

- Satisfactory assessment and evaluation entailed carrying out the following tasks:

1	Analysing the provincial three year business plans (2008/9 to 2010/11) submitted to DAFF by respective provincial Dept. of Agriculture to identify targets and outcomes over the 3 year period
2	Analysing the annual updated business plans submitted to DAFF by the provincial Dept. of Agriculture to identify target deliverables for each province.
3	Assessing the extent to which each province has achieved its targets as articulated in the updated and approved annual business plan.
4	Conducting sampling in each province, based on plans and targets and levels to which each has either achieved its planned outcomes or otherwise, to identify projects that provincial Departments have reported to have achieved in each pillar of the Extension Recovery plan that require evaluation and evidence check
5	Conducting such an evidence check in each province

The first phase of the assessment and evaluation exercise entailed assessing the extent to which each province has achieved its targets as articulated in the updated and approved annual business plan. The first Report of the evaluation therefore detailed the findings of the assessment and evaluation of the performance of each provincial Department of Agriculture over the past three years as provided in the Provincial Business Plans and the Annual Reports submitted and consolidated by the DAFF.

The assessment and evaluation activities that led to the production of this report focused on analysing the provincial three year business plans submitted to DAFF by respective Provincial Departments of Agriculture to identify targets, deliverables and outcomes over the 3 year period.

The second phase of the evaluation consisted of evaluators carrying out verification site visits to sampled municipalities to confirm through observation. This phase also entailed interviews with ERP managers at Provincial and District and Municipal levels to establish the extent to which ERP initiatives had been implemented and to identify successes scored and challenges confronted. It also entailed carrying out surveys amongst extension officers to determine their opinions on how the ERP had succeeded in improving their lot across the identified pillars. The phase also provided an opportunity to talk to farmers with the intention of getting a glimpse into the kind of impact that ERP was beginning to have on the farm activities themselves.

On the whole the Business Plans and Annual reports give the following summary of total achievements

Year	Outputs									
	Recruitment	ICT recipient s	FGB	Qualification upgrading	Officials trained on skills programmes				Money `000	utilised
					Soft	Technical	ICT	Total		
2008/9	350	2423	0	33	730	266	268	1264	81 617	82%
2009/10	217	2244	0	646	498	1206	642	2346	153 393	90%
2010/11	346	4054	23162	670	385	771	791	1947	261838	87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>8721</b>	<b>23162</b>	<b>1349</b>	<b>1613</b>	<b>2243</b>	<b>1701</b>	<b>5557</b>	<b>496848</b>	<b>86%</b>

Source: DAFF ERP Annual Reports (2008/9, 2009/10, 2010/2011)

Other activities highlighted by DAFF Annual Reports as having been accomplished included the following:

- The development of a policy framework for provisioning of corporate wear for extension officers;
- Development of the Farmers Green Book and Management Diary;
- The Development of a framework for the introduction of MEC extension awards for best performing extension personnel
- Initiating the development of a framework for monitoring and evaluation of extension personnel

The initial analysis of the ERP Plans and Annual Reports indicated that the ERP has largely accomplished its objectives especially in the provision of ICT equipment, development of policy frameworks to guide implementation and further development of extension services, the recruitment of personnel (which fell short by 8% recruits), the training and upgrading of officials, in addition to the training of officials in the use of the ICT and the Extension Suite Online (ESO).

Such achievements (as reported) persuaded the evaluators to make a tentative conclusion at the beginning that indeed, the implementation of the ERP within the MTEF period largely achieved its objectives and is succeeding in transforming the extension service into a more skilled, ICT empowered service. All provinces were able to draw up yearly ERP plans, following through with activities that led to the achievements of planned outputs. Although it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess allocative efficiency, it is important to note that the provinces were able to spend the total funds allocated to them to the tune of 87% and this tells a commendable story that demonstrates a focus and commitment to accomplish the given objectives and activities.

From a conceptual point of view, the Business Plan narratives from all provinces indicated an understanding of what ERP entails and an appreciation that the ERP has brought into existence a new way of delivering services. This new way is understood as holistic and comprehensive (works across the whole agricultural value chain) and calls for new skills fit for delivering services that can support a business and entrepreneurial oriented farming sector. The development of policy frameworks over the three years do point towards the successful creation of a more professional and better managed service with standardized practices and value system able to deliver effectively across all areas as required.

An analysis of activity performance shows that in most instances, the National Department led by example in terms of activity implementation, timeous execution and proper administration. An assessment of performance by DAFF over the period in most cases shows a commitment to action that is able to follow through on its actions and meet its commitment deadlines as set down in the plan

and agreed with other stakeholders. A strong feature and theme that runs through out DAFF ERP implementation is a strong inclusive and consultative orientation that seeks to take all the various stakeholders along at every stretch of the road, both in the planning and in the execution of ERP activities.

Verification site visits, interviews with ERP managers, Extension Officers and farmers, confirmed that indeed, the ERP implementation had brought vey significant improvements to the Extension system especially in terms of increasing available manpower, training and up skilling the manpower, providing them with ICT gadgets, improving the service's professionalism and image whilst at the same time making the service more visible and accountable. However, in the process of implementation, many challenges have arisen. These include management and communication inconsistencies, policy alignment issues, ICT connectivity and functionality problems, and human resources management challenges amongst others.

The evaluation's overall conclusion is that ERP implementation has been a success. It achieved its targets across the provinces especially in terms of recruitment, ICT provision, up skilling and training. However, the challenges identified should be addressed in order to sustain the improvements. Going forward, the following recommendations are forwarded: continue to implement a more invigorated and robust ERP, continue to recruit because the officer/farmer ratio is still unacceptably high; intensify the acquisition of ICT skills and address problems of ICT system failures and connectivity, address challenges relating to human resources motivation and retention, and communicate more effectively.

## SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

### A.1: Background

It is not presumptuous to argue that irreversible and entrenched economic and social transformation in South Africa will be reflected by the extent to which rural and agricultural development are achieved. The rate of agricultural growth in the country will, in turn, depend on the speed with which the current subsistence oriented production system predominant amongst smallholder farmers is transformed into a market orientated production system. Amongst the many institutional support services that need to catalyse/support the agricultural transformation process, the agricultural extension service plays a critical role, since it contributes to the development of the skill and knowledge of farmers to adopt new and improved technologies (seed varieties and animal breeds, implements, chemicals and practices). The approaches and processes, with which these skills are multiplied and access to information given, will also be crucial.

The Government of South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) launched a new Extension Strategy following an extensive consultation process that culminated in the hosting of the National Extension and Advisory Service Indaba in East London in March 2008. Supported and funded by National Treasury, this revitalized extension and advisory service strategy, known as the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP), has the following objectives:

- To ensure accountability and visibility of extension
- To promote professionalism and the image of extension
- To Increase the recruitment of extension officers in line with demands of the farmer extension ration
- To provide appropriate skills and orientation of extension
- To provide ICT infrastructure and other resources

As planned, the strategy was initially rolled out over three years spanning 2008/9 to 2010/11.

The Government of South Africa has placed monitoring and evaluation of government programmes as a key aspect of bringing transparency and accountability to public administration thus highlighting that monitoring and evaluation have become critical elements of effective planning and programme implementation for government.

In line with this overall Government thrust, and due to the importance and centrality of the agricultural extension and advisory service as a support mechanism to farmers, and the great investment of Government funds in the improvement of the service; the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries deemed it important to assess the outcomes and the value of the Extension Recovery Plan to the target group, including the benefit and value it has added to the extension officers.

## **A.2.Evaluation Purpose**

The overall goal of the Assessment and Evaluation of the Extension Recovery Plan was to provide a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the level to which each province has achieved its targets and outcomes, as set out in the business plan of 2008/9 and potentially revised. Indeed, it was the intention of this assessment and evaluation to provide a “measure” which can be used by DAFF to continue such evaluation as part of an on going Monitoring and Evaluation Programme of the Extension Recovery Plan.

Satisfactory assessment and evaluation entailed carrying out the following tasks:

1	Analysing the provincial three year business plans (2008/9 to 2010/11) submitted to DAFF by respective provincial Dept. of Agriculture to identify targets and outcomes over the 3 year period
2	Analysing the annual updated business plans submitted to DAFF by the provincial Dept. of Agriculture to identify target deliverables for each province.
3	Assessing the extent to which each province has achieved its targets as articulated in the updated and approved annual business plan.
4	Conducting sampling in each province, based on plans and targets and levels to which each has either achieved its planned outcomes or otherwise, to identify projects that provincial Departments have reported to have achieved in each pillar of the Extension Recovery plan that require evaluation and evidence check
5	Conducting such an evidence check in each province

### **A.3. Project Process Management**

The evaluation was planned and managed by the DAFF's Directorate: Extension Services. The evaluation team was composed of independent evaluation experts who have extensive experience in project planning, research, and evaluation and who have worked in the agricultural sector for many years.

The DAFF's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit was invited to follow the evaluation process and to provide relevant observations to the evaluation process and team on an on-going basis.

In order to effectively manage and track the progress of the evaluation process a Task Force was instituted at the outset of the program. The Task Force comprised of Senior DAFF personnel, stakeholder representatives from organizations, academic and agricultural research institutions. The Task Force's primary brief was to provide guidance to the evaluation process and to ensure that the process was carried out in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Before the Assessment and Evaluation Team went into field, it was critical to put all the provinces at par in terms of the whole project; what is entailed, and the process involved. The DAFF therefore hosted a workshop where staff responsible for ERP implementation in the provinces was invited. The workshop, held at the DAFF offices, focused on the following: a rehash of what ERP entailed why the assessment and evaluation was being conducted; how the assessment and evaluation was to be conducted; the role of provinces in ensuring that the evaluation exercise was effectively executed, and what the expected outcomes of the evaluation were.

In order to ensure that progress was timely reported, and also to manage potential process risks involved, the Evaluators were to provide weekly updates to DAFF telephonically or through email where necessary and appropriate. A more thorough briefing was to be given on a monthly basis. Three milestone reports were to be submitted to DAFF in line with the ToR specifications.

#### **A.4.Evaluation Approach and Methodology**

In tandem with the fundamental principle of independent evaluation, DAFF commissioned an independent organization, ALCINOF Resources Management, to carry out the assessment and evaluation. The evaluation was implemented and completed between February 2012 and April 2012 utilizing multiple tools (both qualitative and quantitative) to assess and evaluate the performance of the ERP over the given period.

Data collection methods included:

- 1) Review of documents including ERP provincial plans, Quarterly Reports and Annual Provincial and DAFF Annual reports on ERP implementation covering the whole MTEF period.
- 2) In-depth interviews with provincial officials within the Departments of Agriculture with responsibility for the Extension Recovery Plan in the nine provinces
- 3) Self completion in-depth interviews with District Officials, sent to all District Managers (47 Districts), with twenty being completed and returned (43% response rate)
- 4) Self Completion In-depth Interviews with Extension Officers, sent by District Managers to all Extension Officers by within their Districts, with one hundred and fifty being completed and returned
- 5) Visiting sites in each province, to conduct evaluation in different districts, sixty two verification site visits were made in all – using ethnographic (observation and notation and videoing of project), quantitative information and qualitative questions on issues and aspects pertaining to each project. In provinces where there were five or less Districts, every effort was made to ensure that every district was covered. In provinces with large numbers of districts, i.e. KZN and EC, an attempt was made to cover at least half the districts. The choice of municipalities within each district was as diverse as possible to ensure coverage in terms of geographic area, farming types; urban and peri-urban to rural and deep rural; as well as by language groups and project types, i.e. single farmers to co-operatives to food security in metro areas via backyard food gardens.
- 6) In each province as part of the visits focus groups were conducted with farmers in different municipalities / regions, with 2 to 4 focus groups per province. Twenty-eight focus groups were conducted in total, with four areas combining groups from two difference municipalities, e.g. combining Uppington and Kakamas farmers at Keimos in order to include both within a time constraint, ensuring that thirty-two municipalities were covered.

The interviews with Provincial Officials commenced in early March 2012 and the fieldwork was completed by the end of April 2012.



## **A5. Research limitations**

Distribution of questionnaires - initially planned to be sent to all email addresses, i.e. using their laptops & 3G cards or Blackberry cell phones proved a challenge. Lack of response through various problems of connectivity or simply that the officers do not check their emails, led to request to District Managers to effect the distribution and ensure response. In addition, the intention was to call Extension Officers to investigate certain comments further, i.e. areas of excellence or challenge. However, in some instances, we found that in some instances, Extension Officers initially asked us to call back later then resolutely did not answer any of the evaluation team's calls. At times, problems relating to booking of flights and cars somewhat hampered the fieldwork, raising the necessity of re-arranging meetings with District Managers and Assistant Managers and focus groups accordingly.

## SECTION B: AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

### B.1. Extension as a Developmental Concept

Although as a developmental concept it is in wide use especially within the agricultural and rural development sectors, Extension Service has meant different things to different people. To some like Moris (1991) extension is defined as the mechanism for information and technology delivery to farmers. This conceptualization of the extension service has been the basis for the transfer of technology (TOT) extension model (S.E. Terblanché: 2008). A more comprehensive definition of extension service is given by the World Bank as a 'process that helps farmers become aware of improved technologies and adopt them in order to improve their efficiency, income and welfare' (Purcell and Anderson 1997, 55). An even broader definition of extension service is given by Berhanu Gebremedhin, 1 D. Hoekstra and Azage Tegegne (2006) to include facilitation of linkages of farmers with other institutional support services such as input supply, credit and agricultural produce marketing. Hence, extension service is defined in this document as a service of information, knowledge and skill development to enhance adoption of improved agricultural technologies and facilitation of linkages with other institutional support services (input supply, output marketing and credit).

At the same time, extension is a political and organizational instrument utilized to facilitate development. Its purposes may differ, from technology transfer by companies organized around specific, usually monocropping farm systems to problem-solving educational approaches to participatory programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and advancing community involvement in the process of development.

In its approaches, Extension is multidisciplinary. It combines educational methodologies, communication and group techniques in promoting agricultural and rural development. It includes technology transfer, facilitation, and advisory services as well as information services and adult education. It is dependent for success on other agricultural development processes such as marketing and credit services, not to mention economic policy and physical infrastructure. In short, it is a function that is dependent for success on other factors, including other services and institutions.

William M. Rivera, M. Kalim Qamar and L. Van Crowder (2001) say that Agricultural extension operates within a broader knowledge system that includes research and agricultural education. This larger system is referred to by FAO and the World Bank as AKIS/RD

(Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems for Rural Development). The OECD countries refer to it simply as the Agricultural Knowledge System (AKS) whilst others describe the three pillars of this system – research, extension and agricultural higher education – as «the agricultural knowledge triangle» and suggest that since the three pillars involve complementary investments they should be planned and sequenced as a system rather than as separate entities (Eicher 2001). Linking the triangle’s institutions with their common clientele, namely the farmers, and with each other, also requires systematic planning

**FIGURE 1: Agricultural Extension as part of AKS/AKIS:**

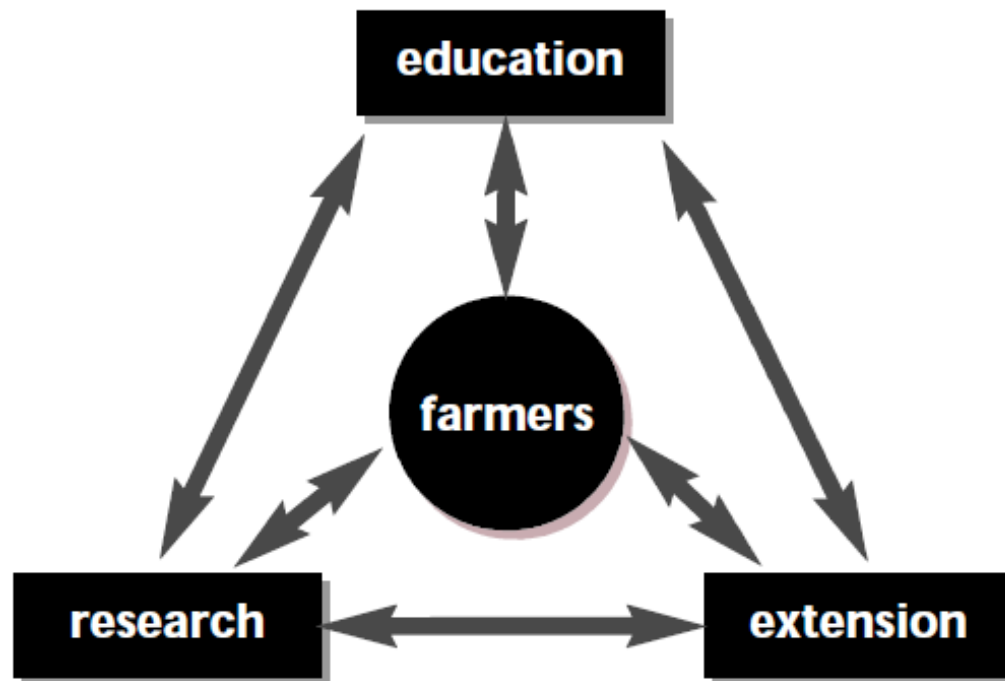


Figure 1 above illustrates that, optimally, agricultural information systems for rural development should link people and institutions to promote learning and to generate, shared and used agriculture-related technology, knowledge and information. According to the AKIS/RD Strategic vision and guiding principles (FAO/World Bank 2000) the system integrates farmers, agricultural educators, researchers and extensionists, enabling them to harness knowledge and information from various sources to improve farming and livelihoods. In principle, agricultural extension receives relevant information from the agricultural education system and feeds backfield observations to this system.

Rivera, Qamar and Crowder (2001) further state that Extension is also professionally linked to the agricultural vocational and higher education systems in the sense that these systems also produce the agents who work in extension. In addition, the relationship between agricultural extension and agricultural research is even closer, because the knowledge that agricultural extension transfers is usually generated by agricultural research through applied and adaptive agricultural research development.

Whilst there could be a tendency within the agricultural sector to see the only purpose of agricultural extension as that of disseminating information to raise the production and profitability of the farmers (agricultural production performance), a broader interpretation sees its purpose as the advancement of the whole range of agricultural development tasks, such as credit, supplies, marketing and markets (agricultural process development).

In the broadest interpretation, therefore, agricultural extension provides nonformal – agriculturally related continuing adult education - for multiple audiences: farmers, spouses, youth, community, urban horticulturalists (continuing agricultural education and community development) and for various purposes (including agricultural development, community resource development, group promotion and cooperative organizational development)(Rivera, Qamar and Crowder, 2001).

S.E. Terblanché (2008), citing Düvel (2002) and the Department of Agriculture (2005), writes that during 2000/2001, extension officials in South Africa identified and prioritized the following principles underlying an effective extension approach namely:

- Participation (empowerment, ownership, inclusivity);
- Needs based (balance between felt and unfelt needs);
- Evaluation/accountability;
- Programmed (goal driven);
- Institutional mobilization and organization;

- Sustainability;
- Behaviour change focus;
- Priority approach;
- Coordination/constructive involvement of all role player (forming of linkages);
- Technical support; and
- Equity.

## **B.2. Extension as a Function in Agricultural Development**

When systematically and effectively provided, extension is known to enhance social and economic development. Technological change, and the knowledge system that underpins it, is a critical factor in development, according to the World Bank (2003a, 2003c). In spite of the difficulty of isolating its impact on agricultural productivity and growth from that of other factors, studies have demonstrated the high economic returns of investments in agricultural research and dissemination, with returns typically above 40 percent (Birkhaeuser, Evenson and Feder 1988; Anderson and Feder 2003). Investment in agricultural research and extension is thus acknowledged as a crucial input of agricultural growth. Many studies and observations have concluded however, that in most instances, agricultural extension services in developing countries are grossly under funded to undertake the activities required for achieving food security while protecting the productive resource base in order to keep up with population and economic growth.

Recognizing the central role that Extension Services can play in the agricultural development and agrarian transformation efforts in South Africa, the South African Governments' Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) launched the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP).

When looked at from a global perspective the ERP designed by DAFF comes at a relevant time because Agricultural Extension continues to be in transition worldwide. Governments and international agencies are advancing structural, financial and managerial reforms to improve extension. Decentralization, pluralism, cost sharing, cost recovery, participation of stakeholders in development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them - these are some of the elements in extension's current transition.

Before new thinking on extension became manifest over the last decade, pressures to change the way extension services were conceived, designed and organized had been felt internationally for a number of years. For instance, public sector extension was severely attacked in

the 1980s for not being relevant, for insufficient impact, for not being adequately effective, for not being efficient and, sometimes, for not pursuing programmes that foster equity (Rivera 1991). Not only did public extension systems come under public scrutiny and political attack but, as well, were confronted by heightened competitive interests from the private sector. Input suppliers and output buyers became increasingly active in instructing farmers in the processes and standards desired by particular markets. Often enough, these information providers created demonstration plots and field trials, similar to public sector extension techniques but with a view to vertical technology transfer.

Internationally, despite the high returns associated with extension found in a number of studies (Birkhaeuser, Evenson and Feder 1988; Anderson and Feder 2003) there was also a general feeling that public sector extension was overextended. The scarcities of financial resources for extension and in some cases the lack of skilled manpower and dearth of organizational capacity (The World Bank 1981:5) led to major changes in ideological, economic and technical perspectives of agricultural extension. Also, the forces for worldwide structural adjustment resulting from massive debts by nations North and South, the onslaught of conservative ideology emphasizing efficiencies over welfare, the accelerating reaction against subsidies in agriculture, all these contributed to the critical assessment of extension. Thus, for some time in the 1980s onwards, governments began to discredit and withdraw their commitment to extension. Following almost two decades of such criticism, a new awareness of the role of the public sector in funding, but not necessarily delivering non-formal agricultural extension occurred. In high-income as well as middle- and low-income countries. Governments began to be pressured to reform and reprioritize public sector agricultural productivity programmes and confront related issues, such as the management of natural resources, rural development, the environment, and health.

Thus the role of government again became recognized as critical for the reconstruction of agricultural extension, especially for fostering the public good. It became acknowledged that only the public sector can effectively and efficiently carry out certain functions and indeed, only national governments can assume the responsibilities that affect the state as a whole. Only governments therefore, could ensure that extension services work for the public good, even if those services are provided by contracting with private sector providers (Rivera and Zijp 2002). An acknowledgement was also made that only national governments can promote increased institutional pluralism in extension service provision and oversee the quality enhancement and assurance necessary for rural development. As Serageldin (1996), succinctly puts it, it became recognized that *"strong, effective, and efficient governments are essential to development, for they alone can create the enabling environment required for the private sector and civil society to flourish"*

However, in spite of this renewed commitment to public funding and support for extension services, a number of challenges still exist. Berhanu Gebremedhin, D. Hoekstra and Azage Tegegne (2006) argue that globally, a number of generic problems still confront the extension service including problems related to coverage; complexities involved in the service; effect of wider agricultural development policy environment for success; the critical role of other institutional support services such as input supply, credit and agricultural marketing; lack of political support and commitment; inadequate public funding; and insufficient appropriate and relevant technologies.

The complexity of the extension service arises from the need to deal with the diverse sources of agricultural information for farmers, advising multiple stakeholders and partners in the agricultural development effort, and the range of extension mandate.

Indeed it is argued that the effectiveness and efficiency of extension service is contingent upon the overall policy environment for agricultural development. Lack of political commitment, partly arising from urban bias and poor understanding of the role of rural development in the overall economic development effort of a country, has been another common problem confronting the extension service in many developing countries. In this regard, Purcell and Anderson (1997) posit that implementation of about half of the World Bank assisted extension projects is seriously affected by lack of commitment by senior government officials.

Another generic problem confronting the extension service is inadequate public funding. The problem is especially acute with regard to operational budget. Operating costs are usually liable to budget cuts. In many developing countries, lack and shortage of relevant and appropriate technologies to improve productivity is a major constraint confronting the extension service, a problem that is more serious in rain fed, resource poor environments (Axinn 1988; Purcell and Anderson 1997). Part of the reason for the lack and shortage of appropriate technologies is the weak linkage between research, extension and farmers.

To alleviate the aforementioned generic problems of extension, a range of institutional arrangements have been tried, including improvements in extension management, decentralization, and commodity-focused approach, fee-for-service public provision, institutional pluralism, empowerment and participatory approaches, privatization, service contracting, and inter-connecting rural people and use of appropriate media (Anandajayasekeram et al. 2005). Decentralization can facilitate flexibility and adaptability of the extension service to local environment and the needs of intended beneficiaries, although it can also increase local political interference on technical matters.

Today, most Extension Services in developing countries are described as pluralistic (Eicher 2004). The objective of a pluralistic Extension System is to have a co-ordinated system of complementary extension services that would reach and respond to the diverse requirements of farming systems and the different needs of farmer groups (World Bank, 1977). As such, a pluralistic extension system is characterized by the co-existence of the different extension models and approaches. For institutional pluralism to work, it is important for the central government to accept reduced direct control over program or staffing so that it can help to solve problems of coverage, fiscal sustainability, accountability and interaction with knowledge and technology generation.

The Extension Service experience globally has led to the identification of the key success factors (Thropp 1996, as cited in Anandajayasekaram 2005), including participation and empowerment of farmers and communities, linkages between groups and institutions, innovative learning and communication, and supportive policy environment and political commitment. A common feature of the most successful Extension Services has been farmers taking the lead or sharing control in all parts of the effort. Close collaboration between research institutions, extension agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and farmers has also been an important factor of successful Extension Service delivery. Moreover, mutual learning processes and exchange of information between farmers, experts and scientists facilitates improved problem identification and technology development. In all cases, Government commitment at all levels helps bring about change more quickly.

For many decades in most countries, most of the focus of extension has been on technology adoption (Roling 1988), ignoring human resource development. Yet it is now widely acknowledged that an effective Extension Service needs to aim at both technology adoption and human resource development. Human resource development deals with the rural people themselves and their social systems, and aims at developing leadership capacity, institutions and mobilization and organization of farmers. For instance, to become extension technicians, agents must acquire high quality technical expertise and training. Secondly, to meet the challenge of reform measures, managerial staff must develop high quality administrative expertise relevant to arranging and monitoring contracts, as well as supervisory skills in human resource management and programme monitoring and evaluation.

It is also now widely recognised that extension workers need to become agronomic, livestock or fisheries technicians or, depending on the programme goals, to develop special skills in farm management, farmer organization, or other programmatic and organizational skills. Importantly also, extensionists must be prepared to respond purposively to the requirements of institutional reform (Qamar 2001), and new knowledge and skills must be promoted as well as new attitudes towards change.



### **B.3. Agricultural Extension Reform Strategies**

Since the 1980s various and distinct public sector agricultural extension reforms have occurred at the global level with countries adopting a variety of institutional reforms in response to new paradigms. A critical factor contributing to this drive to reform extension is the new paradigm supporting market-driven income-generation. In this global oriented extension reform regime, a considerable variety of public sector reform strategies have emerged, and these have been categorized in different ways. Other researchers (e.g. Rivera, Qamar and Crowder, 2001) organize these extension reforms under two main headings: *market reforms and non-market reforms*. According to this distinction, market reforms encompass four major reform strategies: revision of public sector extension systems, pluralism, cost recovery, and total privatization. Non-market reforms are considered as comprising two main reform strategies: (a) decentralization, transferring central government authority to lower tiers of government, and (b) subsidiarity, transferring or delegating responsibility, sometimes by abolishing authority over extension, to «the lowest level of society as is practical and consistent with the overall public good» (Porter 2001).

In most countries, there exists an institutional «complex» of public, private, and semi-public service providers (i.e. the so-called «third sector,» or non-profit NGOs). In the case of institutionalized pluralism, the public sector funds the extension activities while the private sector delivers them. One of the most radical recent extension reform strategies is total privatization, including commercialization. In the case of total privatization, both the funding and the delivery of extension services are shifted entirely, or largely, to the private sector, as in The Netherlands. The Netherlands decided to privatize its public extension agents, at first by transferring them with initial financial support to work with farmer associations, and more recently assigning responsibility for these services to a private company, DLV. Privatization relieves the government of a fiscal burden, often improving the delivery of services once the private sector has taken over the function, although this strategy may leave poor farmers and rural workers without any support. In the case of commercialization, authority is given to a government-commercialized public agency, as in New Zealand. New Zealand's Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries was challenged to «go commercial» in 1986, and to operate under user-pay commercial criteria. Indeed, international practice and experience shows that an extensive menu of options exists for governments to consider in any agricultural and rural extension reform. This global experience also suggests that there is no single solution to the question of reform. Indeed, several areas of reform might be combined to formulate a country's policy, depending upon that country's situation and the way the government views its needs.

## SECTION C: THE NEED FOR CHANGE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

### C.1. Apartheid, the Homeland System, and 'two agricultures'

Put in the words of Williams, Mayson, de Satgé, Epstein and Semwayo (2008) 'South Africa has long been characterized as having two agricultures..... The roots of the "two agricultures" thesis originates in the instruments used by the South African State to support white commercial farmers on the one hand and measures to regulate agricultural production and land-use management in the former reserves and homeland areas on the other'.

Indeed, over many decades of apartheid rule till the agricultural deregulation period of the 1980s, a multitude of measures were introduced with the sole purpose of benefiting some 55,000 white commercial farmers. As cited by Williams, Mayson, de Satgé, Epstein and Semwayo (ibid) these measures included, amongst many others, a comprehensive system of support, which was implemented largely by the Department of Agriculture and comprised research and extension, subsidies for a wide range of functions such as soil conservation works, boreholes, housing for farm workers, farm schools, fencing, disaster assistance etc.

However, argue the same authors, while white farmers enjoyed this favourable, heavily incentivized environment, black agriculture was subjected to a suppressive and suffocating regulatory regime that served to undermine black agricultural production and land based livelihoods.

In his assessment of extension services in the run up to the homeland era Lipton, (1972) noted that "while 90,000 rich, educated white farmers have 3,000 extension officers (plus enormous injections of easy credit, marketing facilities, and guaranteed prices) 600,000 black farmers have less than 1,000 extension officers and these hopelessly overstretched men (and their small budgets) have been concentrated on the irrigation schemes."

Williams, Mayson, de Satgé, Epstein, and Semwayo (2008) point out that the homeland era which commenced with Transkei's 'independence' in 1976 opened the way for homeland extension services and the development of agricultural development Parastatals like TRACOR, AGRIVEN and Agriwane. An important development was the launch of the Farmer Support Programme (FSP) introduced by the Development Bank of Southern Africa in 1983. Focusing on small farmers in the homeland areas, the FSP set out to integrate the promotion of agricultural activities with other non-farm related rural development activities (Williams, Mayson, de Satgé, Epstein and Semwayo 2008)

However, in a review of the extension, training and research services provided as part of this FSP, Hayward & Botha, (1995) identified a wide range of problems:

- Provision of poor quality extension support in most instances. The low effectiveness of services was not due to lack of field officers but rather to the low quality of their formal education and the lack of appropriate in service training to meet on the job support needs
- No meaningful contact between extension and research given that most research capability remained targeted at the commercial sector
- Extension methods were out-dated and had not adapted to changing international extension approaches
- Farmers were encouraged to use inputs at too high a level against their actual achievement pushing many into debt
- Some 40 farmer training centres had been constructed in the former homelands while occupancy rates were 15 – 20%
- Lack of co-ordination between Departments of Agriculture and Agricultural Corporations

## **C.2 1994: Democracy and the Reconstruction and Development Programme**

The advent of democracy in 1994 witnessed the demise of the Homeland system, ushering in a transitional period that featured a focus on the development and implementation of a rural development strategy under the Government of National Unity. This Rural Development Strategy was located within the Department of Land Affairs and the Reconstruction and Development Programme office.

Williams, Mayson, de Satgé, Epstein and Semwayo (2008) argue that although the Rural Development Strategy advocated broadening access to agriculture, it 'never really progressed beyond a think piece and it was largely eclipsed when the RDP office was subsequently closed in March 1996'. They go further to assert that 'for much of the 1990's the provision of farmer support services was largely

overtaken by the new institutional priorities of merging all the different homeland departments of agriculture with the agriculture and extension services which had supported white commercial farmers. Most of the new state's energy was expended in establishing a new look National Department and nine new provincial departments'.

In the period post 1994 the Department of Agriculture was therefore restructured and new provincial Departments of Agriculture were established. Some commentators have argued that these provincial departments displayed many of the weaknesses of the former homeland departments in their inability to maintain support services to farmers. At the same time, the new departments also lacked adequate extension and support services available to assist new farmers as was acknowledged by the then Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs. She noted that a benchmarked extension profiling study had shown that South Africa had approximately one-third of the required number of extension officers to meet its development targets and that 80% of the current extension staff did not have adequate training. This dire situation was underlined by a study that was undertaken by the University of Pretoria at this period. According to the study, 63% of farmers judged that their extension worker had no advice of value to offer while 37% percent conceded that they sometimes have information of some value (cited in Duvel, 2003). There was thus a dire need to usher in a new agricultural policy for South Africa. This came in the form of The White Paper on Agriculture in 1995.

### **C.3.The White Paper (1995): A new agricultural policy for a democratic South Africa.**

The Government of South Africa's White Paper (1995) on Agriculture offered a sharp critique of the conventional transfer of technology approach to extension, advancing the case for what it termed 'a holistic system'. In a holistic system, it is argued, researchers, extension workers and farmers work together as partners seeking solutions to problems facing farmers. This 'holistic system' envisages that "researchers would spend more time in the farmers' field, and liaise with farmers far more often than in the conventional model". In this way, the model acknowledges, "farmers already have useful knowledge, especially of their own conditions and constraints". (White Paper, 1995).

The White Paper noted that "previously, the Government had two parallel extension services—one for commercial agriculture and another in the self-governing territories' and concluded that ". Extension and training have not really been effective in the self-governing territories for a number of reasons, including an attempt to model extension services on the system used in commercial farming, and inadequate training and support for extension officers." (White Paper, 1995).

The White Paper went on to call for an integrated extension service and a new model of participatory extension, in which the extension worker is trained to act as a facilitator to replace the prevailing transfer-of-technology model. It argued that “a well-integrated retraining and reorientation programme needs to be formulated if the capacity of small-scale farming is to be enhanced through appropriate support services.” (ibid)

In pursuance of such recommendations, the National Department of Agriculture (DoA) went on to develop and launch the National Education and Training Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (Department of Agriculture, 2005a). This Strategy highlighted the multiple and serious challenges that still had to be overcome before there could be a well trained cadre of extension staff in South Africa. The following were some of the highlights provided by the Strategy:

- In 2005 the national corps of public extension staff was approximately 2800. The ratio of extension staff to commercial and subsistence farmers was estimated as follows:
- Commercial farmers: 1: 21
- Subsistence farmers: 1: 857
- Combined: 1: 878

The Strategy document also highlighted the following factors as impacting on the effectiveness of extension services:

- Distance between farmers
- Geographic areas covered by extension workers
- Client literacy
- Level of practical functioning of local farmer groups and associations

The strategy therefore strongly argued for the concept of agricultural extension to be expanded to provide agricultural extension workers with capacity and the skills to assist communities to deal with the effects of rural change, the impact of HIV/AIDS on the rural economic base, and the growing vulnerability of household livelihood systems.

#### C.4. Norms and Standards for agricultural extension and advisory services

In response to this prevailing complex institutional, capacity and delivery challenges facing extension services the then National Department of Agriculture (NDA) developed and published Norms and Standards for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services in 2005.

The Norms and Standards document argued that there is no single extension model or approach suited to all situations in South Africa, noting that depending on the prevailing conditions technology transfer, participatory approaches and needs based development can all be relevant. The Department of Agriculture therefore pressed on with efforts to reform and revolutionise the extension services especially in the light of the land and agrarian reforms that were being rolled out by the Government of South Africa.

Thus in 2008 the Department of Agriculture went further and produced a detailed report entitled *“The state of Extension and Advisory service within the Agricultural Public Service: A Need for Recovery”* following a consultative extension Indaba it had hosted earlier in the same year. The report provided a sobering and candid assessment of the state of the nation’s extension services.

Noting that the “capacity of provinces to deliver quality extension services to farmers varies and to some it is already suffocating, the Report provided the following key highlights as captured in tables below:

**Table 1: The different extension bands as currently conceptualised**

JOB TITLE	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT
Agricultural Community Officer	Standard 10 + in service training in agricultural studies	NGO and Local Government
Agricultural Development Officer	Standard 12- + 3 or more years of post matric agricultural diploma	Social Development/Health/Local government
Agricultural Advisors	B.Tech/Bachelors/Hons in Agriculture	Provincial
Subject Matter Specialist	BSc (Hons) degree in Agriculture	Provincial and National

**Source: DoA Report, 2005**

**Table 2: Number of Employed Extension Officials N= 2210;**

PROVINCE	TOTAL	
	No.	%
Eastern cape	623	28
Free State	40	3
Gauteng	29	1
KwaZulu Natal	360	16
Limpopo	666	30
Mpumalanga	189	9
Northern Cape	23	1
North West	137	6
Western Cape	25	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2210</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: DoA Report, 2005**

As can be noted from table 2 above, at the time the profile was done, the largest numbers of extension officials were from Limpopo Province ( 30% of the total), followed by Eastern Cape Province at 28% and KwaZulu Natal at 16%. Gauteng Province and Northern Cape Province have the smallest number of appointed extension personnel currently standing at less that 2% of the total pool.

### **C.5. Qualification assessment**

The report noted that only 427 out of 2210 (19.%) had degree or higher qualification. About 1728 out of 2210 (78.%) of the extension personnel had a diploma qualification. Overall 8 out of 10 were insufficiently qualified to operate as Agricultural Advisors or Subject Matter Experts. Only Gauteng and Free State Provinces had a good percentage of officials with degree qualifications and higher. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal had the lowest percentage of extension officials with degree qualifications and higher.

## C.6. Gender and qualification

In 6 out of 9 provinces, female extension officials were more educated than their male counterparts. It is only in Free State, Gauteng and Western Cape where male officials were more educated than their female counterparts. The latter can be attributed to the trends in recruitment whereby females have joined the service fairly late compared to their male counterparts.

## C.7. In service training

The report observed that very few extension officials had ever been exposed to formal skills programmes that are crucial to the delivery of product and services to farmers. Only 204 out of 2210 (9%) had completed training in communication, 238 out of 2210 (11%) had completed project management, 140 out of 2210 (6%) had completed computer training and 143 out of 2210 (7%) had completed training related to people management and empowerment. Less than 25% of extension staff had been exposed to technical training programmes since joining the public service.

## C.8. Extension/farmer ratios

The report gave the following as the projected ratio of extension personnel to farmers based on extrapolated farmer populations:

**Table 3**

Province	Current No. of extension officials	Suggested number based on different ratios	
		1: 500	1: 250
EC	623	1344	2688
FS	70	52	103
GP	29	19	38
KZN	360	710	1419
LIM	666	1181	2361
MP	189	337	675
NC	23	26	52
NW	137	129	257
WC	58	61	123
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2210</b>	<b>3559</b>	<b>7706</b>



The report went on to conclude that major problems of the extension system in South Africa have included top-down and non-participatory approach, a primarily supply driven orientation, low capacity of experts and development agents, low morale and high turnover of extension staff, and shortage of operational budget and facilities strategy.

This report indicated that there was thus an obvious and urgent need to craft and implement an extension strategy that would offer pluralistic and interactive operational models geared towards entrepreneurial oriented agricultural development including involvement of the private sector extension, co-operatives and large-scale commercial production and commodity organizations.

## SECTION D: THE EXTENSION RECOVERY PLAN: FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATED PLURALISM

### D.1. The National Strategic Framework for Extension Recovery

Under the Government of South Africa's new outcomes approach, Outcome 4 calls for an increase in "Decent employment through inclusive economic growth". This outcome encapsulates the core thrust of the current Administration, and of the New Growth Path. However, to the extent the creation of decent employment is a national imperative, this is even more the case for South Africa's rural areas, where the crisis of unemployment is especially acute.

Boosting the smallholder farmer sector has been identified as one of the key components of the overall employment drive, and *the* key component for creating decent work in rural areas. First, the establishment of new commercially-oriented smallholders features as an important activity in respect of the Delivery Agreement for Outcome 7, which is defined as "Vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and food security for all". In particular, the Delivery Agreement for Outcome 7 calls for the establishment of 50 000 smallholder farmers over the current Administration's term, against the current 'baseline' number of about 200 000. In addition, the New Growth Path indicates that the target for establishing new smallholders is 300 000 by the year 2020. In other words, the pursuit of smallholder establishment and support is fundamental to Outcomes 4 and 7 of the government's Programme of Action, and to the realisation of the New Growth Path.

It is vital therefore to understand the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP) within this overall context. The DAFF's ERP is a critical part of the government's efforts to establish systems to deliver integrated services to smallholders and other farmers, who are in effect small enterprises in the agricultural sector with the general aim of developing and testing strategies for improving smallholders' integration into value chains. A product of an intensive and extensive stakeholder consultation process, the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP) can be traced back to 2005 when the Minister of Agriculture approved the norms and standards for extension and advisory services. After this seminal step, the Department of Agriculture, in 2006/2007, completed a study on the state of Extension and Advisory Services in South Africa, which it used to lobby funds through the National Treasury. National Treasury allocation led to the finalization of the ERP and its implementation through all the provinces of South Africa.

As a Plan, the ERP is rooted in a positive vision and a positive hope of a successful land reform process and a transformed smallholder system that is diversified, commercialized and supported by adequate, highly accountable and skilled professionals working in an ICT driven and enabled environment.

The ERP has a clearly articulated implementation framework that is composed of five organically linked implementation pillars as listed below:

- Ensure accountability and visibility of extension
- Promote professionalism and improve the image
- Re skilling and re orientation of extension
- Provision of ICT infrastructure and other resources
- Recruitment of 1000 personnel over the MTEF

It is important to note that each pillar has clearly identified activities and responsibility allocation. This is briefly captured below:

**D:2: Core activities under Pillar One: Ensure accountability and visibility of extension**

<b>Core activities</b>
The establishment of a Unit responsible for managing extension at all levels
Develop a service charter outlining the role of extension and responsibilities of farmers including communication protocols.
Review and implement the signing of performance contracts at all levels of extension officers
Review the policy on transport particularly the provision of subsidized vehicles
Develop a policy framework on the provision of uniforms for extension personnel DOA Provision of uniforms
Introduce the Extension Management Diary and the Farmers Green Book and Pilot the Extension Management Diary and the Farmers Green Book
Establish an Extension Recovery Plan Forum
Communication plan target various farmers groups (e.g. use of radio)
Enter into partnerships with commodity organizations in the delivery of extension

### **D.3: Core activities under Pillar 2: Promote professionalism and improve the image**

<b>Core Activity</b>
Provide mentorship services for extension and advisory services personnel
Establish a statutory body to guide and uphold the image of extension as a profession
Introduce an award system in recognition of service excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a framework</li><li>• Implement the system</li><li>• Minister's Awards</li></ul>
Harmonization of job titles and salary levels of extension and advisory services personnel

### **D.4: Core activities under Pillar 3: Re skilling and re orientation of extension**

<b>Core Activity</b>
Provision of bursaries to the current personnel to upgrade their qualifications in line with the norms and standards
Enroll extension personnel in competence based skills programmes from technical (hard) to soft skills programmes
Design and facilitate the implementation of compulsory education and training programmes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extension advisors</li><li>• Subject matter specialist</li><li>• Managers at all levels</li></ul>

### **D.5: Core activities under Pillar 4: Provision of ICT infrastructure and other resources**

<b>Core Activity</b>
Develop an ITC policy and guidelines with special focus on standardizing the supply of equipment
Develop capacity building programmes on knowledge and information management
Provide extension personnel with Decision Support Systems in line with the farming practice in a given geographical locality

## D.6: Core activities under Pillar 5: Recruitment of 1000 personnel over the MTEF

Core Activity
Conduct work studies and job evaluation as per policy
Strengthen leadership at Local Municipality Level
5 Appoint subject matter specialists at District Municipality level in line with Growth Development Plans
Pillar Beneficiaries of Land Reform and other priority projects
Strengthen the capacity overall at Local Municipality level

In order to ensure effective rollout, DAFF developed criteria for allocating funding to the provinces, to support the implementation of the above ERP activities as follows:

- Provinces that were found to have acute human resources capacity gaps received substantial funding; these included the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga.
- Provinces that had healthier Extension and advisory services received minimum funding. These included the Free State, Northern Cape, North West and the Western Cape.

## SECTION E: SOME EVALUATOR OBSERVATIONS ON THE EXTENSION RECOVERY PLAN

### E.1. Evaluator Observation on the new thrust in Extension Service

The Evaluating Team believes that when fully analysed, the ERP tells the following story about the new extension thrust in South Africa:

- the-prioritization of agricultural extension services is now firmly a part of a national multi-sectoral integrated food security network;
- the planning and budgeting is geared toward pluralizing and strengthening agricultural extension/communication systems by allocating funds for institutional and management reorganization (including organizational development training, integrated monitoring and evaluation systems),
- there is a focus on human resource development at all levels;
- there is a strong orientation towards key issues of land and agrarian reform and black entrepreneurial and business development;
- there is a strong recognition of and bias towards the role of ICT in the provision of effective and efficient extension services through the national agricultural value chain.

### E.2. Evaluator Observations on ERP Planning, Administration, and Reporting

**Overall conclusion:** On the issues of planning, administration and reporting, this assessment indicates that right from the start of implementation, DAFF had a clear pathway in terms of planning and reporting procedures.

Provincial ERP project activities were initiated with the submission of a clear actionable plan that validated the transfer of funds from DAFF. Indeed the submission of such structured planning documents as required by DAFF provided the basis of a comprehensive and joint needs assessment whilst at the same time providing a results based framework that was going to make it easy to implement any monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan.

In any public development programme, once funding is secured and programme rollout is initiated, effective and efficient administration is a key guarantee of programme execution. A key feature of such effective administration is timely and relevant reporting systems and procedures. Reporting is a key aspect of monitoring and a key point for evaluation. Therefore the extent to which DAFF put in place such reporting mechanism was in itself a predictor of the extent to which the ERP was going to be successfully implemented.

The ERP falls under the CASP pillar of Technical and Advisory Services. The ERP is therefore administered under the DORA, Schedule 4. The Act stipulates that the programmes under Schedule 4 should be reported on every quarter and reports must be submitted within 30 days of the end of the quarter. This assessment and evaluation exercise can express that these essential administrative requirements were fulfilled. Throughout the MTEF period, all provinces timeously forwarded the quarterly reports to DAA with the aid of a template designed by the National Treasury

Demonstrating a developing culture of continuous improvement within the administration and management of ERP, by 2009/10 DAFF had discovered that the previous template prescribed by the National Treasury had not allowed for the capture of detailed critical information relating to the ERP. Another template was therefore developed to supplement version 4.3 viz. ERP Supplementary Reporting Template. Provinces were advised to report on both templates and forward them to the CASP office and the Directorate: National Extension Support Office, which coordinates ERP implementation at the national level.

DAFF further demonstrated administrative vigilance on this score, by convening quarterly extension review workshops to verify reports received from the provinces and establish challenges experienced by the provinces in implementation. For 2008/9 three (3) workshops were conducted on the following dates: 16 April 2008; 04 September 2009; and 27 November 2008. For 2009/10, three review workshops were conducted on the following dates: 19-20 August 2009, 20-21 October 2009 and 24-25 November 2009. PDAs were represented during the those workshops

Another key feature of the ERP that also predicted its successful execution was that the ERP provided for clear lines of responsibilities in terms of activity implementation between the National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture and even other stakeholders. For instance, according to the Plan, the following activities within the ERP were the responsibilities of the National Department of Agriculture

- Development of a policy framework on the provision of uniforms for extension personnel
- Establishment of an Extension Recovery Plan Forum

- The review of norms and standards for extension and advisory services
- Establishment of a statutory body to guide and uphold the image of extension as a profession
- Development of a framework for an award system in recognition of service excellence
- Development and deployment of Decision Support Systems for personnel
- Compilation and distribution of a list of accredited and reputable service providers.

The provision for clear lines of responsibilities left no ambiguities and enhanced a sense of focus and accountability for all those involved-itself a necessary mark of thorough programme planning for proper execution.

The main monitoring tools were quarterly and annual reports produced for DAFF, which set out planned activities by pillar and contained a factual narrative of implementation activities and other inputs. Quarterly workshops hosted by DAFF, composed of DAFF and provincial officials also provided an opportunity for reviewing progress. Such monitoring activities also allowed for flexibility to changing circumstances by altering implementation plans in response to specific conditions and demands arising on the ground in the Provinces. This evaluation has revealed that all provinces have shown a good record of success in completing planned activities set down in the Provincial plans. Documentation that tracks the achievement of planned activities consisted of reports written to DAFF on a quarterly and annual basis.

### **E.3. Evaluator Observations on ERP: Bench- Marking with International Best Practice**

**Overall conclusion:** A close study and evaluation of the Extension Recovery Plan goals and objectives and approaches indicates that the ERP was crafted with international benchmarks in mind. The conclusion here is that as a policy and strategic thrust on extension improvement, the ERP is indeed premised on international best practice.

Indeed, major changes have occurred in agricultural extension and new trends have continued to affect its reform and development over the last few years at the global level. However it could be safely stated that, at international level, there is some consensus on extension service best practice. For instance, at the international workshop on "Extension and Rural Development" jointly hosted in November 2002 by the World Bank, the USAID and the Neuchatel Group, a number of policy recommendations were put forward. These have come to be accepted as central to the issues of extension, rural development and food security. By placing its focus on key approaches *like public*



*financing, a wider rural development thrust, pluralistic provision, food security, poverty reduction, stakeholder involvement*, ERP is in line with the eight recommendations that were submitted at the above mentioned World Bank international workshop:

#### **E.4. Evaluator observations on funding and expenditure**

**Overall conclusion:** ERP public funding by National Treasury to the tune of R500 million over the MTEF recognizes and thrusts extension activities forward as a public function that must not be lost, nor underestimated. It indicates the South African government's acknowledgement that extension can and does play an important role in agricultural and rural development and in social and economic development.

ERP expenditure patterns in the Provinces tell a story of commitment to action especially in those provinces like Limpopo, Free State, Western Cape that were able to utilise their allocations to the full with others like KwaZulu Natal, and North West following closely on their heels. In all circumstances where provincial plans are focused and activities followed through, moneys allocated are spent as specified-- one indicator that the ERP planned activities were being implemented (**see tables below**).

**Table 4: DORA 2008/9 Extension Preliminary Expenditure figures by provinces (R' million)**

Province	Budget Allocation	Expenditure	Unspent Funds	Expenditure %
Eastern cape	18 828	18 828	0	100
Free State	9 177	5 270	3 907	58
Gauteng	4 735	2 980	1 755	63
KwaZulu-Natal	16 458	12 837	3 621	78
Limpopo	15 162	13 402	1 760	88
Mpumalanga	9 912	9 912	0	100
Northern Cape	6 881	2 330	4 551	34
North West	12 793	10 004	2 789	78
Western cape	8 054	8 054	0	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 000</b>	<b>81 617</b>	<b>18 383</b>	<b>82</b>

Source: DAFF ERP Annual Report 2009/9

**Table 5: DORA 2009/10 Extension Preliminary Expenditure figures by provinces (R' million)**

Province	DORA Gazetted	Expenditure per quarter				Total Expenditure for 2010-11	% Spent
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
		R '000					
Eastern Cape	31 337	6 867	7673	4 917	9 247	28704	<b>92</b>
Free State	15 169	1 228	7 678	3 085	3 178	15169	<b>100</b>
Gauteng	9 922	1 674	1 674	3332	1 482	8162	<b>82</b>
KwaZulu Natal	23 850	3 600	6590	2 44	8 475	18909	<b>79</b>
Limpopo	30 891	0	11 487	7241	9 515	28243	<b>92</b>
Mpumalanga	15 388	3 766	3 195	4 036	3 567	14564	<b>95</b>
Northern Cape	12 781	5 662	2 996	2 384	1 739	12781	<b>100</b>
North West	15 600	152	2 734	3 288	4 862	11036	<b>71</b>
Western Cape	15 825	1 191	2 823	7 234	4 577	15825	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>170 763</b>	<b>24 140</b>	<b>46 850</b>	<b>35 761</b>	<b>46 642</b>	<b>153393</b>	<b>90</b>

*Source: DAFF ERP Annual Report 2009/10*

**Table 6: DORA 2010/11 Extension Preliminary Expenditure figures by provinces (R' million)**

Province	DORA Gazetted	Expenditure per quarter				Total Expenditure for 2010-11	% Spent
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
		R '000					
Eastern Cape	65 635	5 108	6 918	23 796	27990	63812	<b>97</b>
Free State	22 252	2 173	2 180	8 794	9105	22 252	<b>100</b>
Gauteng	16 202	1 100	1 838	1 681	2328	6 947	<b>43</b>
KwaZulu Natal	38 136	2 760	2 443	1 569	26880	36 412	<b>95</b>
Limpopo	60 761	6 048	12 294	37 136	5289	60 767	<b>100</b>
Mpumalanga	23 112	2 204	2 260	9 174	6403	20 041	<b>87</b>
Northern Cape	19 637	600	2 964	4 620	4741	12 925	<b>66</b>
North West	20 273	0	3 474	3 476	12992	19 942	<b>98</b>
Western Cape	18 740	2 373	3 798	4 975	7594	18 740	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>284 754</b>	<b>22 366</b>	<b>38 169</b>	<b>95 221</b>	<b>103 322</b>	<b>261 838</b>	<b>87</b>

*Source: DAFF ERP Annual Report 2010/11*

## SECTION F: ASSESSING AND EVALUATING IMPLEMENTATION ON THE FIVE EXTENSION RECOVERY PLAN PILLARS

### F.1.Introduction:

This section offers (1) an analysis of the provincial three year business plans (2008/9 to 2010/11) (including updated and revised plans) submitted to DAFF by respective Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDAs), identifying targets and outcomes over the 3 year period, and (2) results of the verification and site visits undertaken by the valuers in the municipalities across all provinces.

The section therefore outlines the following about the plans: what was planned and what was achieved as self reported by the provinces themselves for this period 2008/9 -2010/2011 and as verified by evaluators during site verification visits. For each pillar the verification results are presented as a narrative that highlights the following: what ERP managers, officers and farmers at provincial and municipal level think of ERP; what they see as the achievements attained; and the issues that arise from the implementation e. g some unintended consequences/benefits/negatives.

As per the ERP rollout plan, PDAs were expected to submit to DAFF a three-year plan for the implementation of the Extension Recovery Plan in their respective areas. The plan was to be based on the allocations for 2008/09 and the projected allocations for 2009/10 and 2010/11. The Provincial plans were also supposed to include activities and programmes that were to be funded through their own Equity Share allocations. Such information was to be submitted as additional to the funds allocated for the Extension Recovery Plan through DORA.

### F.2 Planning for and Implementation of Pillar One: Recruitment of Personnel

**Overall Observation:** The recruitment of personnel, a key pillar intended to boost manpower provision and lower the officer/farmer ratio, was boosted by the ERP initiatives taken over the MTEF. The provincial plans intended to recruit 921, and reports indicate that Provinces actually recruited 913 personnel; this was indeed a great achievement. Whilst provinces like Western Cape, Gauteng, Northern Cape and

KwaZulu Natal far exceeded their targets, only North West and Mpumalanga fell far short of their target with Free State and Limpopo just missing their targets by 1-3%.

**Table 7 Planned and achieved targets as per provincial plans and reports**

Province	Number of personnel targeted and recruited per financial year						Total targeted over MTEF	Total recruited	%
	2008/9		2009/10		2010/11				
	Targeted	Recruited	Targeted	Recruited	Targeted	Recruited			
Eastern Cape	139	139	60	86	82	19	281	234	84%
Free State	28	26	32	8	8	4	68	66	97%
Gauteng	12	62	12	0	16	52	40	114	285%
KwaZulu Natal	41	0	54	38	59	197	154	245	159%
Limpopo	59	55	39	43	40	39	138	137	99%
Mpumalanga	22	22	35	13	31	9	88	44	50%
Northern Cape	11	16	4	4	2	5	20	25	125%
North West	60	15	18	8	4	21	82	44	54%
Western Cape	24	15	18	17	11	17	49	78	159%
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>99%</b>

**Source: ERP Provincial Plans and DAFF ERP Annual Reports**

Verification sites visits confirmed that provinces have recruited and deployed these new recruits to all corners of their provinces. In the words of Mr. K. Moodley of KZN, 'now we have new recruits and are building a new credible system, we call them (these extension officers) extension cadres, extension activists'. With the exception of provinces like the Free State, verification visits indicated that most provinces opted to recruit extension officers on a contract basis. ERP Provincial Managers in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal, for instance, all pointed out that new recruits taken in through ERP are on contract because ERP is a grant and Provinces are not sure of its continuity. However, they emphasize, priority for permanent employment will be given to these contract employees as and when permanent posts arise within Departments. In the words of the Gauteng ERP Coordinator Mr. Mpho Tlape ERP helped them increase their

staff compliment *'but these are on a year to year contract because the province has no assurance that ERP will continue beyond the MTEF'*

Verification site visits revealed that there were challenges on the implementation of this pillar. First, was the quality of prospective recruits. Whilst job applicants were huge in numbers, the quality left much to be desired. For instance in KZN they had over 1000 applicants in a situation where they only had to recruit 33 new staff. In the words of Mr. Moodley most of the applicants, although university graduates, just could not make the grade. As Mr. Kuben Moodley noted, *'the quality of applicants left much to be desired. We even ended up discarding the competence test.'*

Other challenges also arose from the positive victories of ERP recruitment. In the Free State, Dr. Takisi Masiteng stated that whilst the Free State has taken in new recruits on a permanent basis, moving from seventy(70) to one hundred and fourteen extension officers over three years, other challenges have arisen. In Dr. Masiteng's own words, *'we have increased staff but expansion causes space and other infrastructural challenges'*.

In some provinces like the Western Cape, ERP management claimed that they noted that Public works had difficulty providing them with decent accommodation so they took this issue to DAFF. Negotiations with DAFF resolved that they could use ERP funding to secure accommodation for their officers. This they did and to date they have secured comfortable offices, which they have furnished and installed with ICT gadgets.

Having said that, 32% of municipalities feel that, with the result of the current recruitment drive during the last 3 years they now have sufficient staff currently for their needs. Altogether 68% municipalities felt they needed more staff, mainly in the specialist category. However, in some areas where the ratio of Extension Officer to farmers is high, up to about 1000 farmers to each Extension Officer, there is still a need for more "Generalists". Rather than specify districts or municipalities, it was felt more useful to understand the skills that managers felt were lacking: Generalist EO's and especially specialists in Crop Production; Hydroponics & Tunnel Production; Animal Health; Animal Production; Beef; Dairy; Stock (Piggery, goats, sheep); Poultry; Land Planning, Irrigation, Economics; ICT & Technology Support.

### F.3. Pillar Two: Re-skilling and Re-orientation of extension

**F.3.1. Overall Observation:** The figure achieved for overall upgrading is a massive 1349 personnel. However, when viewed against the target of 3026, it becomes only an achievement of half the target.

**Table 13a. Personnel targeted and personnel registered for qualification upgrading as planned and reported**

Province	Number of personnel targeted and registered per financial year						Total targeted	Total registered	%
	2008/9		2009/10		2010/11				
	Targeted	Registered	Targeted	Registered	targeted	Registered			
Eastern Cape	120	0	314	225	449	134	883	359	41%
Free State	27	6	30	25	23	26	80	57	71%
Gauteng	7	0	11	0	9	7	27	7	26%
KwaZulu Natal	325	12	150	49	–	215	475	277	58%
Limpopo	517	0	134	129	40	95	691	224	32%
Mpumalanga	142	0	177	131	144	65	463	196	42%
Northern Cape	12	15	11	16	15	20	38	51	134%
North West	80	0	122	40	46	67	248	107	43%
Western Cape	42	0	37	31	42	41	121	72	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1272</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>3026</b>	<b>1349</b>	<b>45%</b>

**Source: ERP Provincial plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports**

Whilst the Northern Cape exceeded its target (134%) and Free State achieved 71% of planned targets, Western Cape 60% and KZN 58% , ; all other provinces failed even to get to half their planned target. Analyzing the plans alone at this stage, the evaluators' conclusion on this disparity is that there is no reason that could be attributed to this gap between the target and actual output except over ambitious planning. However, verification visits unearthed other possible factors that are discussed below.

One factor that contributed to this underachievement was the late confirmation of acceptance of applicants for the bursary. This led to low uptake because some Extension Officers were unable to fund themselves until they heard of the outcome of the application.

*Extension Officers applied to province for bursaries but no response received. Extension Officers have had to use own funding. Bursary letter issued midyear (2 bursaries awarded, 1 completed B.Tech but other couldn't due to late availability of funds). Budget allocation: Honors and above not seen as up skilling. (Justice Lekholo - AD Food Security Tshwane Region, Gauteng)*

**F.3.2.Field of Study pursued by upgrading personnel:** A key challenge that Extension has faced in South Africa has been the low level of skills coupled by the inability of extension staff to deal with the myriad of tasks they had to perform as they rendered assistance to farmers. As part of re-orientation and re-skilling of the Service therefore, it was critical for the ERP to address both the low level of qualifications and the narrow breath of their skills set. In this context, all provinces endeavoured to enrol staff into higher fields of study and also into a variety of areas of competence. The tables below provides an illustration of this approach to re-skilling extension staff and is taken from the performance of provinces in the financial year 2009/10.The tables below indicate that with the exception of the North West, all other provinces encouraged officers to enroll into course that led to various qualifications and the acquisition of different skills sets.

Provinces also engaged in soft skills training with Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape topping the list training 328, 297 and 205 respectively over the MTEF .North West did not engage in training although they had initially planned for it in the 2008/9 financial year. The type and the NQF Level of the selected soft skills training programmes included project management, leadership and facilitation skills ranging between NQF levels 3 to NQF level 6. Provinces aimed at ensuring that officers were in a position to manage and monitor projects within their area of operation and also to enable the officers to advise farmers on project management. Leadership and facilitation courses were aimed at the newly appointed managers and Deputy Managers in municipalities especially in provinces like Limpopo. Out of 45 municipalities – all have recorded that their EO's attending short business oriented courses within the past 3 years. Verification visits indicated that there is a substantial interest in Project Management courses, with, in some districts; all their EO's attending such courses. Other non agricultural courses mentioned included Extension Diploma (University of Pretoria); Conflict Management, Extension Recovery, Farmer Facilitation

Verification visits confirmed the wide-ranging courses undertaken by officers undergoing upgrading:

*One doing a Master in Economics - own funds, and one doing a Masters in Risk Management - own funds. Province advised that study above honours level not funded through ERP fund (Lucky Lesufi - Regional Manager Food Security, Sedibeng, Gauteng)*

*One doing his Doctoral proposal and four doing their Masters in Agriculture (out of own pocket) have applied but Dept. doesn't fund beyond Honours (Bothaville: Nala Municipality, Free State)*

**Table 13b: Field of study in which personnel registered for financial year 2009/10**

Field of Study	Duration of study (years)	Number of personnel registered in 2009/10 per province									Total per study field	
		EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC		
B. Agric	-3	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	1	18
B.Sc. Agric	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	1	44
B.Sc. Agric. Economics	2	0	1	0	0	74	0	0	0	0	0	77
B. Tech.	2	183	15	0	32	0	120	16	0	0	9	375
B. Phil.	2	0	0	0	0	54	0	0	0	0	1	57
Honours	2	1	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	14
M.Sc.	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
MSc.	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	8
Magister Institutionis agraria	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
M. Sustainable Development	2	38	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	45
M. Sustainable Agric.	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
M.Tech	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
MBA	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Advanced Diploma	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
National Diploma	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	9
Higher Cert. In Agric	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6
Ph.D.	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Baccalaureus Institutionis Agriae Honores	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6



Total		225	25	0	49	129	131	16	40	31	
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*Source: ERP Provincial Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports*

**Table 13c: Soft Skills training**

Province	Number of personnel targeted and trained per financial year					Total trained over the MTEF
	2008/9		2009/10		2010/11	
	Targeted	Trained	Targeted	Trained	Trained	
Eastern Cape	390	0	390	60	145	205
Free State	70	85	90	0	64	149
Gauteng	27	13	32	0	0	13
KwaZulu Natal	120	160	360	119	21	190
Limpopo	250	0	392	230	98	328
Mpumalanga	100	297	140	0	0	297
Northern Cape	44	147	0	8	0	147
North West	100	0	120	0	0	0
Western Cape	12	28	27	81	57	166
<b>Total</b>	<b>1113</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>1551</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>1621</b>

*Source: ERP Provincial Business Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports*

Hard technical training did not take back seat either. All in all, 2243 personnel underwent hard (technical) skills training over the MTEF with Eastern Cape and KZN and Western Cape contributing the most numbers to this figure having trained 1122, 348 and 287 respectively. Again, North West did not engage in this training including Mpumalanga this time around.

The verification site visits indicated that all of the forty-five (45) municipalities visited confirm that bursaries for further study have been awarded to EO's for tertiary education

- *Yes, we have received bursaries and myself as well. And there are those unlucky ones who have not. I won't be specific because Mr ..... is the one working with bursaries.*
- *Yes they have received bursaries (Tzaneen)*
- *Yes. They have been given bursaries and there is great enthusiasm for that (Port Shepstone)*
- *Bursaries are available and some have received (Caledon)*

**Table 13d: Hard (technical) Skills Training**

Province	Number of personnel targeted and trained per financial year					Total trained over the MTEF
	2008/9		2009/10		2010/11	
	Targeted	Trained	Targeted	Trained	Trained	
Eastern Cape	400	0	400	683	439	1122
Free State	70	0	90	127	50	177
Gauteng	27	0	37	0	0	0
KwaZulu Natal	200	153	200	195	0	348
Limpopo	200	0	200	71	60	131
Mpumalanga	80	0	90	0	0	0
Northern Cape	39	91	0	32	55	178
North West	68	0	88	0	0	0
Western Cape	24	22	48	98	167	287
Total	1108	266	1153	1206	771	2243

**Source: ERP Provincial Business Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports**

The verification process has also confirmed that one of the key developments arising from the massive training and up- skilling programme has been the development and /or strengthening of partnerships between the Extension Service system and training institutions, and even other stakeholders. Just as an example, the table below indicates the number of institutions of higher learning who have partnered with the provinces to deliver training to extension staff through ERP funding. Each partnership is dictated not just by location but primarily by the skills needs of extension officers who have to be trained in the particular province .Indeed, the existence of a national network of institutions that have the capacity to train, and are in partnership with the DAFF and the PDAs, is a prerequisite for building a strong extension service.

The ERP is also already enabling partnership to develop and flourish between the Extension Service and commodity and farmer organisations.

*We have already worked with NERPO, Red Meat Association, Goat Interest Group, Poultry Association of SA (Patrick Tonyane, John Taole Gaetsewe District, Northern Cape)*

*Not yet entered into agreement with commodity organizations, but we have established three commodity groups, namely, Broiler commodity, Sunflower commodity and Livestock commodity groups. (Daniel Tladi Tsokotla, Deputy Manager, Waterberg District, Limpopo)*

*During the study group and farmers' days commodity group/organization like Tomato Growers of South Africa and NERPO are invited to give a brief presentation of their services. (Chaka Konute Jackson. Deputy Manager, Value Chain, Waterberg District, Limpopo)*

*Yes – Potato SA (D V Chetty, District Manager, Umgungundlovu, KZN)*

As an example and illustration, the table below shows the number of personnel who were enrolled in different institutions for the financial year 2009/10.

**Table 13e: Number of personnel who were enrolled in different institutions for the financial year 2009/10**

NO upgrading per prov.	Name of Institution														
	UFS	CPUT	NMMU	UP	UFH	CIAT	CUT	TUT	US	UNISA	UWC	WAGEN	LIMP.UNIV.	UKZN	NW Univ.
EC =	34	0	58	6	8	0	0	4	0	113	0	1	0	1	0
FS=	7	0	0	3	0	0	11	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
GP=	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KZN=	0	0	32	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
LP=	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	57	0	17	0	0	54	0	40
MP=	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	120	0	0	0	0	11	0	0
NC=	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NW=	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WC=	0	9	6	0	1	6	0	0	5	3	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total= 464</b>	41	9	96	10	26	6	27	184	5	134	1	1	65	1	40

**Source: ERP Provincial Business Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports**

**F.3.3.Gender upgrading:** The Provincial strategies on recruitment indicate a strong awareness of and the need for ensuring that gender is a critical consideration in the recruitment and development of personnel. A study of the plans and an analysis of recruitment patterns indicate that progress has been made in this direction. There is therefore a strong and expressed desire to recruit in line with gender equity targets although compliance has not necessarily reached the desired levels. The figures below, taken from the 2008/9 financial year plans, provide a useful example of efforts being put by the ERP to upgrade officials in line with gender considerations. Verification visits

did confirm that the award of bursaries cuts across gender and there was no indication that there is a feeling of bias between genders in terms of the bursary awards.

**Table 13f: Number of personnel upgrading qualifications in terms of gender and race**

Province	No. Of personnel upgrading qualifications in 2009/10	Gender		Race			
		Female	Male	African	Coloured	Indian	White
Eastern Cape	225	48	177	224	1	0	0
Free State	25	13	12	24	0	0	1
Gauteng	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KZN	49	29	20	49	0	0	0
Limpopo	129	33	96	128	0	0	1
Mpumalanga	131	66	65	131	0	0	0
N. Cape	16	5	11	10	6	0	0
N. West	40	8	32	40	0	0	0
W. Cape	31	8	23	16	9	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

**Source: ERP Provincial Business Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports**

Although the targets planned proved to be too ambitious, verification visits confirmed that major strides have been made in all provinces on this pillar. For instance, for the Western Cape, according to Mr. Aries, the biggest contribution of ERP has been in qualifications upgrading. According to him, a key element of this has been the upgrading of officers who had been employed as Community Development Workers with only Standard 10 level education. However through ERP these have been given an opportunity to upgrade.

According to the ERP manager *'ERP provided these community workers with an opportunity of their lifetime'*. In this way, he went on; *ERP has strengthened further the Western Cape Department's community focus.*

Participants in the training felt that the training that has been provided through ERP is making a valuable contribution to extension service and farmer support goals. Those who have completed training and those on training stated that training has significantly increased their knowledge and improved performance in their work with farmers. The mmajority of EOs are happy with the way the training has helped them in their interaction with Farmers. As much as they have projects dealing with difference areas in Agriculture, they are pleased to give relevant advice without speculating. This has improved their turn around time.

- *The course on excellent customer service assisted me to improve in communicating with clients using the Batho Pele principles with an understanding of delivering excellent service to clients. There is a slight improvement in term of using the Excel program. (Mpumalanga, Gert Sibande, Govan Mbeki)*
- *Received more information on GroupWise, This to a certain extend made me more strong because I gathered more information and updated myself, so that farmers develop trust in me.*
- *As already mentioned communication has improved tremendously (Eastern Cape. Chris Hani, Emalahleni.)*

Even the farmers are beginning to experience the benefits of this training as the quotes from farmers below indicate:

*He once taught us how to grow potatoes. He also taught us marketing because we ate from the farm and we needed to sell some. He taught us to look after the finances although the farm was not making much money, it is always important that we put some money aside (Kokstad)*

*She trains us all the time how to plant the vegetables, vegetables like carrots, beetroot, spinach cabbage and etc. Before we used to plant vegetables and we eat them because we did not have customers but now we have schools and the community to supply. (Pietermaritzburg)*

*She wants us to grow our market by selling to supermarkets in town. That also means that we have to increase the production in order to meet the needs of our market. (Pietermaritzburg)*

The massive efforts at upgrading have produced its own challenges. First, is that a number of trainees are not completing their studies or are just taking too long to do so. Secondly, training seems to be diverting officers' attention from their work as they try to concentrate on their studies with the result that at the end both the work and the studies lose out. As the ERP Provincial Coordinator for the North West Mr. Matiwane observed, *'In the last three years we have seen officers spending time on studies, they spend lots of time not talking about work but assignments. But going forward these will be helpful to projects'*. The old find the training somewhat burdensome and they whine thus *'Sekolo se sa lona se a re sokodisa'. Le re rometse sekolong ga le refe se re se tlhokang ka nako'*

*Awarded bursary to study for B.Tech in 2011 but because of age (54) and intention to retire, declined award (Theunissen District, Free State)*

Participants and the ERP management also cited curriculum relevance as a problem. Mr. Moodley raises his concerns as follows: *"the academic development path 'is just' too regimented 'if you are an animal scientist you continue to be developed as such and you remain just that' – an animal scientist. There is need to rigorously engage with tertiary institutions on an urgent sustained basis and start asking what constitutes an extension service curriculum'*.

*The Department does not offer bursaries like for instance MBA, which is very close and related to Agribusiness by its principles and what it stands for... By giving the youngsters an opportunity we build on the human capital and best service delivery. (Chaka Konute Jackson, Deputy Manager, Value Chain, Waterberg District, Limpopo)*

Officers also claim that at times they do not know the criteria used when people are singled out to attend courses. With such claims being made evaluators made an observation that ERP management in many instances does not do a thorough needs analysis. They feel they just have to fill up courses with people irrespective of the need.

#### **F.4. Planned targets and Achieved Outputs for Pillar three: Provision of ICT infrastructure and other resources**

**Overall finding:** This has been the most successfully achieved pillar across all provinces. The ERP provided for the development of a policy framework on ICT led by DAFF It was within this framework that the provinces went on to execute their own plans in as far as the provisioning of ICT equipment was concerned. The National Agricultural Technical Coordination Committee on Information Management (NATCCIM) facilitated the activities and deliberations for the development of the ICT policy framework. This is the committee that was

commissioned with the mandate to develop the draft policy framework. All PDAs were represented on this committee, which is chaired by the Director: Information and Communication Technology of the DAFF. The draft policy was finalised and adopted during the NATCCIM meeting held on 08 July 2008. The draft policy was customised and registered on the DAFF intranet in March 2009. The policy was the basis that guided ERP managers in the provinces in the provisioning of ICT equipment and gadgets. The table below shows what the provinces planned to do on this pillar and what they actually achieved within the MTEF. . However evaluators have observed that there is a danger that there can be technological dependence; and that the capital cost of technologies, and the cost of on-going access and support can be high if not properly planned and thought through.

**Table 14: Provision of ICT Equipment as planned and reported**

Province	Number of personnel targeted for ICT provision per financial year						Total	Total (MTEF)	%
	2008/9		2009/10		2010/11				
	Targeted	Supported	Targeted	Supported	Targeted	Supported			
Eastern Cape	400	0	110	480	150	603	660	643	97%
Free State	95	100	32	107	298	499	425	706	166%
Gauteng	32	123	16	59	175	243	223	325	146%
KwaZulu Natal	649	1540	16	565	0	736	665	2841	427%
Limpopo	105	157	165	426	370	1250	540	1833	339%
Mpumalanga	80	409	35	190	265	550	380	970	255%
Northern Cape	44	0	6	103	8	63	58	166	286%
North West	170	0	80	250	0	74	250	324	130%
Western Cape	30	94	17	64	0	36	47	194	413%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1605</b>	<b>2423</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>2244</b>	<b>1266</b>	<b>4054</b>	<b>3348</b>	<b>8721</b>	<b>260%</b>

*Source: ERP Provincial Business Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports*



When looking at the number of officials who received ICT equipment, it may seem incongruous that the number of officials who received equipment is actually higher than the number of exiting personnel establishment in extension services. This is explained by the fact that according to the equipment distribution, the same official, may get access to a laptop, 3G, Phone, GPS, DSS software and also use a smart pen. Thus the achieved target in terms of number of personnel with ICT equipment is based on personnel who received ICT equipment in one form or other but not necessarily the entire package. Furthermore, one officer is counted as one other officer every time s/he receives a different type of equipment.

ICT provision has been a success story across municipalities. The verification visits done by this evaluation team has indicated that Extension practitioners are excited to experiment with innovative ICT initiatives. Extension managers and officials claim that these experiences with ICT gadgets are already showing encouraging results and are also effectively complementing conventional extension communication methods they have always utilised in their work with farmers.

The provision of ICT gadgets has boosted the prestige and credibility of Extension officers among their friends and farmers. Previously, many as having a low credibility perceived extension workers. More importantly, ICT provision has helped them gain improved self-confidence also giving a perception that the extension officers are specially trained and thus highly qualified, and suggesting that farmers may contact them more for further information and advice. Such positive image-building publicity conferred on the extension workers a certain status, which seems to be increasing the EO's enthusiasm and motivation. In the words of Mr G.P.Naidu, Assistant Manager in charge of Kwa Dukuza and Mandeni; ICT tools have generated great excitement and made officers '*enthusiastic and more professional as they walk around carrying laptops*'.

In the Free State, North West and KZN, video conferencing facilities have been put up. In the Free State, three video conferencing centres developed whilst in KZN, Video Conferencing facilities put up but were not yet functional by the time the verification visits were done. Through ERP the North West has installed Video Conferencing facilities at all their district offices. They claim that this has significantly reduced costs in terms of time and travel and the plan is to take this facility down to local municipal level.

Commenting further on the provision of ICT the North West ERP Provincial Coordinator had this to say, '*things like ESO. These are some of the beautiful things that have come through ERP... there is no time wastage, they are there in the field with ESO*'. In the Eastern cape, they claim that ICT provision has made a difference to officers and in the words of the Extension Services Provincial Manager '*with ICT tools (officers) they feel so empowered*'. In the words of Gauteng Province's Mr. Tlape, '*these tools enhance credibility and ensure credibility of*

*advice because our farmers are also becoming technology savvy and educated and this presents a challenge as well. We live in a technology driven era so ICT fits in and it has enhanced relationships between farmers and extension officers and enhanced offerings’.*

The provision of ICT gadgets is also having other spinoff benefits with managers and officers claiming that even work relations are being positively affected with the claim that the provision of ICT tools to officers has helped to flatten hierarchies at work because in the words of at least two Provincial Managers, before ERP, ICT gadgets were the preserve of senior Departmental officials.

However, the ICT provision is not seen as the final panacea. There is need to go beyond as Mr. Matiwane of the North West observed: *‘now that we have gadgets, emphasis will be on improving service delivery, our way of thinking and doing should be different now’*

**Table 15a: ICT Training as planned and reported**

Province	Number of personnel targeted and trained per financial year					Total trained over the MTEF
	2008/9		2009/10		2010/11	
	Targeted	Trained	Targeted	Trained	Trained	
Eastern Cape	478	0	200	214	326	540
Free State	70	0	90	0	0	0
Gauteng	34	0	11	0	0	0
KwaZulu Natal	200	250	200	303	221	774
Limpopo	200	0	200	107	77	184
Mpumalanga	80	0	90	0	166	166
Northern Cape	7	0	0	18	0	18
North West	170	0	130	0	0	0
Western Cape	34	18	70	0	1	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1273</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>1701</b>

The table on ICT training above shows that KZN led the pack by training a massive 774 personnel in ICT skills, followed by Eastern Cape, which came in at 540. Free State, Gauteng and the North West did not have personnel trained although initial plans indicated that they

would. In all a total of 1701 personnel were trained in ICT. ICT training, which mostly focused on the ICDL, was intended to enable officers to use their newly acquired ICT gadgets especially their laptops.

#### **F.4.1. Progress achieved on the Extension Suite Online (ESO)**

A key feature of ICT provision was the urgent need for the adoption of a decision support system for agricultural extension in South Africa. Using ERP funding, this was successfully done through the adoption, installation and training of officers in the use of the Extension Suite Online (ESO) There has been a universal adoption of this system throughout all the provinces indicating the dire need for an appropriate and cost effective mechanism that could provide extensionsists with quick access to relevant, appropriate and timely information. As part of the package training had to be conducted and awareness created in order to facilitate the utilisation of the system. The awareness and training programme was implemented through visiting all active provinces regularly. Secondly, training sessions for Extension officers were implemented according to a cycle and included retraining, refresher courses as well as specialised courses in the application of ESO in the provision of extension services.

**Table 15b: Number of officials trained on the use of ESO**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Number of personnel targeted for support</b>	<b>Number of officials trained</b>
Eastern Cape	10	453
Free State	8	214
Gauteng	5	243
KwaZulu Natal	16	119
Limpopo	2	553
Mpumalanga	2	550
Northern Cape	5	87
North West	3	137
Western Cape	0	234
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1 950</b>

The verification site visits confirmed that huge amounts of work has been achieved in terms of training officers in ICT especially on the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) across all provinces.

- + *YES, at least now we have laptops, 3Gs, cell phones and green books. And the SMART PEN though it is not yet functional but it looks like a good tool to have. Extension suite online is the best ever tool that we use. (Gauteng, Randfontein, Joburg metro)*
- + *Laptop, Camera, GPS, Cell-phone, 3G card, Suit online programme, Smart pen, All that is mentioned above has improved my work tremendously and has ease workload also. (Northern Cape, Siyanda)*
- + *Laptop, smart pen and Blackberry phone. (Xhariep)*

However, many challenges still exist. More training is still needed to consolidate skills already given. Old staff has difficulties using the gadgets and at times resist their use. This poses a challenge as noted by one officer in KZN remarked '**computers are like furniture at home**'.

There are problems of network connectivity as graphically captured by the same officer who said '**it's a mess with the 3G card**'. There are also problems of maintenance and upgrades that frustrate officers.

- *Of the 7 issued, 5 are not working, old, obsolete, upgrade needed, still awaiting replacement (Lichtenberg)*
- *All issued with 3G cards but withdrawn & advised to use cell phones. Told it is cheaper (Bothaville)*
- *All have received but not working because software licenses not been renewed (Escourt)*
- *No internal IT technician, currently based in Bloemfontein, therefore it takes too long to fix problems (Thabo Mafutsanyana)*
- *1 laptop not working, still being repaired, (takes 6 months to repair)(Theunissen)*
- *Repairs very slow - 3 to 4 weeks delay (Bothaville)*

In spite of these problems the verification visits established that the benefits of ICT provision are trickling down to the farmers who are beginning to see some difference in the way the officers work with them. The farmers have noticed and are impressed, and acknowledge the difference as the remarks from farmers noted below indicate:

- + *Before, communication was not easy. Sometimes you go to their office and you don't find anybody. But now they have cell phone, we phone them or send an SMS. (Queenstown)*
- + *They normally phone before they come to visit. Another form of visit is when you need his visits in that case you arrangement with him by phoning because we have their contact numbers. (Taung)*

Farmers are particularly impressed that the extension officers are now equipped better to service them. They particularly like that they have the transport to get to them and are thus able to see them more often. However, when it comes to the technology and ICT provided to the Extension Officers, this is where a significant impact can be seen on the ease and frequency with which they communicate.

- + *Communication is endless. Because of cell phone we talk the whole day. Sometimes if you do not have airtime you send SMS. (Kirkwood)*
- + *A contract cell phone. She calls us from time to time. We call her every time we need her help*
- + *That woman my extension officer she takes that lap top out and she goes into the internet and she answers questions that I have, she asks the internet the questions, she types with her fingers the questions and then the answers they come out on the screen*

## **F.5. Planned Targets and Achieved Outputs for pillar 4: Ensure accountability and visibility of extension**

**Overall conclusion:** An analysis of the ERP Business plans, Annual Reports and verification visits indicated visible and successful execution on this pillar across a number of activities as outlined below. Particular success was achieved on the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for extension personnel and also on the development and distribution of the Farmer's Green Book in most provinces and the procurement and use of the Extension Management Smart Pen. These tools were intended to enhance the accountability and visibility of the extension services.

**Table: Planned targets by Provinces**

Province	Planned Targets over the MTEF period	Achieved Targets
Eastern Cape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a unit responsible for managing extension at all levels</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out 10 000 green books</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure 100 subsidized vehicles</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase uniform for all extension officers</li> </ul>	
Free State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out Farmer's green book to 6500 targeted farmers by August 2010</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of uniforms to extension officers by April 2010</li> </ul>	
Gauteng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out of 150 green books by June 2010</li> </ul>	
KZN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out of Farmer's green book</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of uniforms for front line extension personnel</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce an award system in recognition of service excellence</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure 11 subsidized vehicles</li> </ul>	
Limpopo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out of 4000 green books</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure 900 management diaries by June 2010</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce an Award System in recognition of service excellence</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of uniforms for front line extension personnel</li> </ul>	
Mpumalanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out 1000 green books</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure 30 digital pen by quarter 1</li> </ul>	
Northern Cape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out 1000 green books</li> </ul>	
North West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure subsidized vehicles by July 2010</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase smart pen for 177 officials by 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2010/11</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure protective clothing quarterly</li> </ul>	
Western cape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce an award system in recognition of service excellence</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a unit responsible for managing extension at all levels</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review policy on transport</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of uniforms to frontline personnel</li> </ul>	

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Host 12 farmers' days, 3 per quarter</li></ul> |  |
|--|--|--|

*Source: ERP Provincial Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports*

**F.5.1. Progress has been achieved on the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for extension personnel.**

**This framework was developed in order to ensure a** standardised method of measuring performance of the extension personnel in all provinces. During the year, DAFF developed a discussion document based on the findings of the visits to the provinces and started work on the creation of a national extension-monitoring tool.

**F.5.2. Progress has been achieved on the development of a policy on the provision of corporate wear for extension**

This activity was later dropped as a matter of activity prioritization within the ERP plan. However, before the activity was dropped, some work had already been accomplished. The DAFF had commissioned work on the development of a national policy framework on extension corporate wear in 2008. The developed framework had been presented to all provinces at a workshop in November 2008. Flowing from the workshop a task team representing all provinces had been established with the objective to finalise the policy. The first meeting of the task team took place at the end of the financial year (8 April 2009) in the policy framework where the provincial inputs had been incorporated before it was decided that this activity might merit consideration in future.

**F.5.3. Progress has been achieved on the development of the Farmers Green Book**

The introduction of the Farmers Green Book is one of the key implementation successes of the ERP. The development of the Farmers Green Book is one mechanism that was designed to further ensure the accountability and visibility of extension and advisory services. A decision was made at the Cabinet Lekgotla in May 2008 that the DAFF should develop the Farmers Green Book (FGB). The purpose of the FGB is to record the farmer's daily interactions with various agricultural advisors both in government and outside government. The book provides an opportunity to the farmers to evaluate the quality of the products and services rendered to them.

Work on the FGB started soon after the Cabinet Lekgotla and after the first draft was complete; this was sent to the provinces for inputs in August 2008. These inputs were then incorporated into the final product and the book was noted and approved by ASRDC in September

2008. In line with the need to enhance visibility, the book was translated into other South African languages, viz. Sesotho languages, Nguni languages, Tshivenda, IsiTsonga and Afrikaans.

After the FGB was launched in the provinces by the Minister during Lestsema between October and November 2008, the DAFF proceeded to hold workshops on the use of the farers Green Book. These workshops, held in the provinces, targeted farmer, farmers unions, managers responsible for extension, and extension officers themselves. By 23 January 2009, an electronic version of the Farmers Green Book had been sent out to provinces, giving them a chance to give their own inputs. After incorporating provincial inputs, the revised copy of the book was sent to the provinces by March 2009. The provinces were granted permission to use the Extension Recovery Fund for purposes of printing the green book. The pilot started on August 1 2009.

**F.5.4. Progress has been registered on the piloting of the Farmer's Green Book.** As reported above, it had been resolved that the Farmer's green book was to be piloted for a period of 12 months, from April 2009 to March 2010. The recommendation had been that all provinces would pilot the green book with a selected targeted group of farmers from different municipalities. The targeted groups for the pilot were Land and Agrarian Reform and CASP beneficiaries. Workshops on the use of the Farmer's green book were concluded in all the provinces from 11 February to March 2009. The purpose of the workshops was also to share information on the extension recovery plane and the post Agri-summit resolutions.



**Table 16: Number of Farmer's green book copies piloted per province**

<b>Province</b>	<b>No. Of green book copies utilised</b>
Eastern Cape	10 000
Free State	1 200
Gauteng	0
KwaZulu Natal	0
Mpumalanga	157
Northern Cape	500
North West	1 200
Western Cape	254
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 561</b>

**Source: ERP Provincial Business Plans and DAFF Annual ERP Reports**

The table above indicates the total number of Farmer's green book copies, which were printed by provinces and used in the pilot phase. The Eastern Cape printed the majority – 10 000 copies were utilised by both targeted farmers and extension officers since the province could not print the management diaries. The Farmer's green book was piloted in 20 local municipalities in Pretoria. In the Free State, copies of the book were printed and piloted in isiXhosa, English, Afrikaans and Sesotho. The Gauteng and KZN provinces did not participate in the Green book Pilot. Gauteng printed extension visit cards, which are used by extension officers when they visit farmers. Kwazulu-Natal took the approach of digitalising the Farmer's Green book, but this delayed the printing of the book and this is why they could not pilot it. The North West printed 1 200 copies and distributed them to smallholder, subsistence and commercial farmers. The Western Cape used digital books, which were piloted, in six districts of the province.

The important role that the Farmers Green Book is playing in the Farmers daily work was highlighted through findings of a research conducted through an independent research organisation in 2010. This research study was undertaken to determine the effectiveness with which the FGB was being utilised by both farmers and extension officials. The research reconfirmed that the FGB is a useful tool especially for the smallholder farmer who has no access to any other form of farm management/record system. Thus after the provinces piloted the tool during the 2009/10 financial year in order to ascertain if the tool was appropriate and efficient for the farmers or not, an

evaluation of its usefulness was conducted in the provinces that had piloted the tool. The Western Cape used the book differently by digitising it (used it hand in hand with the smart pen).

The verification visits have also confirmed that while the FGB has been a roaring innovation in the majority of provinces, in others it has been somewhat unwelcome and its adoption has been reluctantly accepted.

Provinces like Limpopo, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, and Gauteng and Eastern Cape have hugely popularised the use of the FGB with the Free State not far behind. In these provinces the FGB has solicited very high levels of use and satisfaction among smallholder farmers and extension officers and is helping to meet the twin objectives of ensuring the accountability and visibility of extension personnel and services. As such, the FGB has become a valued planning and reporting tool for smallholder farmers who now advocate its continued provision and use. The areas of concern were around literacy levels of some of the beneficiaries of the FGB. The following comment by the farmer is quite revealing:

*I also have it, and the people from the office do come. There is a boy that helps me at the farm; part of his job is the book.  
(Modimolle)*

However, some provinces are still behind in FGB implementation. There seems to be a lukewarm reception to the Green Book in the North West. In this province, more needs to be done. The words of the ERP Provincial Coordinator in the Province are revealing: *'the introduction of the Farmers Green Book, yes its there but there are challenges!'* KZN has printed the FGB as planned but has not provided it to farmers claiming logistical and cost issues. Verification reveals reasons for slow adoption are premised on three things: the perception that the FGB is a policing tool, that it is cumbersome and time intensive, and thirdly that its production and distribution are costly logistical nightmares.

On the smart pen model used in the Western Cape, there was agreement amongst officials and farmers that the Smart Pen is good especially because supervisors can monitor the work done by the officers in the field. In the words of Mr. Arise of the Western Cape, *'we now know what each and everyone is doing—they can't hide'*. However, the perception was that the smart pen is merely a clock card system for management to monitor and supervise their extension officer because it is not accessible to the farmer and does not directly address the smallholder farmer as such. In spite of this the farmers are equally excited, remarking *'it makes them very accountable. They write what we've agreed to...It's very effective I must say'*. (Caledon farmer)

For provinces that are fully utilising the FGB the use value of the FGB is recognised. Those farmers that were using the FGB felt that the document monitored the extension officer's movement to check if he/she was doing her job according to his/her mandate. It made sure that they visit the farms, give advice, work with farmers and show a sign of accountability.

*For me it is a logbook that makes the EO to be accountable and for everyone to sign as proof of his visit. Is a supporting documents of proof should anyone claim to have rendered service. (Taung)*

The FGB was also useful for recording keeping for both the department and the farmer as well.

*Yes, because you can see the progress report, and you can see if you are behind with things like vaccinations and all that, (Kuruman)*

*I use it, everything that I do on my cows or sheep, I must write it there. (Kuruman)*

Problems encountered include illiteracy and time and especially extension Officer commitment to the FGB. This last factor is problematic.

- *FGB has been introduced, but we have farmers that are unhappy with the book. They always ask us to write for them. We have farmers who cannot write and they don't like this book. It's working with those who are interested and can write (Extension Officer, Venda)*
- *I also have it, and the people from the office do come. There is a boy that helps me at the farm; part of his job is the book. (Farmer, Modimolle)*
- *I wrote in the beginning, but not now. They came with it, but it didn't work. (Dikgatlong)*
- *I have it but it was just for that year, but since then, I haven't used it. (Kuruman)*
- *Van Rooyen (the Extension Officer) knows more than the green book. (Uppington)*
- *The green book is too much work (laughter) I don't even know where mine is. (Uppington)*

#### **F.5.5.Transport and Farm Visits**

Verification visits confirmed that transport provision has been another gain that has come from ERP. Municipalities visited there was evidence that officers had got subsidized vehicles or had access to government (GG) vehicles. The farmers through remarks such as the following also supported this:

- *During the days, I am talking before 2008. It was not simple getting support from the extension officers; they neither had transport nor Cell phones. Getting help in the form of couching was rare. We saw them once in 2 months. To me it's like they never existed. (Kirkwood)*
- *Before, some extension Officers used to use their own cars. And some of their cars were not reliable. They would get broken before they get to the farm. (Escourt)*
- *Before, our EO did not have transport to come to us or to take us to places where we suppose to attend training. (Queenstown)*
- *She just got a car recently. Before she used to walk and use public transport. (Pietermaritzburg)*

Comment from some of the District Personnel is that some of the pool cars are old and in not particularly good state of repair. This sometimes hampers the use of pool cars for visits to farmers.

- *Not enough vehicles, cannot respond to issues as they arise, restrictive, most of the vehicles in poor condition (Bothaville)*

Progress on this pillar is also hampered by other policy and administrative challenges. These include contradictory transport policies in the provinces. For instance, in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, officers on contract are provided with subsidised vehicles and are also allowed to drive GG cars. In the Eastern Cape these officers on contract do not get subsidized cars but are allowed to drive GG cars. In the rest of the Provinces they do not get subsidized cars and are not allowed to drive GG cars even if they have a valid Driver's licence.

- *Departmental transport policy doesn't allow contract officers to drive pool vehicles. Pool vehicles are in a bad state. Those that don't have cars have to share with those who do. This disrupts planning, inability to prioritize, time consuming. (Wolmaranstad)*

Bureaucratic delays in processing subsidies are another challenge. For instance a lady in one municipality in KZN claims that she has been waiting for over two years for a vehicle in spite of having raised the necessary deposit of R50000.00 that was required. Then there are other individual issues like Credit Bureau blacklisting

## **F.6. Planned Targets and achieved Outputs for pillar 5: Promote professionalism and improve the image of extension**

**Overall conclusion:** Partial success has been achieved on this pillar. The pillar of prompting professionalism and improving the image of extension was brought about to provide an environment in which extension personnel would be highly motivated, would improve service delivery and would operate in a professional manner.

Under this pillar, the key deliverables were: the participation of extension personnel in professional bodies, the hosting of extension of conferences, and awards for best performing personnel.

**F.6.1.SASAE membership** In about 80%of municipalities visited there is awareness of the professional body, SASAE. However, new recruits are mostly not aware of SASAE. The fact that membership fees are paid for by the Department has helped but it not all provinces have yet taken up this initiative. Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape have gone a long way in paying for officers' membership. This is not the case in KZN, Eastern Cape and Western Cape.

- *All belong to SASAE, Our EO's are reluctant to belong to anywhere subscription is not covered by government and the SASAE subscription is covered. (Thabo Mafutsanyana, Free State)*
- *Almost all belong to SASAE, not sure of the number as budget approvals for new appointments still outstanding from Province (Tshwane).*

Some Extension Officers or Specialists also belong to other professional bodies and some that were mentioned are listed below:

- *SA Natural Scientist Profession. 1 registered (Lichtenberg)*
- *Most of us we have joined SASAE, but we have not seen their effectiveness in us. I am a member of PSA but it is not for agriculture. Other people I am not sure (Venda: Mutale)*
- *No. None (are members of SASAE). Most of the new recruits don't even know about any such thing (Greater Kokstad).*
- *Aware of but SASAE has not promoted membership in this area (Western Cape: Worcester)*

- Requirement that everyone is registered to a professional body, but we are struggling to convince the EO's to register with SASAE. Only 4 are members, tried to send the others to conferences to motivate them but they have not joined (Camdeboo, Graaf Reinet).

However, most of those who have joined and attended SASAE conferences find it beneficial as is reflected in the following comments:

- Have decided to take only SASAE members to conference. SASAE conferences are useful, as we gain information and learn from other members from other Provinces and countries. Also visit projects in those areas and get to see how they do things differently
- SASAE has assisted immensely in EO development (Theunissen)

**F 6.2. Award Ceremonies:** DAFF had the responsibility of developing a framework for the introduction of an award system in recognition of excellence in extension and advisory services. On this element there was success. DAFF did indeed develop the Framework in August 2009, which was then sent to provinces in the very same month to guide implementation.

Although PDAs had the framework at their disposal, only three provinces managed to have award ceremonies for their personnel. As recommended by the DAFF framework, Limpopo, Free State and Western Cape managed to award the deserving personnel for their outstanding performance in different categories (as outlined in the example from Limpopo tabled below).

**Table 18: Categories and names of personnel from Limpopo who were recognised through awards**

Category 1 – Best senior advisors and advisors extension	Category 2 – Best subject matter specialist	Category 3 – Best deputy manager
Grobler, R.J. (First prize) Maake, M.L. (Second prize) Tlolana, L.F. (Third prize)	Maake, L.P. (first prize) Sitholimela M. (Second prize)	Greeff, B.F (first prize) Nethononda, L.O. (second prize)

The table indicates the categories and names of personnel from Limpopo who were recognised for going the extra mile in rendering service to their clients. According to Provincial records, these conferences provided a forum for information sharing and the exchange of experiences not only between provinces but also amongst all stakeholders involved in extension.

**F.6.3. Provincial extension conferences:** Although only Limpopo, North West and the Northern cape pioneered the hosting of Provincial Extension conferences, by financial year 2010/11 all but KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng had held these conferences. It was recommended to provinces that the award giving ceremony be incorporated into the provincial extension conference since both activities speak to the image and professionalism of extension. However, only Free State and Limpopo acknowledged the outstanding extension personnel in different categories by handing over MEC wards and prizes. The first Northern Cape conference was combined with the launch of the Farmer's green book by the MEC for Agriculture in the province although there were no awards for best performing extension officers during the conference. A key feature of the provincial conferences was that the province invited speakers from different academic institutions, other government departments and industry to share information on different topics relating to the enhancement of extension. Also, t provinces engaged frontline extension personnel to facilitate conferences that would inspire extension personnel.

But noticeable strides have been made in spite of modest successes on this pillar. For instance, in the Western Cape Mr. J Aries claims that with these improvements from ERP *'people want to come and work for us'*, thus confirming that the image of the Extension Service has indeed improved. He went further to state that Extension Awards have been of great value because they also *"allow for a lot of discussion and reflection and allow people to move out of their silos and comfort zones. Even just a nametag, jacket makes a difference"*. This enhances professionalism

With resources now at their disposal, the Department in the Western Cape could still continue to improve the professionalism of their staff through exchange visits to

The officer image has indeed improved, a different situation from three years ago when in Mr. Moodley's words, *'we were zero in terms of competences- we couldn't take any extension officer to any stakeholder'*. The ERP Provincial Manager in Mpumalanga who stated that *'when some of us started as extension officers, it was something else but now everyone wants to be in extension'* confirms this.

Verification visits indicated that provinces like Limpopo are making significant strides on developing the professional ethos of their members. In the words of the ERP Provincial Manger, Mr, Ndove, the Extension Officers run the show as far as conference are concerned. To deepen involvement, District conferences are actively organised by officers themselves some of whom now comprised District Extension Committees. Such Extension and Award Committees consist of farmers associations and other stakeholder groups. Reflecting on such developments, Mr. Ndove solemnly declared, *'everything is exciting to be an extension – the opportunity to execute a passion and vocation'*, before concluding, *'Limpopo have not yet matured but have begun to find their feet'*

## SECTION G: OVERALL CONCLUSIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The overall purpose of this assessment and evaluation exercise was to identify targets, deliverables and outcomes of the Extension Recovery Plan over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework 2008/9 -2010/2011. Having analysed the Provincial ERP Plans and their implementation and Annual Reports and having embarked on verification site visits and carried out interviews with key informants, the evaluators arrived at the following concluding comments and observations:

**G.1.** Interviews conducted amongst ERP managers, extension officers and farmers across all provinces and sampled municipalities revealed that the ERP is considered as highly relevant to the South African agricultural context and has been effective in contributing to the revitalization of the agricultural extension system and also the agricultural sector development goals. Over the past three years, say both senior managers of provincial ERP programmes and extension officers, ERP funding has been extremely valuable and has been a clear asset to the improvement of their professional skills and service delivery capacity. Senior Managers asset that ERP has restored Extension and Advisory services and put the services on a respectable pedestal than ever before, in the process making the service a trusted partner of the smallholder farmer. Extension officers overwhelming stated that training had enhanced their capacity and that their enhanced knowledge and skills will be transferred to their jobs, including greater use and application of ICT tools. Achievements with a high potential for sustainability include the continuing support for the widespread use of ICT, up skilling, and visibility with accountability.

**G.2.** From a conceptual point of view, the Business Plan narratives from all provinces indicate that senior managers of ERP in the provinces understand what ERP entails and have an appreciation that the ERP has brought into existence a new way of delivering services. This new way is understood as holistic and comprehensive (works across the whole agricultural value chain) and calls for new skills fit for delivering services that can support a business and entrepreneurial oriented farming sector. The development of policy frameworks over the three years hints at the creation of a more professional and better-managed service with standardized practices and value system that will be able to deliver effectively across all areas as required.

**G.3.** A key observation that could be made is that a new Extension Service system is being developed through ERP. The launch of the ERP ushered in a new transformation pathway for extension services in South Africa. It has invigorated a service that had suffered years of



fragmentation and neglect and has ushered the service into a technology driven era possibly unthinkable only a decade back. Indeed, the ERP has begun to create a service that relies on planning, that sets objectives, focuses on its human capital development, is responsive to other national and local development priorities and imperatives like food security, land reform, markets and entrepreneurship, amongst others.

The ERP is also bringing about a more unified perspective and understanding of what the South African agricultural extension service should be and what role it can play within both agricultural and broader rural development. A reading through the Provincial ERP Plans and discussions with ERP managers tell us that in all the Provinces, with slight variations of emphasis, extension and advisory services are considered to be a broad offering that includes all technical services provided to the farmer. In terms of organization, the extension service in the provinces has increasingly become municipal focused, with an emphasis on villages and farms. The Extension Services have also come of late to adopt commodity and project approaches through value analysis, with the participatory approach being increasingly the guiding principle for interaction with clients.

**G.4.** Extension Services in the Provinces offers a basket of services that include: advising farmers on production techniques, getting them organized as groups, organizing markets for farmers, helping link small producers with markets and, lastly, encouraging communication between farmers and other stakeholders. Extension officers also assist in the formation of commodity groups, cooperatives, farmers associations and study groups. They also assist farmers in doing market research, informing and education them on new technologies, and in drawing up production plans apart from providing other technical advice.

Extension officers are also assisting with the implementation of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategies and other government priority programmes including CASP, LandCare programmes, amongst other local ones.

Thus, from the perspective of all provinces, as put in the words of the KZN ERP Business Plan, 'the *Provincial extension and advisory services remain the currency through which agricultural development will be brought to fruition. Extension and advisory services personnel are utilised to drive provincial flagship programmes like Siyavuma, CASP and LandCare*'. In the case of provinces like Mpumalanga these focal programmes include Masibuyele Emasimini including poverty alleviation programmes driven by the Department of Social Development.

**G.5.** Like in most other developing nations, extension workers in South Africa are overworked, overstretched, and not able to have wide outreach coverage and consequently ineffective. ERP recruitment has achieved notable strides in increasing the number of extension personnel and reducing the officer/farmer ratio. The provision of ICT has created other possibilities. Through ERP funding, provinces now have access to multimedia communication tools like video conferencing, digital cameras and smart pens. . These multi-media tool are further alleviating the problem of overload and wide outreach.

There is no doubt that ICT innovations are increasingly having important implications on extension service provision due to its role in introducing and diffusing the concepts of knowledge sharing and timely communication and changing the way officers and farmers interact. From a discussion with he officers, it is clear that this operational implication of ICT provision is beginning o be felt is felt at the individual, organizational and farm levels

**G.6.** An analysis of activity performance shows that in most instances, the National Department led by example in terms of activity implementation, timeous execution and proper administration. An assessment of performance by DAFF over the period in most cases shows a commitment to action that is able to follow through on its actions and meet its commitment deadlines as set down in the plan and agreed with other stakeholders. A strong feature and theme that runs through out DAFF ERP implementation is a strong inclusive and consultative orientation that seeks to take all the various stakeholders along at every stretch of the road, both in the planning and in the execution of ERP activities.

### **G.7. Evaluators' Overall Conclusion on ERP Implementation**

It is the evaluators overall conclusion that in terms of planned targets, ERP has delivered well according to plan across all provinces and across all pillars as indicated by the table below and as verified in field. However, ERP achievements across individual pillars have not been consistent and at par across all provinces. Many factors, mostly hinging on policy, management and administrative issues in the provinces, have provided challenges to ERP implementation. Although these challenges have created inconsistencies and gaps, they have not derailed the ERP implementation focus and achievements.

**Table 18 Summary of total achievements over the MTEF**

Year	Outputs									
	Recruitment	ICT recipients	FGB	Qualification upgrading	Officials trained on skills programmes				Money utilised '000	
					Soft	Technical	ICT	Total		
2008/9	350	2423	0	33	730	266	268	1264	81 617	82%
2009/10	217	2244	0	646	498	1206	642	2346	153 393	90%
2010/11	346	4054	23162	670	385	771	791	1947	261838	87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>8721</b>	<b>23162</b>	<b>1349</b>	<b>1613</b>	<b>2243</b>	<b>1701</b>	<b>5557</b>	<b>496848</b>	<b>86%</b>

**Source: Provincial ERP Business Plans and Annual reports (2008/9 -2010/11)**

The table above indicates that the ERP has largely accomplished its objectives especially in the provision of ICT equipment, the recruitment of personnel the training and upgrading of officials in addition to the training of officials in the use of the ESO. Such achievements did persuade the evaluators to reach the conclusion that indeed, the implementation of the ERP within the MTEF period largely achieved its objectives and is succeeding in transforming the extension service into a more skilled, better motivated, and ICT empowered service. That the provinces were able to spend the total funds allocated to them to the tune of **86%** also tells a commendable story that demonstrates a focus and commitment to accomplish the given objectives and activities

The evaluation's overall conclusion therefore is that the Extension Recovery Programme has been effectively delivered across all provinces in terms of the five pillars that anchored it. Indeed, there have been birth pangs, there have been many hurdles but ERP is acknowledged to have made a difference. In the words of Mr. Matiwane of the North West, ERP *'brought a bit of life into this province'*. This is echoed by Mr. J Aries of the Western Cape who asserts that *'if it had not been for ERP we could be having serious problems- we don't have a lot of equitable share from Provincial government.* In the words of Dr. Masiteng of the Free State, *'what is different is the thinking behind ERP- not just the allocation. It is a paradigm shift about how DAFF thinks about extension officers'*. Going further he says the ERP is relevant, *it ^fits in with our Mohoma Mobung'*. Because of its relevance, ERP efforts have been given high-level political support in provinces like KZN as well. According to Mr. Moodley, *the Premier is a great supporter of ERP. He has said he wants two officers in each ward (771 wards in all!)*. This has paid off; to this end, the Premier gave R29 million from own budget to extension Services. The Province has clearly linked

ERP to key outcomes of government e.g. employment creation, health, etc., ERP contributes at every level e.g. infant mortality programmes etc. Such high political support is also seen in the Free State where, in the words of DR. Masiteng *'the MEC very supportive when it comes to ICT systems and ERP, he is passionate about it'*

Mr. Tlape, reflecting on the contribution ERP has made, says that *'to us, ERP means revitalization, revamping, it means growth from a dilapidated directionless situation to a more refreshed and renovated system'*. In Mr. Ndove (Limpopo)'s view, *the ERP has greatly helped in professionalizing the service'*. Echoing this, Mr. Tawana, of the Northern Cape, is adamant that there is *'stark improvement, thanks to ERP, communication is now easy, Extension officer skills have improved, and confidence has improved. There is less paper. And there is more efficiency'*.

Exclaiming further the manager stated that ERP has been *'a God sent gift from national'*. In his concluding remarks the same ERP manager quipped, *'ERP has made agriculture glamorous'* For KZN, as for other provinces, says Mr. Moodley, *'the ERP was needed. Extension Services had to change with all government strategic foci changing'*. With these strong sentiments being expressed it is no surprise that the concluding words from the ERP Provincial Manager for the Eastern Cape were *'if ERP stops we are dead,'* almost echoing what Dr. Masiteng had said hundreds of kilometers away the previous day, *'if you take away ERP you are killing the extension service'*. However, DAFF has to work purposefully on the challenges identified in order to eliminate the risk of ERP achievements being nullified by the power of legacy factors.

## SECTION H: RECOMMENDATIONS PER PILLAR

### H.1.Overall recommendation: Extend the life of the Extension Recovery Plan

This evaluation has shown that indeed, many remarkable improvements have been made through ERP but it is true that DAFF cannot declare victory yet. Incremental changes are reversible. The ERP is a huge change management and transformational initiative. However, sustainable transformation takes time and needs a very long term view in terms of vision and commitments. Secondly, any renewal programme, like the ERP, risks losing momentum if short term and medium term wins are not followed up, consolidated, or replicated immediately. Responses got from extension management and staff indicates that to date, if reenergized, they might be willing to go on the long march because they are seeing compelling evidence of change in their work environment. It is imperative therefore that DAFF seizes this palpable sense of expectancy and urgency to continue to introduce new or deepen old successes within the ERP. Change has to be deepened, has to be institutionalized, so that it sticks and becomes *'the way we do things here'*. So pressure for change has to be kept up.

However, it is the evaluators' and task Force Team's opinion that in order to be effective the ERP design processes and focus could be addressed. This is because going forward, the ERP should have a proper and unequivocal legitimacy and a more deliberate and deeper stakeholder consultation process can only achieve this. Secondly, ERP design should reflect a clearly articulated and deeper strategic relationship with other programmes at all levels of government e.g. initiatives targeting smallholder farmers, provincial growth and development plans, rural development and land reform amongst others. This is especially so because Extension service offerings are cross cutting and their effectiveness is hugely impacted by other initiatives and factors endogenous to it.

A strong aspect of this recommendation is the need to locate the ERP, going forward, within a clearly articulated and agreed National Extension and Advisory Policy Framework. Key strategic challenges have to be addressed through this policy including goals, expected benefits and outcomes, target beneficiaries, funding and delivery models, partnerships amongst others. Although ERP shows a firm grounding within the existing national agricultural policies and is clearly informed by international best practice and concepts, it is also true that at present DAFF has not articulated a National Extension and Advisory Service Policy that should of necessity inform and act as

the implementation framework for ERP and its design. Of particular interest is the need to have an uncontested definition of policy beneficiaries and an agreed conceptualization of what constitutes, for instance, a smallholder farmer.

Defining the national Extension and Advisory Policy is therefore a basic building block in the implementation of an effective, informed and accountable ERP. A comprehensive Extension and Advisory Policy framework will be a vital tool through which to establish the operational boundaries within which ERP will function. It will support day-to-day management of the ERP whilst simultaneously taking the longer-term vision of future operational activities into account. A supportive and integrated Extension and Advisory Policy will also be indicative of DAFF's level of commitment and is essential if the ERP is to be successfully embedded into the wider national and provincial agricultural and rural development operations. Having been crafted in full consultation with all stakeholders, the policy framework will be an effective mobilizing and legitimizing tool for the ERP.

## **Recommendations on individual pillars**

The five pillars of the ERP are organically linked initiatives that, individually, contribute to the seamless success and delivery of the whole ERP outcome. In the future design of ERP therefore, the recommendation is that the pillars should all be continued in accordance with the specific recommendation on each pillar.

### **H. 2. Pillar 1: Recruitment**

**H.2.1. Continue to recruit.** The numbers have not squared up because the officer/farmer ratio is still a yawning gap. Achievements have been scored but the officer/farmer ratio is still unacceptably high. The ambitions of the political leadership in provinces like KZN where they want at least two officers in each ward will call for continued recruitment drive if they are to be fulfilled. ERP should continue as a means of increasing staff in this service until it reaches service ratios comparable to best practices

**H.2.2. Improve and standardize recruitment strategies cross all provinces.** Recruitment can be a costly and inefficient process if not properly managed. One way to standardize and lessen risks in ERP recruitment could be to create a national database from which provinces can draw their recruits. This will reduce costs for everyone. This would look at out of school graduate who might have to be put through an intensive internship with a carefully structured mentoring system. This of course would entail drawing up a clear long-term strategic framework for mentorship within the extension system. Extension will thus absorb unemployed graduates immediately and put

them into field and close the experience gap through mentoring. This experiential approach will ensure that young officers get relevant hands on skills instead of having to go back for many more years of study that takes their focus and energies away from the field. This recommendation may also suggest that ERP leadership at DAFF and in the Provinces may have to look more closely at how they could strategically position ERP recruitment to existing internship programmes of the DAFF.

### **H.3. Recommendations of Pillar 2: Training and Upgrading**

**H.3.1: Strengthen partnerships with research and tertiary institutions and review curriculum offerings.** It is now widely recognised that extension workers need to become agronomic, livestock or fisheries technicians or, depending on the programme goals, to develop special skills in farm management, farmer organization, or other programmatic and organizational skills. Importantly also, extensionists must be prepared to respond purposively to the requirements of institutional reform, and new knowledge and skills must be promoted as well as new attitudes towards change.

This changing agricultural scenario, both in South Africa and globally, should be viewed as providing both challenges and opportunities for agricultural extension educators to revitalize curricula and also to relook at delivery models and methodologies. This recommendation emphasizes the need for DAFF to take advantage of the opportunities to be proactive than reactive on issues of extension education and curriculum revitalization at tertiary institutions. In line with pluralistic approach to extension, initiatives in this direction should seek to strengthen relationships between tertiary institutions, extension services, NGOs, Commodity organizations, farmer associations, input suppliers and output buyers.

Although this evaluation indicates that ERP implementation has strengthened relationships between Extension services and tertiary institutions, the evaluators feel that a more and thorough liaison between the extension service, tertiary institutions and research institutions and farmer organizations could ensure that academic courses offered are indeed demand driven and are in tandem with the challenges needed in farmer support.

Such an approach will also help to ensure that officers once enrolled, actually stay on the course and not only complete the course but do so within the prescribed time. There are indeed a number of cases where officers, because of the norms and standards requirements, are going on to a course but are not completing or are taking far longer to do so than should be the case.

Agricultural development constitutes a complex network of interrelationship amongst all the agricultural sub sectors including fisheries, forestry, livestock and crop agriculture, research and tertiary institutions. It is therefore important that concerted efforts be put in place by all concerned stakeholders in agriculture for improved capacity building necessary for effective service delivery

**H.3.2.** As a corollary to the above recommendation, **DAFF should look closely at contributing to the building of learning institutions** that are capable of providing effective capacity building programs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century extension service they want to provide to South African agriculture. There is a need to create lasting institutions capable of ensuring the sustainability of the best practices and new skills introduced or acquired during the program. This would provide an opportunity for coordination and linkages between strategies such as ERP and other tertiary institutional reform measures. Stronger and communication intensive partnerships with academic institutions, and research partners should be part of ERP planning and implementation.

**H.3.3. Put more effort into essential soft skills than is presently happening.** Indeed huge efforts have put on technical training in the provinces. This is essential if Extension Officers are to be kept a step ahead of farmer needs and demands. However, it is not only training in new technical subjects that are needed. This evaluation got a tentative indication that training on other critical skills seems to be inadequate, such skills include: community and group organization, leadership and entrepreneurship development, participatory needs assessment methods, strategic planning and total-quality management principles, message design and multi-media strategy development, cost-benefits and risk/payoff analyses, management information system, new computer and communication technology applications. These are all new skill sets that are required in the light of the challenges of farmer support demands of the new South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition, DAFF could look at having some standardized induction course/workshop to be given to new recruits as they start the service.

To become effective extension technicians, it is expected that agents must acquire high quality technical expertise and training. In the same vein, to meet the challenge of ERP reform measures, managerial staff must develop high quality administrative expertise relevant to, for an example, arranging and monitoring innovation initiative, as well as supervisory skills in human resource management and programme monitoring and evaluation. Going forward such requirements should be seriously considered in ERP human capacity development.

**H.3.4.Create a true learning organization:** Capture, highlight, communicate and replicate quick wins and emerging best practices from each province that have been engendered by ERP and seek ways of consolidating these successes. You have raised the bar; it must be



taken now to a higher level. As the qualifications and professional stature of the Extension Personnel are raised, this can be linked to a career path, which will see development of a more specialized service. As Mr. Ndove, ERP Provincial Manager in Limpopo critically put it, are the present extension officers equipped to be advising van der Merwe?

#### **H. 4. Recommendation on Pillar 3: ICT Provision and Training:**

**H.4.1. Continue to put effort into ICT training.** The study revealed that most of the users of ICT, with Western Cape, Limpopo and Free State relatively in a better position, have got inadequate training on basic skills of computers, etc. In some instances the courses were too short and many extension officers have not yet acquired the basic computer skills that can enable them to utilize the technology to the desired level that allows them to be efficient and effective in performing their tasks. Therefore, it is recommended that continuous and intensive training has to be given to these agricultural service deliverers so that the ICT tools at their disposal do not end up being white elephants

**H.4.2. Connect remote office site and work on network connectivity issues.** Verification visits indicated that there is no internet infrastructure in some few isolated municipal offices and, in some other remote offices; network connectivity is a huge problem. Although these are exceptional cases, there is still an urgent need to have such cases attended to in the appropriate manner so that we can talk of universal access within extension service. Such cases need the DAFF and PDAs to work closely with other stakeholders like network service providers.

**H.4.3. Build internal ICT training capacity** by identifying ICT savvy cadre of young extension professionals. Human resources development through staff training on ICT will have to remain a very crucial element of ERP going forward. ICT is an ever-evolving technology and continuous training and up scaling are always necessary. DAFF and PDAs may have to think of some means of reducing dependency on outside trainers for such 'refresher' courses. One way could be to identify a core-group of agricultural extension and training staff in the service who can be the ICT champions. These will then be trained to serve as ICT Master Trainers and Master Planners who can effectively serve as multiplier agents in developing other officers. This will minimise unnecessary "dependency" on more costly resource persons and/or consultants, after the initial round of training of trainer's activities have been completed. It seems possible to transfer ICT skills through training of local extension officers and trainers, without having to perpetuate the need for external technical assistance after one or two ICT training programmes have been implemented successfully.

**H.4.4.** In line with key deliverable commitments of DAFF, it may be time for ERP to **look at ICT for smallholder farmers themselves**. This would mark a transition from extension officers being the target to smallholder farmers being the target beneficiaries of ICT provision. Integration of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are rapidly transforming the agricultural extension and on farm practices elsewhere in the world. . To ensure a sustainable and holistic use of ICT within the smallholder sector, ERP should work on a sustainable plan for placing rural ICT infrastructure for use by farmers themselves. International experience shows that an ICT enabled extension system is a key agent for changing agrarian situations and farmers’ lives by improving access to information and sharing knowledge. Indeed, these international experiences show that ICT based agricultural extension brings incredible opportunities and has the potential of enabling the empowerment of farming communities.

This will involve purposefully seeking to influence or deepen DAFF involvement in national ICT policy debates and initiatives with the purpose of placing agriculture at the centre of national ICT policy debates and initiatives. This will also involve looking deeper at the agricultural ICT infrastructure scenario and related issues; and considering more comprehensive and innovative ICTs for agricultural extension initiatives that serve the farmers themselves (e.g. Village knowledge centres, information kiosks, mobile ICT units, web portals, digital data base and networks, rural tele-centres, farmer call centres, mobile telephony, video-conference, offline multimedia CDs, decision support systems, expert systems, innovative community radio and television programmes, open distance learning *etc.*).

**H.4.5. Enhance the use value of the Extension Suite Online.** As a matter of urgency, attend to the developing of appropriate and up to date content for tools like ESO in order to enhance its relevance and use value. Make the content “cutting edge”. Such content improvement should include fruitful consultation with users as Mr. Ndove of Limpopo suggested.

## **H.5. Recommendations on Pillar 4: Accountability and Visibility**

**H.5.1. Find ways of effectively rolling out the Farmer Green Book in the provinces that are currently not doing so:** Considering the high level commitments made on the FGB and the use value it is evidently giving to farmers, it is important that all provinces not yet fully utilizing the tool begin to do it. A way around farmer numbers and logistics has to be found. Given the claimed benefits the FGB is already giving to farmers in provinces using it, it is clear that the FGB is a necessary developmental tool for farmers. The way forward should be guided by already existing key strategic commitments of DAFF. For instance, boosting the smallholder farmer sector has been identified as one of the key components of the overall employment drive, and *the* key component for creating decent work in rural areas. The establishment of new commercially-oriented smallholders features as an important activity in respect of the Delivery Agreement for

Outcome 7, which is defined as “Vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and food security for all”. In particular, the Delivery Agreement for Outcome 7 calls for the establishment of 50 000 smallholder farmers over the current Administration’s term, against the current ‘baseline’ number of about 200 000. In other words, the pursuit of smallholder establishment and support is fundamental to Outcomes 4 and 7 of the government’s Programme of Action, and to the realisation of the New Growth Path. In provinces where the printing and distribution of the FGB is considered as unsustainable because of the numbers involved, a useful approach could be to link the number of smallholder farmers who get the FGB to a % figure that is linked to meeting the targets that have to be met in terms of the Department’s delivery commitments as already specified.

**H.5.2. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.** A nationwide change effort like ERP needs to communicate vigorously and clearly, selling the vision, clarifying pathways of implementation, highlighting and celebrating wins and disseminating emerging best practices. DAFF should seriously consider having a newsletter as such a communication tool. Such communication will also assist in harnessing high-level political support and buy in.

**H.5.3. Institute a service culture audit and ensure a culture of service excellence within Extension and Advisory Services.** Ideally carry out a Service culture Audit and implement recommendations accordingly. Infrastructure alone does not guarantee quality and effective extension services. Review the whole service culture at ground level, ensure that norms and standards inform the whole system development, and ensure that world class service charters have been drawn up and are in place and that the total extension service ethos and practices puts the farmer at the centre. As the Chief Director from Mpumalanga observed, *‘yes, big infrastructural improvement, FGB printed and distributed and being used, digital pens and 3G made available, laptops purchased and provided, transport subsidies processed and Government vehicles offered but these do not do the work, people do, we are sitting with a big challenge- cultural change’*

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## **KEY PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS**

### **ALUM MPOFU –Project Director**

Alum Mpofu is a development strategist specializing in rural development, media, education, communication for change, and multi-stakeholder planning, capacity building, project implementation and evaluation.

Alum Mpofu is Executive Director of Alcinof Resources Management Consultancy providing strategic solutions in a variety of areas including rural development, agricultural development, Capacity building strategies, agribusiness, cooperatives and entrepreneurial development.

Over the last decade he has worked with international organisations like AusAID, gtz, and UNDP on development projects in South Africa and other SADC focusing on capacity building projects in agriculture, local government, media and communication. He was appointed to the Editorial Board of the South African Adult Literacy Cooperation Journal from 1994 – 1995, involved in the analysis of Language Policy Options for the Gauteng Legislature in 1995, also working with USAID / TELP on a project to assess and evaluate the impact of English Second Language Programmes at selected universities and technikons in 1995. In 1994 he was made an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Natal’s Centre for Cultural and Media Studies

From 2003 to 2004 he worked as a consultant on the AusAID funded project, ***Institutional Strengthening of the Department of Agriculture*** (ISDA) before working on the Department of Labour’s Employment and Skills Development Agency (ESDA) initiative. For two years, he was a member of AusAID Quality Assurance Panel for the South African Vocational Training (SAVET) Programme. Apart from other published articles in journals, he was co-editor of a book, with Professor Keyan Tomaselli and Susan Manhando on broadcasting entitled *“Public Service Broadcasting in South Africa: Policy Directions towards 2000”*. He was Manager: Strategic Research

for SABC 2 and part of the SABC- McKinsey Turnaround Strategy Team. Once a CEO of Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation, he has also been engaged by the UNDP as a consultant to the Lesotho Ministry of Broadcasting and was for five years on the Board of the South African Media Monitoring Project.

**JANE GURNEY –Team Leader**

Jane Gurney, a trained and university qualified economist, has experience ranging across various fields, from business and industrial research as well as research amongst key opinion leaders and vast experience in programme impact evaluation and social research. Jane Gurney has been in the research industry since 1973, and brings a wealth of international and local experience to her understanding of the research arena. She uses leading edge technology in research, both in qualitative and in quantitative studies, as well as developing her own techniques.

She is a full member of SAMRA, serving two years Chairman of the Business Division and three years as an elected member to SAMRA Council in charge of the training portfolio. She is also a member of QRCA, an international organisation of Qualitative Research Consultants. She is an associate member of the Market Research Society of the U.K and while there launched and was Chairman of the Telephone Interest Group as part of the MRS for two years. She served on the committee of the Industrial branch of the Institute of Marketing Management. She has an Honours degree in Economics from the University of Essex in the UK and has presented papers on various topics at SAMRA conventions.

**THEMBEKA FUZANI-Project Administrator**

A co director of Alcinof Resources Management, Thembeka has many years of project management and training experience within the agricultural sector, she has worked as a project administrator for the Catholic Bishop Conference, before joining the AUSAID funded South African Vocational and Training Programme (SAVET) as a Project Administrator in 2002. Ever since 2003, she has been engaged with projects in agriculture as a SETA accredited agricultural mentor to smallholder farmers and cooperatives. She has also been engaged as a trainer to government officials and farmers through out the provinces as a trainer in Gender mainstreaming in LandCare and LandCare Management. From 2008 through 2009, Thembeka was the Eastern Cape, North West and Gauteng Province Project Coordinator for a DoA LandCare Awareness Project that was being rolled out throughout the nine provinces. One of her most recent engagement was as a workshop presenter on the effective and efficient utilization of the Farmers Green Book to Extension Officer and smallholder farmer through out the provinces.

**VINCENT SEOKA- Field Manager**

Vincent Seoka is a trained Project Manager and is very experienced in qualitative and quantitative research. Vincent has been in marketing research for over 20 years. Initially he was field manager and moderator for Teddy Langschmidt, working in the early years with Wally Langschmidt, the founder of SAMRA. He left to form Moedi Research Surveys in 1997, which later became Kutu Consulting in 2003. Over the past 20 years, through his experience in conducting and managing various market research projects, he has garnered a wealth of experience with regards to the emerging customer and business market.

Vincent has an understanding of the agricultural sector having conducted a number of surveys in the past for the Department of Agriculture, traveling the country and interviewing farmers, extension officers, representatives of the Provincial Departments of Agriculture and representatives from the Agribusiness sector. He is very well travelled in both rural and urban areas of South Africa. He also speaks all eleven languages in this country fluently. Vincent commands a field complement of well over 100 interviewers that are experienced and well trained and that cover all nine provinces in South Africa. The use of the predominant languages in each of the nine provinces is an inherent feature of the team.

Vincent has worked closely with the Bureau of Market Research, at UNISA, as their BEE partner on a number of government projects, again covering banking for the SMME sector, as well as numerous Customer Satisfaction / Stakeholder Satisfaction studies, Climate and Agricultural Studies and Lifestyle studies. Vincent is a member of the Research Panel of the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) at UNISA.

**TREVOR HANEKOM- STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

Trevor has a B.Com degree and the Graduate Diploma in Market Research (IMM), the SAMRA Diploma administered through the IMM. For many years, Trevor Hanekom was a Managing Director of Rfact, a company that he launched in 2005, providing data & statistical analysis as well as electronic data gathering for the research industry.

Trevor experience in the research industry dates from 1992 as a telephone and field interviewer. Within six months he was promoted to data capturer and soon was heading the data processing department at Management Sciences Group. Trevor has been in the industry for many years. Initially working for Management Sciences group as a field Manager, he later joined Interserve and became a Research Executive. He later joined RPI, heading their data capture and analysis divisions but in 2005 he founded Rfact to service these companies



on an outsourced basis. He is a full member of SAMRA (South African Marketing Research Association) and served as SAMRA Johannesburg Branch Chairman for the two years 2006 and 2007. He is also a Student Member of the IMM.

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