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Norms and Standards for Extension and Advisory Services in Agriculture

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Department of Agriculture

**NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR EXTENSION AND
ADVISORY SERVICES IN AGRICULTURE**

Compiled by
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Foreword

The supreme challenge that faced us ten years ago was to introduce fundamental changes in the political, administrative, and delivery systems that govern the agricultural sector. In addressing this problem, we take the opportunity in presenting the norms and standards for extension and advisory services in Agriculture to promote the delivery of services and address some of the challenges that the present extension and advisory services are still facing.

The lack of a national framework for extension and advisory services created unnecessary confusion with regard to roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders on service delivery. Therefore, there was an urgent need to establish minimum norms and standards for effective extension and advisory services.

We are all aware of the changes that agricultural extension has to undergo, from being a dualistic service to a single amalgamated service, focusing on the needs of both small scale and commercial farmers. The norms and standards are meant to break down the artificial divide between the first and the second economy.

The urgent need (to establish norms and standard) was further echoed by the announcement of the State President (State of the Nation Address, May 2004) to re-establish the agricultural credit scheme, which meant that many farmers will get credit and more pressure will be on those delivering the services through the LRAD (Land redistribution for Agricultural Development) program whom the majority of the beneficiaries lack farming skills or experience, and the CASP (Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program). That announcement marked the re-entry of the State in the rural financial market to provide and broaden access to agricultural financial services. Therefore, we saw it fit that, in-order to broaden access to agriculture, agricultural extension and advisory services need to be reviewed and reformed accordingly.

The beneficiaries of LRAD program have put forward challenges that the present extension and advisory service cannot handle without the guiding principles embedded in the norms and standards.

The agricultural sector is crucial to rural development and contributes significantly to any initiative to alleviate poverty, and for this reason there is a great need for a strong extension and advisory services led by government's operations in partnership with relevant role-players.



THOKO A. DIDIZA
MINISTER: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Overview

I am pleased to submit the Norms and Standards for Extension and Advisory Services in Agriculture to the Minister for approval and tabling at MINMEC. The implementation is with effect from the 2005/06 financial year across all provinces.

The structure of the Norms and Standards

The document is a culmination of protracted discussions within the sector on the current status of Extension Services in RSA, and the need to improve the system. The document is divided into two main sections. Section one gives a brief background of the political, administrative changes in the democratic dispensation and recommendations for the delivery mechanism in the agricultural sector. This sets the basis for articulating appropriate norms and standards.

Section two focuses on the norms and standards to guide the provision of extension and advisory services to all spectra of clients. These norms and standards form the guidelines for the implementation of Agricultural Advisory Service Programme across all provinces.

Focus of Extension and Advisory Services

The challenge for the Advisory Service is to deal with public priority issues, viz. poverty, food security, natural resource management and economic growth. These issues are addressed through national strategic programmes; LRAD, Integrated Food Security Nutrition Programme, CASP and Land Care. Logically these key programmes are the main focus of Extension and Advisory Services. The Norms and Standards are geared towards supporting the successful implementation of these programmes.

Implementation of Agricultural Advisory Service Programme

Given the diversity of our country, the Norms and Standards therefore recognizes different approaches to organize, plan and implement the advisory services as the situation may demand, but conforming to the national Norms and Standards. The planning at district and local municipalities need to be aligned with the Integrated Development Planning (IDPs).

Accessibility of information and knowledge support to all clients and staff is given priority. The advisory services will take advantage of technological facilities like Gateway and internet and Community Centers to make information available to clients. As part of ensuring knowledge support and transfer, a mentorship programme for land and agrarian reform beneficiaries is recommended for implementation in the provinces.

The delivery of advisory support is highly depended on human resource capacity and finance. There is an urgent need to improve the human resource in terms of competence and skills and qualifications to render high quality service to our clients. The upgrading of competence and skills programmes must be designed based on needs assessment. The extension officers are encouraged to become professionals and experts in their fields and rewarded accordingly for excellent performance.

The provincial departments of agriculture are charged with ensuring adequate budget allocation for implementing these Norms and Standards.

Partnerships and collaboration networks with all relevant stakeholders are necessary for successful implementation of the Norms and Standards. The minimum roles of the principal stakeholders are

clearly defined to reform the Advisory Services. In brief the Department of Agriculture (DoA) will mainly do the monitoring and evaluation; the PDAs will fund and implement; ARC will be involved in technology development and transfer through the advisory service as intermediary; the private sector is encouraged to get much involved in specialized support to black farmers within the AgriBEE process; the academic institutions are required to revitalize their curriculum and offer accredited in-service training to both farmers and extension officers.

The year 2005 is set for the implementation of the Agricultural Advisory Programme based on norms and standards across all provinces. Let us prepare to implement and serve our country with diligence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke that curves upwards at the end.

MASIPHULA MBONGWA
DIRECTOR GENERAL: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PART A. BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

The agricultural sector is crucial to rural development and contributes significantly to any initiative to alleviate poverty. For this reason there is a great need for strong extension and advisory services led by government's operations in partnership with relevant role-players. During the past ten years, agricultural extension in South Africa has undergone fundamental change from a dualistic service (separate services for commercial and small-scale farmers) to a single amalgamated service, focusing on the needs of both the previously disadvantaged small-scale farmers and the large-scale commercial farmers.

The democratisation of South Africa since 1994 introduced fundamental changes in the policy, administrative and delivery mechanisms and systems for government services to conform to the new Constitution. In the agricultural sector, this process led to the development of a White Paper on Agriculture (1995), which encapsulated the strategic transformation imperatives through the captivating simple acronym of BATAT (Broadening Access to Agriculture Thrust). The objectives of BATAT are to design and establish mechanisms for broadening access to agriculture for previously underserved farmers in terms of their needs for financial services, human resource development, technology development, delivery systems and marketing services. The BATAT continues to this day to be the agricultural sector's guiding perspective, and is the foundation of a vision of 'equitable access and participation in a globally competitive sector that contributes to community development, income generation, employment creation, food security and a better life for all in a sustainable manner'. Through the BATAT, the need for total reorientation of agricultural extension services was recognized by the realization that:

- The delivery system is the key to the transformation of the small-scale disadvantaged agricultural sector of South Africa, and
- Appropriate advice must be offered to farmers efficiently and regularly.

It is government policy to broaden access to services, including access to agricultural extension services. In its current form, the agricultural extension service presents serious problems in respect of efficiency and relevance. There is thus a need to review and reform it urgently in terms of the effectiveness of its structure and relevance of its content and focus. The provinces have a responsibility to strengthen their extension services, but are currently experiencing constraints and pressures on their ability to provide effective extension and advisory services to farming communities.

The DoA has embarked on a search for an appropriate model of extension appropriate for South African conditions through a commissioned study, with financial assistance from the Netherlands Government. The study recommended no specific single extension model for South Africa, but identified important principles considered fundamental to forming the guideline framework for extension approaches. The study engaged various key participants in extension services from the nine provinces, and considered various inputs reflecting constraints to, and success in the provision of services to farmers. Different approaches to extension were analyzed. These are broadly categorized into perspectives that consider extension as a form of education, being proactive in nature and focusing on future problems that farmers might encounter; and on the other hand perspectives that consider extension merely as the provision of advice in response to farmers' problems. The report recommends a Participatory Programmed Extension Approach (PPEA) for South Africa, for which five programmes are proposed: Extension planning and projects, Extension linkage and coordination, Knowledge and support, Education and training, and Monitoring and evaluation. These recommendations are incorporated in these norms and standards.

2. Why norms and standards

The development of norms and standards has become a matter of priority for the DoA since a number of problems and challenges with regard to the coordination of extension and advisory services need to be addressed urgently to enhance and maintain the required pace of rural development. The lack of a national framework for extension and advisory services creates unnecessary confusion with regard to the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders on service delivery. There is thus an urgent need to establish minimum norms and standards for effective extension and advisory services within the nine provinces of South Africa.

The intended result of this document is to set norms and standards to guide the agricultural sector in the provision of services, particularly extension and advisory services based on broad government policies and goals, as well as on the needs of the different stakeholders, with due consideration of the present government structures in the agricultural domain. The historical view of extension is exclusive to those personnel designated 'extension agents /officers'. A large number of services rendered by a range of subject matter specialists, veterinary surgeons, animal health technicians, agribusiness advisors, consultants, Non-Governmental Organisations etc, all of which provide important and critical services to farmers, have not been recognized in this context. Recognition of the entire spectrum of services being rendered to farmers therefore provides a basis for inclusion in this approach. Norms and standards thus become necessary for the provision of service by any advisor to farmers; hence the appellation 'extension and advisory services'.

There is however a need to differentiate between extension and advisory services, as the two have different meanings and interpretations. There is no single definition of extension applicable to all situations. In general, extension refers to a systematic process of working with farmers or communities to help them acquire relevant and useful agriculture or related knowledge and skills to increase farm productivity, competitiveness and sustainability. In practice it is a continuum, ranging from the narrow technology transfer that brings changes in farming practices without taking into account the overall societal perspectives, to advisory, education and human development where it takes on critical public priority issues (e.g. food security, poverty alleviation, environmental degradation and social equity).

The advisory service, which is very much part of extension, is normally provided by subject matter specialists, private organisations or firms to support commercial interests. It is commonly practised where agriculture is highly commercialised or farmers have attained a high degree of competence and are able to articulate their demand for services and approach extension officers or advisors for advice.

The goal of setting norms and standards is to contribute towards achievement of the vision of 'a united and prosperous agricultural sector' by enabling participants and clients to acquire the necessary skills and technologies for efficient and productive farming. The norms and standards will also facilitate attainment of the Department's mission through:

- Improved access to agriculture support services (information, finance, inputs, regulatory services, technical expertise, markets, etc) which will create an enabling environment for improved agricultural productivity;
- Endowing farmers with skills and knowledge for ensuring sustainable resource management;
- Facilitation of access to new technologies and awareness thereof;
- Enhancement of communication channels with farmers and farmer organizations, mentors and advisors.

3. Objectives

The main objective of setting norms and standards is to reform the extension and advisory services in South Africa. The specific objectives are to:

- Improve the efficiency, relevance and cost effectiveness of publicly funded agricultural extension and advisory services;
- Promote a participatory approach to agricultural extension and advisory services, and to recognize the entire spectra of participants in the provision of agricultural services;
- Promote and implement the value chain approach to ensure holistic support services.

To achieve these objectives, the extension and advisory services should undertake the following specific functions:

- Facilitate access to extension and advisory services that lead to sustainable income generation by clients;
- Provide and facilitate access to agricultural information for improved planning and decision making;
- Facilitate access to technology and, where possible, provide such technologies;
- Provide and facilitate access to advice on sustainable (including conservation of natural resources) agricultural production;
- Provide and facilitate advice on skills development in agriculture;
- Strengthen institutional arrangements (partnerships, restructuring, corporatisation, funding, establish new entity/ties) for the effective delivery of services.

4. Clients

The client base for agricultural extension and advisory services is as outlined in the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP). The priority focus will be on subsistence and household food production; small-scale farmers and land and agrarian reform beneficiaries; and large-scale commercial farmers. Advisors, extension agents/officers and mentors should therefore be trained to provide these clients (see Table 1) with support envisaged under the six pillars of CASP, viz. Information and Knowledge Management; Technical and Advisory Assistance; Regulatory Services; Training and Capacity Building; Marketing and Business Development; On- and Off-farm Infrastructure.

Table 1. The categories of clients and the support needed

Category of Clients	Description	Support needed
The hungry	Primarily the responsibility of the Department of Social Development	Provision of starter packs and advice during food emergencies and disasters
Subsistence and household food producers	Mainly produce for own consumption; may produce small marketable surplus	Support under the six pillars of CASP
Small scale farmers and LRAD beneficiaries	Some produce marketable surplus; some have access to own land or production rights in communal areas (arable or and grazing); some are land reform beneficiaries	Support under the six pillars of CASP
Commercial farmers	Have full access to goods and services (land, information, inputs, markets) to farm effectively	Specialized advisory services, ARC, private sector support, AGIS and available information

PART B. NORMS AND STANDARDS

1. Support programmes requiring extension/advisory services

The DoA recently developed several agriculture-related development programmes to respond to urgent priority issues such as food security, poverty alleviation, food safety, economic growth and environmental conservation. These issues are captured under the following strategic programmes, which will be the main focus of extension: Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS), the Land and Agrarian Reform Programme, the Integrated Food Security Nutrition Programme (IFSNP), the National Land Care Programme, Marketing and Entrepreneurship Development and CASP. Successful implementation of these programmes depends largely on efficient and effective extension and advisory services. This document provides norms and standards for extension and advisory services in support of these key programmes.

2. Guiding principles

The extension support and advisory services will facilitate the implementation of government priority programmes guided by the following principles:

- ***Demand-driven:*** Extension must respond to targeted potential entrepreneurs/farmers' needs while maintaining professional standards.
- ***Relevant:*** Advice and technologies must be applicable within the opportunity realm of resources and market environment of the clients.
- ***Pluralistic, flexible and coordinated extension:*** As many service providers as possible should be encouraged to become involved and contribute towards agricultural development. With many service providers, there is a need for proper coordination to prevent negative impact on the welfare of clients and duplication or working at cross-purposes. The extension and advisory services must be sufficiently flexible to respond to the miscellaneous and ever-changing needs occasioned by changing socio-economic environment.
- ***Equity:*** Agricultural extension and advisory services must go to those who really need them, especially the subsistence small-scale farmers, women and the disabled to promote equity, though not necessarily excluding commercial farmers.
- ***Sound governance:*** All agricultural extension and advisory services projects/ programmes and structures must have competent personnel with clear planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and financial accountability procedures.
- ***Effective monitoring and evaluation:*** The projects/activities must be results-oriented and problem solving with monitoring and evaluation built in, and must consider social, economic and environmental impacts.
- ***Human and social capital development:*** The extension and Advisory services must build the capacity of farmers and stakeholders. Emphasis must be on developing targeted and comprehensive capacity towards problem solving, ownership and sustainability of the clients.
- ***Participatory:*** Clients/beneficiaries must be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of their projects in a manner that promotes ownership and empowerment.
- ***Sustainability:*** All extension and advisory services must provide advice and information that meets the criteria of sustainability, viz. (a) productivity, (b) risks reduction, (c) protection of the environment, (d) economic viability, (e) social acceptability, (f) technical feasibility, and (g) commercial feasibility.
- ***Cooperative governance:*** Extension and advisory services are concurrent functions to be regulated and controlled under the framework of cooperative governance. Operational authority and responsibility are allocated to national, provincial as well as local levels of governance consistent with organizational competences and efficient use of resources.
- ***Priority focused:*** The extension service should be guided by government strategic priorities.

- **Accountability:** There should be a system of communication with, and evaluation by clients on agreed deliverables by extension and advisory service and other service providers. The provision of extension and advisory services must be customer focused.
- **High quality advisory service:** The extension and advisory service must provide high quality service by incorporating innovations and entrepreneurship into its programmes.
- **Batho-Pele:** There must be compliance to the eight Batho-Pele principles in dealing with clients and execution of development efforts.

3. Implementation guidelines

3.1 Extension approaches

There is no single extension model or approach suited to all situations in South Africa. Approaches and methods must be adapted to local situations and conform to the above principles. All of the following strategies are valid for extension, but the choice and combination(s) for implementation must be dictated by the prevailing conditions.

3.1.1 Technology transfer

This approach is relevant and important in many respects, as it is an integral part of extension, although only a part of the extension process. The ARC, PDAs, development institutes, academic institutions and private sector have a responsibility not only to develop innovations, but also to diffuse them. The following broad guidelines are promoted:

- Collaborative diagnosis of farmers' conditions and needs should be the basis for setting priorities and planning research, using informal and formal surveys, meetings, field days, rapid rural appraisal, conducting on-farm trials, dissemination of innovations, evaluation and reconsideration.
- Training of extension officers to increase their capacity to transfer relevant technologies.
- On-the-farm training of farmers to speed up adoption.

3.1.2 Participatory approach

The participatory approach builds on farmers' own capacities and the ability to organize them into groups to identify needs and priorities, plan extension programmes/projects, implement and evaluate. This approach is recommended for implementing a multi-sectoral, client-focused, coordinated, demand-driven and participatory extension service. The following are the broad principles of the participatory approach;

- **Community participation and involvement**

As a matter of democratic principle, clients need to participate in all decisions affecting them. Their participation must be substantive and significantly impact the outcomes, not involve just attendance of meetings. This will promote ownership, increase demand for services and empower or strengthen clients.

- **Needs-based development**

Projects and/or programmes will be based on needs identification, assessment and prioritisation in collaboration with farmers/communities or their representatives. The establishment of multidisciplinary project teams is necessary.

- ***Institutional linkages and structures for participatory extension***

The approach relies on partnerships and networking. The extension officer and the clients jointly identify problems, opportunities and potential solutions. Since the extension officer cannot solve all problems, he/she acts as facilitator in building partnerships with private sector, research, local municipalities, farmer organisations, markets (inputs and outputs) and credit institutions to address problems.

In order to implement participatory extension and advisory services, provinces will need to facilitate the establishment of structures representing farmers. In some cases existing structures (e.g. farmers' unions or organisations) can be used. Such entities should link up with formal structures like district municipalities to act as overarching or umbrella organisations, taking responsibility for development and the initiating and commissioning of projects. Flexibility and adaptation to meet situation specific circumstances is important.

- ***Coordinated extension and advisory services***

With a multiplicity of service providers, coordination is essential to ensure quality and adherence to minimum norms and standards. The provinces should coordinate (through a forum) the various types of service providers linking with the community institutions (e.g. local municipalities or farmer organizations).

- ***Monitoring, evaluation and accountability***

The monitoring and evaluation criteria should include as much evidence as possible. Indicators should be set for inputs, activities, participation, client reactions, knowledge gain, attitudinal change, practice adoption or behaviour change, and impacts on social, economic and environment.

The results of evaluation must be communicated to stakeholders and clients to enhance future support of extension and advisory services.

3.1.3 Advisory approach

The advisory approach is easily achievable in the highly commercial farming sector where farmers have achieved a high level of competence, are able to identify their own problems and are innovators. The private sector is encouraged to offer this service because of resources availability and efficient service delivery processes. The PDAs will offer and facilitate the provision of specialized advisory services on a needs basis, especially in financial planning, marketing and research.

3.1.4 Project approach

The approach of 'Managing by Projects' is a powerful instrument whereby planned, targeted extension actions are introduced. All funded projects have to be registered, with clearly defined objectives, action plans, timelines, deliverables, key performance indicators and resource assignment and execution responsibilities.

Within these broad approaches, provinces should develop their situation-specific implementation strategies in conformation with norms and standards. The diversity of farming practices and systems should be considered in developing appropriate implementation strategies at provincial level. These will need to be aligned with the Integrated Development Planning (IDPs) of the municipalities and priorities at both district and local levels.

3.2 Accessibility of information and knowledge support

Extension and advisory services must use public facilities such as libraries, Gateway, post offices, AGIS, Multi-Purpose Community Centres and other sources of information to make information available to farmers on services and products with minimal effort. Information will be accessed through web sites and physical walk-in community centres or local extension offices manned by information/knowledge officers.

3.3 Funding of extension and advisory services

Funding of agricultural extension and advisory service should be provided for within the budget of the provincial departments of agriculture. Government will fund the advisory service, especially to poorly resourced clients, while farmers and members of producer organisations with the ability to pay for services will be encouraged to seek and pay for services received from the private sector. Where possible outsourcing, co-financing, the contracting of services and private funding should be implemented to solve the problem of fiscal sustainability. Full-scale application of privatization is not under consideration because government policy is to ensure equity and meet the need to support the many clients who rely on the public service, and who have no means to pay for private services. However, integration of the private sector into the public extension and advisory services is encouraged and promoted.

3.4 Human resource

3.4.1 Competence and skills required

Individuals who render agricultural extension and advisory services interact directly with the public. This requires that such individuals understand the importance of such interactions with respect to the way they impact upon service delivery and the image of government. It is therefore expected of every individual who performs the duties of agricultural extension and advisory services to demonstrate professionalism. This may require specialized knowledge and intensive preparation, including instruction in skills and methods as well as in the scientific, historical or scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods, maintained by force of organization or concerted opinion. To this end, competence is critical to ensuring high standards and exemplary conduct in the provision of agricultural extension and advisory services.

Agricultural extension and advisory services should be rendered, at the minimum, with a common understanding of competence as defined in the Public Service Regulations, 2001: as '... the blend of knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitude that a person can apply in the work environment, which indicates a person's ability to meet the requirements of a specific post.' All providers of agricultural extension and advisory services must accordingly be competent in the following areas:

- **Client Orientation and Customer Focus:** They must be willing and able to deliver services effectively and efficiently in order to put the spirit of customer service (Batho-Pele) into practice (good inter-personal relations are a requirement);
- **Communication:** They must be able to exchange information and ideas in a clear and concise manner appropriate to the audience in order to explain, persuade, convince and influence others to achieve the desired outcomes;
- **Project Management:** They must be able to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate specific activities in order to deliver the desired outputs;
- **Knowledge Management:** They must be able to promote the generation and sharing of knowledge and learning in order to enhance the productivity of the farmer/s (this shall include competence in a particular specialized field of study such as crop production, livestock production, horticulture, farm business economics, extension, land use planning, etc);

- **Service Delivery Innovation:** They must be able to explore and implement new ways of delivering services that contribute to the improvement of productivity of the farmer/s;
- **Problem Solving and Analysis:** They must be able to systematically identify, analyze and resolve existing and anticipated problems in order to reach optimum solutions in a timely manner (ability to conduct needs assessments with clients and stakeholders leading to desired outcomes, including the ability to design, develop and execute specific programmes or projects with minimal supervision);
- **Honesty and Integrity:** They must be able to display and build the highest standards of ethical and moral conduct in order to promote confidence and trust in agricultural extension and advisory services; and
- **People Management and Empowerment:** They must be able to manage and encourage diverse groups of people, optimize their outputs and effectively provide leadership in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

A person employed as an agricultural extension or advisory services officer at all levels shall be required to have a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent in training and experience; a strong commitment to higher education; and the willingness to assume responsibility and demonstrate competence.

The extension officers or advisors who wish to follow the specialist stream (e.g. agronomy) must have higher degrees in the technical field and are encouraged to belong to organizations that will help them to further their knowledge or expertise. Those who wish to be in the extension stream must have higher degrees in extension and must register with the recognized relevant professional body. Any person promoted or appointed to a management position must have a post graduate qualification in extension management or otherwise in accordance with the Department of Public Service Administration regulations.

3.4.2 Human resource development

Agricultural extension and advisory services are dynamic professions that constantly change in response to changing policy environment and clientele needs or requirements. Extension and advisory services therefore need a cadre of well-trained, dedicated and motivated staff skilled in agricultural production (scientific and technical expertise), business (economics, marketing and financial management expertise), extension and communication techniques. It is the farmers, not technological intervention, that make production and productivity happen. The provision of effective training through development programmes is therefore in the long term interest of the agricultural extension and advisory service. The training needs of extension officers must be continuously assessed and in-service training implemented accordingly.

Table 2. Indicative titles and qualifications for agricultural extension and advisory services.

Suggested titles	Educational qualifications (minimum requirements)
Agricultural Community Worker	Standard 10 + in-service training in agricultural studies
Agricultural Development Officer	Standard 10 + 3 or more years post matric agricultural diploma
Agricultural Advisors	B Tech/Bachelors/Hons degree in Agriculture
Subject Matter Specialist	BSc (Hons) degree in Agriculture
Extension Coordinators	Qualifications must be in accordance with the DPSA

Table 3. Statistical distribution of agricultural extension practitioners according to function and educational qualifications (n=1082)

Function	Certificate or Diploma		Advanced Dipl. B.Tech or B-degree		BSc, Hons.		Masters, MSc, PhD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Agricultural Technicians	16	80	2	10	2	10	-	-
Extension Workers	519	77.9	101	15.2	40	6	6	0.9
Extension workers and Supervisors	135	71.4	38	20.1	11	5.8	5	2.6
Supervisors and Managers	61	47.7	26	20.3	18	14.1	23	18
Support Services	23	23.7	24	24.7	42	43.8	8	8.2
Other	18	56.3	8	25.0	5	25.6	1	3.1
TOTAL	722	66.7	199	18.4	118	10.9	43	3.9

On average, an extension officer has three years of post-matriculation agricultural diploma qualification, which is inadequate for equipping the officer with the requisite skills and competencies to achieve the desired outputs. The current capacity of agricultural extension officers in this category in all the provinces constitutes 68% of the total extension personnel. The high number of officers with low levels of qualifications and poor competence suggest a need for capacity building programmes. Urgent steps must be taken to implement human resource development programmes to improve upon the skills of the majority of agricultural extension and advisory services officers. As a target, a minimum of 60 % of agricultural extension and advisory services officers must have the minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree by 2010.

The upgrading of competence and skills programmes must be designed to shift the qualifications, skills and competence of those who will be providing the services from that of agricultural community worker to that of specialist. Similarly, specialists must continue to be encouraged towards professional development programmes that will make them experts within their fields without necessarily becoming managers. Clearly remuneration must be de-linked from the need to join the management echelon.

Provincial departments of agriculture must develop and implement incentive programmes for specialists in agricultural extension and advisory services. The central principle should be that specialists in agricultural extension and advisory services do not have to be managers to earn higher remuneration packages. Such incentive programmes must be broad and may incorporate considerations of geographic distribution, opportunities for sabbaticals, and grants for participating in research projects, to name but a few. All incentive programmes must be in accordance with norms and standards set by the Department of Public Service and Administration.

3.4.3 Training and capacity building

3.4.3.1 Mentorship

The agricultural sector has experienced an increasing demand for extension and advisory services to facilitate agricultural development. The majority of the beneficiaries of agrarian reform programmes lack farming experience and skills. It is therefore essential that appropriate training and dedicated support be made available immediately to these clients.

The use of mentors will provide hands-on experience, counselling, moral support, and adaptation of information into practical recommendations. However, it will not replace the extension service, but augment it. The PDAs will organize their own mentorship programmes based on the need according to the existent policy /framework guidelines.

The minimum requirements and standards for mentoring are that, a mentor must:

- Be available to meet the mentee on a regular basis;
- Have appropriate practical experience;
- Have good personal relations with farmers;
- Be willing to help the mentee;
- Maintain a record of the interactions showing the progress of the mentee;
- Be willing to undergo orientation on the mentoring programme;
- Accept that mentoring is not a business or full-time employment, but is offered on a negotiated fixed term period;
- Be prepared to accept nominal compensation for travelling costs incurred.

Where experienced and/or successful black farmers exist, they should be encouraged to serve as mentors.

The mentorship programme already in existence in government will be implemented for new employees in agricultural extension and advisory services. Similarly, all other role players must include mentorship in their programmes of agricultural extension and advisory services. All mentorship participants must meet the minimum norms and standards set by the Department of Agriculture for the sector.

3.4.3.2 Farmer training

Training programmes should target farmers on technical, organisational, operational, marketing and financial/budget planning to ensure improved and accountable performance. Farmers should be encouraged to undergo modular training in all relevant modules with credible and accredited service providers.

3.4.4. Recruitment, career path and staff retention

The purpose of the proposed career path is to create a cadre of dedicated, skilled agricultural extension and advisory service officers with high competence and professionalism. This should instil pride in the profession of agricultural extension and advisory service while improving service delivery. In the public service, the impact should be a reduction in the frequency and proportion of officials who exit the system. To achieve such a system, a number of interventions must be implemented.

Firstly, all agricultural extension and advisory service officers must have clear job descriptions, performance standards and regular appraisals on an annual basis. Secondly, such officers must be

encouraged to perform their duties in accordance with their field of academic specialization, particularly with full registration from the relevant professional body. Thirdly, good performance must be recognized and rewarded in accordance with Public Service Regulations and norms and standards set by the Department of Public Service and Administration. In this regard, excellent performance should be rewarded as prescribed by the Department of Public Service and Administration. Reward for excellence in performance must avoid promotion to the management echelons. A variety of incentives for excellent performance must be utilized for all agricultural extension and advisory service officers (e.g. sabbaticals, grants for further education, awards, remuneration, etc).

3.4.5 Resources and administrative support

Adequate back-up support for field-level extension and advisory staff to enable them to provide the necessary service to clients should include:

- Suitable transport;
- Adequate audio-visual aid facilities;
- Access to internet and up-to-date reference information (linked to AGIS);
- Tools and equipment necessary for demonstrations and training;
- Administrative support and equipment;
- The necessary facilities in the extension office (furniture, telephones, Gateway facility, etc);
- Well-researched and up-to-date production manuals.

3.4.6 Extension Agent to Farmer Ratios

A common challenge for extension, which is second to the inadequacy of financial resources, relates to the lack of capacity in all nine provinces. The demand for advisory and/or extension services varies according to the nature of the farming practices (i.e. crop farming, livestock farming or mixed farming systems involving both crops and livestock) and farm size. The extension: farmer ratios often depend on the specifics of an operation and its state of advancement, and the intensity of support programmes. The communal farmers with a high number of producers on a subsistence level are currently serviced through a low extension: farmer ratio, while market oriented large scale farmers are serviced through a high ratio. In order to ensure the provision of advisory services as envisaged under the CASP clientele base, there is a need to recognize farmers' performance and available resources in the determination and allocation of extension officers to farmers. This should lead to the improvement of skills and retention of institutional memory while imparting knowledge that leads farmers towards profitable enterprises. The following figures are a rough indication and estimates of what the extension: farmer ratios should be, but local conditions, circumstances and realities must dictate the application of ratios.

Each province must decide on the relevant ratios according to CASP clientele categorization taking into account local conditions, circumstances and variations.

Table 4. Proposed Agricultural Extension Officer: Farmer Ratios

Scale of operation	Nature of operation/farming		
	Crops	Livestock	Mixed
Subsistence and household	1:400	1:500	1:500
Semi-commercial	1:250	1:250	1:300
Market oriented and large scale commercial	1:500	1:500	1:500

3.5 Institutional mechanisms for delivery of advisory services

Partnerships for agricultural development and the realization of the vision of the agricultural sector, namely, 'a united and prosperous agricultural sector' require the meaningful participation of a wide range of stakeholders. The principal actors for the attainment of this vision are national, provincial, local governments, farmer organizations, other statutory bodies such as public entities, SETAs, and the private sector. The minimum roles and responsibilities of different role players are outlined below, and should be regarded as norms and standards to be adhered to.

3.5.1 Public Sector

The division of functions between the Central Government (DoA), Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDAs), Agricultural Development Centres (ADCs) and Local Extension Offices (LEOs) are highlighted. Coordination and collaboration between the principal stakeholders is essential to provide high quality service.

3.5.1.1 Department of Agriculture

The main responsibility of the Department of Agriculture will be to:

- Develop norms and standards for extension and advisory services;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of norms and standards in extension and advisory services;
- Review norms and standards on an ongoing basis;
- Create an enabling environment for equitable participation in advisory services;
- Set norms and standards for all service providers, mentors, extension offices (standard equipment) and officers (level of training and qualifications);
- Facilitate availability of referenced material obtainable through AGIS and other sources;
- Maintain a national database with inputs from provinces.

3.5.1.2 Provincial Departments of Agriculture

Provincial Departments of Agriculture have the responsibility to ensure the success and productivity of the agricultural sector, and hence the responsibility to provide services, in particular extension and advisory services. The main responsibility of the Provincial Departments of Agriculture will be to:

- Contribute towards the development of norms and standards;
- Interpret and implement the norms and standards in extension and advisory services;
- Allocate funds for agricultural extension and advisory services as per activity, including support programmes;
- Build capacity of the personnel (advisors, mentors and extension agents);
- Strengthen and empower farmer organizations;
- Contribute towards the national database;
- Ensure dedicated capacity to perform the auditing function;
- Consolidate reports from district municipalities;
- Report to clients.

3.5.1.3 District Services

The roles to be executed at the district levels will be to:

- Manage and coordinate the provision of agricultural extension and advisory services within the district;
- Budget and allocate funds for agricultural advisory services and extension;

- Maintain a database of all clients eligible for agricultural extension or advisory services;
- Liaise with the district municipalities and stakeholders to enhance inter-sectoral development efforts at district municipality level;
- Consolidate reports from local municipalities;
- Report to clients.

3.5.1.4 Local Municipality Agricultural Development Centres (LMADCs)

LMADCs serve as the primary service delivery and focal point of agricultural extension and advisory services and should be situated in each local municipality. Each LMADC should therefore provide the following agricultural services:

- Liaise with local municipality and other stakeholders to enhance inter-sectoral development efforts at local municipality level;
- Ensure effective and collaborative efforts in the assessment and identification of farmer/client needs and constraints;
- Mobilize resources and coordinate their utilization;
- Implement government client support programmes (e.g. food security);
- Develop work plans to optimize resource allocation and utilization;
- Maintain a database of clients eligible for agricultural extension and advisory services;
- Consolidate reports from the local extension offices;
- Ensure dedicated capacity for monitoring and evaluation;
- Report to clients.

3.5.1.5 Local Extension Office

Each LMADC office must have extension offices at appropriate localities, either at ward or service area level, where services will be readily accessible to clients with minimal effort. The local extension office must adhere to the following prescripts:

- Be staffed by one or more advisors/officers who provide useful, practical, researched-based information to clients;
- Have basic operational equipment and communication facilities (furniture, telephones, computing facility with access to Gateway facility, AGIS, etc);
- Provide services to the entire clientele within the service area;
- Link and work closely with service centres and multi-purpose community centres;
- Liaise with community leadership (e.g. councillors and tribal authority) and other stakeholders to enhance service provision at service area or ward level;
- Have a variety of resource materials (e.g. information material in electronic and hard copies) relevant to local conditions;

Each local development officer, community worker, advisor and subject matter specialist must generate reports on a regular basis covering or reflecting issues of concern to farmers and proposed interventions.

3.5.2 Farmers and producer organizations (Commodity groups)

Farmer organizations exist at national and provincial level to support agricultural development. To create partnerships to deliver on the vision of a united and prosperous agricultural sector, strong, representative, self-reliant and dynamic farmer organizations that include farmer associations, groups, and cooperatives are required. A clear strategy for strengthening especially those representing small farmers is important so that they are able to:

- Offer training and advisory services to their members (e.g. on a contract basis);
- Represent members' interests in expressing demand for services;
- Make a contribution to policy formulation;
- Enable joint planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of advisory support at provincial and district levels.

3.5.3 Private sector

Government recognizes the essential role that private sector organizations play in the partnership for a united and prosperous agricultural sector. Partnership between public and private sector extension is essential to overcome the effects of limited resources, to meet the growing demand for food and to sustain the natural resource base. The private sector should play the following roles:

- Contribute to AgriBEE by developing and implementing empowerment strategies. Such empowerment strategies will include amongst others the following:
 - Human resource and skills development of black people;
 - Investment in enterprises that are owned and managed by black people;
- Offer assistance in the form of agricultural inputs and services;
- Provide holistic and effective specialized support, especially to LRAD beneficiaries;
- Have a voice in policy formulation;
- Be part of joint planning and implementation of advisory service projects/programmes aimed at small-scale farmer commercialization (e.g. dairy, irrigation, etc).

3.5.4 Agricultural Research Council (ARC)

Research is crucial to maintain the sustainability of agricultural productivity. However, ensuring that technological innovations flow from the researchers to producer/farmers is a challenge for the extension agent and advisor. Therefore, the link between researchers-extension-farmers must be strengthened. The ARC must actively interact with farmers and extension agents/advisors in transferring the technologies that they generate. Specifically, the ARC must ensure that:

- Research and technology development programmes are planned in collaboration with support services and farmers;
- Technical backup is provided to farmers and extension officers;
- The training of trainers (agricultural technicians) is implemented on all new technologies on an ongoing basis;
- AgriBEE initiatives are supported through appropriate technology development and transfer;
- The knowledge generated is made widely available and accessible in electronic or appropriate format at community centres countrywide;
- Technologies relevant to all categories of clients (CASP) and agro-ecological zones are generated.

The following factors¹ should be considered in the development of technologies:

- They should be low cost and affordable;
- They should ensure sustainable environmental management;
- They should use available local resources;
- Interventions should be area specific.

¹Adapted from the Report of the BATAT Technology Design Team (1995)

3.5.5 Academic and agricultural development institutions

3.5.5.1 Colleges and universities

Academic institutions with agricultural and extension training components are vital for building and sustaining capacity in the agricultural advisory services. These institutions need to revitalize their curricula to develop well-trained extension officers and advisors able to respond effectively to the challenges facing extension and advisory services, viz. food security, economic growth, globalization and environmental conservation.

They also need to contribute to the knowledge support system of government (e.g. Gateway) and offer accredited in-service training to extension and advisory staff and train farmers through their community-outreach programmes. Academic institutions should conduct research for technology development and transfer.

Cooperation with the AgriSETA should be established to coordinate training for emerging farmers.

3.5.5.2 Development institutes

Development institutes play an important role in conducting research on technology development and transfer, and the provision of specialized support to commercial and small-scale farmers. An example is Grootfontein Agricultural Development Institute (GADI). These institutes should be supported and strengthened to become centres of excellence in their areas of expertise.

3.6 Communication implications

The policy will be communicated to all stakeholders through workshops and the distribution of printed copies. It will also be made available and accessible through the PDAs and DoA's website addresses.

4. Appendices

4.1 Appendix A. Definitions

Accountability: Institutionalised responsiveness to those who are affected by one's actions.

Advisory services: It assumes an actively problem-solving farmer who seeks advice from outside when s/he and the immediate colleagues cannot solve a problem or when outside sources seem to offer useful ideas. The extension advisor does not visit the farmer to promote one or a few component technologies, but on request.

Approach: Approaches are linked to certain values. They describe how certain issues are dealt with and what 'perspectives' and 'values' are taken into account.

Co-financing: The participation of users in providing services and infrastructure through monetary and labour contributions

Demand-driven: According to what the community, economy and the problem owners need.

Equity: Ensuring consistent and impartial access to benefits for all targeted recipients in accordance with 'the rules of the game'. Equity does not mean equal access.

Extension: Extension is a knowledge and information support function for people engaged in agriculture, and has a broader role than just providing advice (advisory).

Functions: Specific activities which a department undertakes to deliver goods and services in order to achieve its goals.

Gateway: A one-stop service where details can be obtained on a wide range of government services. It has three access points, viz. a physical walk-in centre, telephone and web site.

Guiding principles: Are intended to inform or shape all subsequent decision-making, and also provide normative criteria allowing for acceptance, rejection or modification of policy interventions and activities.

Participatory approach: It involves farmers and communities directly in defining and achieving their own development goals. Farmers have to take the lead and think about their own problems and their solutions. The extension officers become facilitators of the development process.

Mentor: Experienced and trusted advisor.

Mission: An overall strategy to achieve the vision.

Monitoring: Regular checking to see how a programme is working.

Objectives: Specific outcomes and/or outputs (tactics) as necessary steps to achieving the goal.
Basic Research: Focuses on the acquisition of new understanding but is not directed to problems.

Diagnostic research: Focuses on the acquisition of new understanding that is problem directed.

Applied research: Draws on the world body of scientific knowledge in developing new technologies in

response to identified problems.

Adaptive research: Is directed at the testing and adaptation of new technologies, and is focused on specific environments and considers the interaction and performance of technology under specific environments.

Service area level: A community or area served by an extension agent and usually encompassing a few sub-communities (villages in the case of traditional communities, and farmer associations in the commercial associations).

Stakeholder: Any individual who has a 'stake' or interest in the performance of the organisation, e.g. local councillors and legislators.

Strategies: Are the 'translation' of concepts into adapted frameworks which are more practical and situation-specific. Implementation depends on the method chosen.

Vision: A description of the desired situation.

4.2 Appendix B. Acronyms

LMADCs	Local Municipality Agricultural Development Centres
AGIS	Agricultural Geographic Information System
AgriBEE	Agricultural Black Economic Empowerment Programme
AgriSETA	Agricultural Sector Training Authority
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
BATAT	Broadening Access to Agriculture Thrust
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DPSA	Department of Public Service Administration
GADI	Grootfontein Agricultural Development Institute
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
IDPs	Integrated Development Planning
IFSNP	Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Programme
ISRDS	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
LEO	Local Extension Office
LRAD	Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
PDA	Provincial Departments of Agriculture
PMDS	Performance Management Development System

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