

Annual report

Performance of the Extension Recovery Plan

2010/11



**agriculture,
forestry & fisheries**

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Acronyms

AES	Agricultural Extension Services
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
DEXCO	Departmental Executive Committee
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
ESP	Extension Service Providers
ESO	Extension Suite Online
GNP	Gross National Product
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FET	Further Education and Training
HET	Higher Education and Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITCAL	Intergovernmental Technical Committee on Agriculture and Land
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LARP	Land and Agrarian Reform Project
LIMP UNIV	University of Limpopo
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAFU	National Agricultural Farmers' Union
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NW UNIV	University of the North West
UFH	University of FortHare
UFS	University of Free State
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UP	University of Pretoria
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	University of Stellenbosch
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WARD	Women in Agriculture and Rural Development
YARD	Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development
DORA	Division of Revenue Act
LRAD	Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
PDA	Provincial Department of Agriculture
PDP	Professional Development Programme
PMDS	Performance Management Development System
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
NATCIM	National Technical Coordination Committee for Information Management
ToR	Terms of Reference

Definition of terms

Extension

A systematic process of working with farmers or communities to help them to acquire relevant and useful agricultural or related knowledge and skills to increase farm productivity

Advisory service

A service provided by subject matter specialists, private organisations or firms to support commercial interest

Extension Recovery Plan

A strategy developed by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) in 2007 to revitalise the state of agricultural extension and advisory services in the country

Executive summary

The financial year 2010/11 concludes the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period in which Extension Recovery Plan was implemented for the first time. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) started with the implementation of the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP) in 2008/09. The ERP is government's direct response to the concerns demonstrated over the weaknesses prevalent in the South African extension and advisory service. Prior to the ERP, a number of government initiatives were introduced to address these weaknesses. One initiative worth noting is the joint national project with the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the piloting of the most feasible extension model for South Africa. The findings of these projects were further epitomised in the development and launch of norms and standards for agricultural extension and advisory service in 2005. The norms and standards for agricultural extension and advisory service are an expression of internationally benchmarked quality measures for extension and advisory service, which inform and underpin the conceptualisation of the ERP.

The ERP is implemented through five pillars—ensuring visibility and accountability, improving image and professionalism, recruitment, training and provision of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment. 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 channelled to the provincial departments of agriculture as a Schedule 4 grant.

In the past two financial years 2008/09–2009/10 a total of R270 763 million was disbursed to provinces for implementation of five pillars of ERP. Out of the R270 763 million, provinces spent R237 393 million to achieve the following: recruit 567 extension personnel, register 680 for qualification upgrading, train 2 347 in different skills programmes and 4 667 ICT items of equipment were allocated to officials in the form of an ICT package or part of the package.

In 2010/11, a total amount of R284 754 million was allocated to provinces. Through this grant, provinces were able to appoint 346 extension personnel, register 670 for qualification upgrading and maintain the ones registered in the previous years. A total of 81 extension personnel completed in their studies in different fields. A total of 1 947 personnel were trained on different skills programmes categorised into soft, technical and ICT. Provinces procured ICT equipment quantified to 4 054 to support extension personnel. Extension conferences were held in all provinces except KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. A total of 23 162 copies of the Farmer's green book were distributed to farmers in seven provinces. All provinces procured the digital pen system. In 2010/11 DAFF centralised the maintenance, aftercare and training of extension officers in Extension Suite Online and carrying costs thereof.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Norms and standards for Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) in agriculture came about as a response to the gaps prevalent in EAS in South Africa. The lack of a national framework for EAS created confusion with regard to the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders on farmer support services. In addressing this problem, DAFF commissioned a study with a view to finding an appropriate model of extension for South Africa with financial assistance from the Netherlands government. The study recommended no specific extension model for South Africa but identified important principles considered fundamental to forming the guidelines framework for extension approaches. The study engaged various key participants in extension services from the nine provinces, and considered various inputs reflecting constraints and successes in the provision of services for farmers. Finally, the study report recommended a Participatory Programmed Extension Approach (PPEA) for South Africa. Informed by the study report, DAFF developed norms and standards for extension and advisory services in agriculture and these norms.

1.2 Objectives of the norms and standards

The objectives for setting norms and standards for extension and advisory services are the following:

- To improve the efficiency, relevance and cost-effectiveness of publicly funded agricultural extension and advisory services
- To promote a participatory approach to agricultural extension and advisory services
- To promote and implement the value chain approach to ensure a holistic support service

1.3 Focus areas of norms and standards

In order to achieve the set objectives, the following specific functions were recommended in the norms and standards:

- To facilitate access to extension and advisory services, resulting in sustainable income generation by clients
- To provide and facilitate access to agricultural information for improved planning and decision making
- To facilitate access to technology and, where possible, provide such technologies
- To provide and facilitate access to advice on sustainable agricultural production
- To provide and facilitate advice on skills development in agriculture
- To strengthen partnerships for the effective delivery of services

2. Extension Recovery Plan

2.1 Background on the Extension Recovery Plan

Based on the findings of the report on the profile of publicly funded extension and advisory services, the requirements of the norms and standards and the outcome of the extension indaba, DAFF recognised a need to revitalise the state of extension in the country. DAFF therefore requested a funding allocation from the National Treasury for the implementation of the ERP in October 2007. The National Treasury approved an amount of R500 million over the MTEF period 2008/09 to 2010/11 under the Division of Revenue Act (DORA). ERP is a Schedule 4 grant, which implies that it supplements the provincial equitable share with regard to the extension services budget. In the first year (2008/09) of implementation, a total of R100 million was disbursed to provinces for the implementation of the ERP. The second year (2009/10), the allocated funds were R170 million. Subsequently, in 2010/11, an amount of R284 754 million was allocated.

2.2 Framework for the implementation of the Extension Recovery Plan

The consolidated recommendations of the extension indaba, the norms and standards document and the profile report on agricultural extension formed the basis for the development of the framework for the implementation of the ERP. Therefore, five core pillars were drawn from the three documents to form the focus of the ERP. The pillars are as shown in Fig. 1. The five pillars are as follows:

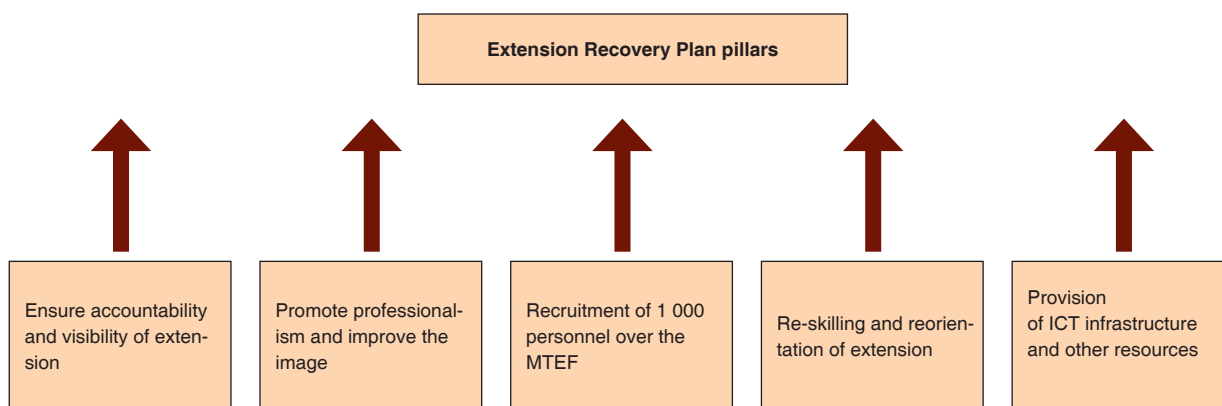


FIG. 1 Extension Recovery Plan pillars

- Ensuring visibility and accountability of extension
- Promoting professionalism and improving the image of extension
- Recruiting 1 000 personnel over the MTEF
- Re-skilling and reorientation of extension
- Provision of ICT infrastructure and other resources

2.3 Criteria for the extension recovery fund allocation to provinces

Based on the recommendations and findings outlined in the report on the profile of extension and advisory services, DAFF developed criteria for allocating the funds to provinces. The following were the criteria used for allocation to the provinces:

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

2.4 Extension Recovery Plan allocation per province 2010/11

The allocation criterion used to allocate funds to provinces remained standard for the rest of the MTEF period 2008/09 to 2010/11. The total amount of R284 754 was allocated to all nine provinces and the disbursement of funds was conducted quarterly in various percentages as indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Extension Recovery Plan allocation per province 2010/11

Extension Recovery Plan	Budget allocations for the ERP implementation 2010/11					
	Province	DORA gazetted	Allocation to provinces			
			23 Apr. 2010	23 Jul. 2010	22 Oct. 2010	24 Jan. 2011
		R'000				
	100 %	20%	35%	35%	10%	
Eastern Cape	65 635	13 127	22 972	22 972	6 564	
Free State	22 252	4 451	7 788	7 788	2 225	
Gauteng	16 136	3 174	5 671	5 671	1 620	
KwaZulu-Natal	38 136	7 627	13 348	13 348	3 814	
Limpopo	60 767	12 154	21 268	21 268	6 077	
Mpumalanga	23 112	4 623	8 089	8 089	2 311	
Northern Cape	19 637	3 927	6 873	6 873	1 964	
North West	20 273	4 054	7 096	7 096	2 027	
Western Cape	18 740	3 748	6 559	6 559	1 874	
Total	284 754	56 951	99 664	99 664	28 475	

Table 1 shows that a total amount of R284 754 was allocated to the provinces in four quarters and the actual dates of the transfers. In quarter 1, R56 951 million (20%) was allocated, quarter 2 and 3 (35% respectively) R99 664 million per quarter was allocated and in quarter 4, R28 475 million (10%) was allocated.

2.5 Implementation plan per pillar per province for 2010/11

For the implementation of five pillars of ERP in 2010/11, provinces were guided by DAFF on which deliverables they should focus on. As a point of emphasis, DAFF encouraged provinces to recruit personnel in order to reach the initial target of 1000, to purchase the digital pen system, to register extension personnel for qualification upgrading in order to ensure that by 2013 all Extension personnel possess a four-year degree/qualification. Other deliverables such as provision of ICT equipment, hosting of extension conferences, and provision of the Farmer's green book were also emphasised. Provinces submitted their business plans between October 2009 and February 2010 with the detailed implementation plans. Table 2 provides a summary of the implementation plans for 2010/11.

TABLE 2 Consolidated business plans for 2010/11

Province	Visibility and accountability	Professionalism and image	Recruitment	Reskilling and reorientation	ICT infrastructure and other
EC	Roll out 10 000 green books Procure 100 subsidised vehicles Purchase uniform for all extension officers	Hosting of extension conference by May 2010	Recruitment of 82 extension personnel	Register 448 personnel for qualification upgrading Train 390 personnel on GSS, 800 on technical and 324 on ICT skills	Rental of cell phones Purchase of 150 laptops
FS	Roll out Ffarmer's green book to 6500 targeted farmers by August 2010 Provision of uniforms to extension officers by April 2010	Register all extension officers to SASAE by May 2010	Recruitment of 8 extension personnel by June 2010	Register 23 personnel for qualification upgrading by 31 March 2011 Train 215 personnel on skills programmes	Providing 141 officers with cell phones and digital pen Providing laptops to 8 officers Purchasing of data projectors, GPS, screens, flip charts
GP	Roll out of 150 green books by June 2010	Hosting of extension conference by 28 June 2010, together with award giving ceremony for best performing extension personnel	Recruitment of 16 extension personnel by March 2011	Register 9 personnel for qualification upgrading by 31 March 2011 Train 100 personnel on GSS, 100 on technical and 80 on ICT skills	Procurement of Extension suite online Procurement of 30 laptops, 80 cell -phones and 65 3Gs by 30 March 2011
KZN	Roll out of Farmer's green book Procure 11 subsidised vehicles	Register all extension officers to SASAE by Quarter 2/3	Recruitment of 59 extension personnel by Quarter 2	Register personnel for qualification upgrading	Setting up video conferencing by quarter 2
LP	Roll out of 4000 green books Procure 900 management diaries by June 2010	Register 35 extension officers to SASAE and to attend a SASAE conference by May 2010 Organise a provincial conference by February 2011 Conduct two exposure visits by July and October 2010	Recruitment of 40 extension personnel by June 2010	Register 40 personnel for qualification upgrading by January 2011 Train 150 personnel on technical and 150 on ICT skills by August 2010	Purchasing of: 350 laptops by June 2010 1 extension software by November 2010 Rental of 14 printers, router and switches, 6x3G by June 2010 Mobile hones
MP	Roll out 1000 green books Procure 30 digital pen by quarter 1	Hosting of extension conference by quarter 3, together with award giving ceremony for best performing extension personnel Participating in the SASAE conference by May 2010	Recruitment of 31 extension personnel by May 2010	Register 144 personnel for qualification upgrading Train 101 personnel on GSS, 101 on technical and 101 on ICT skills	Procuring laptops, cell phones, 240 x 3G allowance, data projectors, 25 digital cameras by quarter 2 Procuring extension suite online by March 2011

Province	Visibility and accountability	Professionalism and image	Recruitment	Reskilling and reorientation	ICT infrastructure and other
NC	Roll out 1000 green books	Register all extension officers to SASAE by April 2010 and send 10 extension personnel to attend SASAE conference	Recruitment of 2 extension personnel by June 2010	Register 15 personnel for qualification up-grading	Procurement of Extension suite online by June 2010 Procurement of 2x laptops, printers, GPS and cell phones by June 2010
NW	Procure subsidised vehicles by July 2010 Procure protective clothing quarterly	Hosting of extension conference and awarding of best performing extension personnel by November 2010 Register extension personnel with professional bodies by August 2010	Recruitment of 4 extension personnel by July 2010	Register 46 personnel for qualification up-grading by Quarter 4 Train 250 extension personnel on Extension Suite Online by June 2010	Installation of video conferencing by July 2010 Procurement of digital pen by August 2010
WC	Host 12 farmers' days, 3 per quarter	Hosting of extension conference by 19-20 April 2010	Recruitment of 11 extension personnel by May 2010	Register 42 personnel for qualification up-grading by March 2010 Train personnel on accredited and non-accredited short courses	Procurement of ICT equipment, extension suite online, digital pen, leasing office space

2.6 Funding allocation percentages per pillar for 2010/11

Funds allocation for 2010/11 was in accordance to priorities and needs per pillar. Each pillar had a percentage range within which funds could be allocated but not exceeding 100% of the allocated funds granted to the province. The funding range was put in place to create flexibility in allocating funds per pillar.

TABLE 3 Funding range per pillar for 2010/11

Pillar	Funding range (%)
Visibility and accountability	3–10
Image and professionalism	2–10
Recruitment	45–55
Reskilling and reorientation	5–8
Provision of ICT	30–32
Total	85–115

Table 3 shows the funding range for allocation of funds for each pillar for 2010/11.

2.7 Extension Recovery Plan budget for 2010/11

The gazetted budget for the ERP for 2010/11 was R284 754 million. The total amount was divided among provinces on the basis of the extension profiling report of 2007. Furthermore, the funding allocation range was used to divide the fund per province per pillar. Table 4 shows the total budget for the ERP for the 2010/11, R284 754 and the breakdown of the grant per province per pillar.

TABLE 4 Extension Recovery Plan budget per province per pillar

Province	DORA gazetted	Visibility and accountability	Image and professionalism	Recruitment	Reskilling and reorientation	ICT equipment and other resources
EasternCape	65 635	4 594	6 563	29 536	5 251	19 691
Free State	22 252	668	1 558	12 239	1 113	6 676
Gauteng	16 202	1 134	972	7 291	648	6 157
KwaZulu-Natal	38 136	1 144	762	20 975	11 441	3 813

Province	DORA gazetted	Visibility and accountability	Image and professionalism	Recruitment	Reskilling and reorientation	ICT equipment and other resources
Limpopo	60 767	1 200	1 800	33 400	4 800	19 400
Mpumalanga	23 112	626	687	10 554	1 745	8 279
Northern Cape	19 637	200	393	9 173	751	5 047
North West	20 273	4 482	1 609	6 412	2 650	5 126
Western Cape	18 740	562	375	12 524	1 225	4 422
Total	284 754	14 610	14 719	142 104	29 624	78 611

3. Progress achieved on each pillar of the Extension Recovery Plan for 2010/11

For the 2010/11 financial year a total of 346 personnel were recruited against the target of 253. Furthermore, a total of 4 054 personnel were supported with ICT equipment nationally. A total of 674 personnel registered for qualification upgrading in 2010/11, while 81 completed their studies. Personnel were registered for qualification upgrading in different institutions of higher learning across. They enrolled for different qualifications in Agriculture namely: National Diploma, B.Tech., B.Sc. Honours, M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees. The same group and other extension officers were trained in various technical skills (771), soft skills (385) and ICT skills (791).

The tables below together with the narrative summary give details of the performance of the ERP in the 2010/11 financial year.

3.1 Improving image and professionalism

All provinces hosted their annual extension conferences during 2010/11 except KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. Only Free State and Limpopo acknowledged the outstanding extension personnel in different categories by handing over MEC awards and prizes.

TABLE 5 Categories of personnel awarded for best performance in Free State and Limpopo

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Best senior advisors and advisors extension	Best subject matter specialist	Best deputy manager
Limpopo		
Netshithuthuni NC Raseruthe MP Mokhudu D	Nevhufumba L Munyai M Tshabutse TE	Mpe BA Matlou JM Radamba MS
Free State		
van Loggenburg R van der Westhuizen M	Mofutsanyane MS Mahne CJ	

Table 5 shows the names of personnel in three categories from Limpopo and Free State who were awarded prizes for their best performance. The first person in each category is ranked the highest, followed by the second and the third. Limpopo went to the extent of recognising the best performing team and municipality. Free State recognised best performing personnel in two categories only.

3.2 Recruitment of extension personnel

TABLE 6 Number of personnel recruited per province for 2010/11

Province	Target for 2010/11	Recruited personnel
EasternCape	82	19
Free State	8	4
Gauteng	16	52
KwaZulu-Natal	59	197
Limpopo	40	39
Mpumalanga	31	9
Northern Cape	2	5
North West	4	21
Western Cape	11	17
Total	253	346

Table 6 shows that a total of 346 personnel were recruited in 2010/11. KwaZulu-Natal made a remarkable impact by appointing 197 personnel, with the positions of Assistant Advisors (175), Advisors (19) and Specialists (2).

3.3 Provision of ICT and other resources

TABLE 7 Number of personnel who received ICT equipment for 2010/11

Province	No. of personnel targeted for support	No. of personnel who received ICT equipment
EasternCape	150	603
Free State	298	499
Gauteng	175	243
KwaZulu-Natal	–	736
Limpopo	370	1250
Mpumalanga	265	550
Northern Cape	8	63
North West	–	74
Western Cape	–	36
Total	1 266	4 054

Table 7 shows that a total of 4054 personnel received ICT equipment in the 2010/11 package for each province. The achieved target in terms of number of personnel supported with ICT equipment is based on personnel who received ICT equipment in one form or another but not the entire package.

3.4 Re-skilling and re-orientation of extension

TABLE 8 Number of personnel registered for qualification upgrading between 2009/10 and 2010/11

Province	No. of personnel targeted for qualification upgrading	Personnel upgrading qualifications	No. of personnel who completed
EasternCape	449	134	12
Free State	23	26	–
Gauteng	9	7	–
KwaZulu-Natal	–	215	5
Limpopo	40	95	20
Mpumalanga	144	65	28
Northern Cape	15	20	12
North West	46	67	–
Western Cape	42	41	4
Total	768	670	81

Table 8 shows that a total of 670 personnel registered for qualification upgrading in 2010/11. The table further shows a total of 81 officers who completed their studies.

TABLE 9 Fields of study in which personnel were registered in for 2010/11

Field of study	No. of personnel registered in 2010 /11 per province									Total
	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	
B.Admin					1				1	2
B.Agric	2			21					1	24
B.Sc.Agriculture	1				10		1			12
B.Sc. Agric Economics		1							1	2
B.Tech.	88	16	7	194	27	50	19	67	11	479
B.Phil.	1								1	2
Honours	1				20	15			2	38
M.Phil									1	1
M.Sc.	3	2			27				1	33
M.Sustainable Dev.	34	4								38
M.Sustainable Agric.									8	8
M.Tech.					6				1	7
MBA									1	1
Masters	1									1
Advanced diploma	3	1							7	11
National diploma					2				10	12
Postgraduate diploma									1	1
Higher certificate in Agric.									1	1
Ph.D.					2					2
Baccalaureus Institutionis Agriae Honores		2								2
Total	134	26	7	215	95	65	20	67	41	670

Table 9 indicates the various study fields in which personnel enrolled in. The majority of personnel (479) registered for B.Tech.

Table 10 on the next page shows the spread of extension personnel in different institutions of higher learning. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University enrolled the highest number of students (251) followed by Unisa with the enrollment of 98 students.

Table 11 on the next pageshows that a total of 1 947 extension personnel were trained in short skills programmes in 2010/11. Eastern Cape trained the most extension officers.Provinces such as Gauteng and North West did not train extension personnel in any of the short skills programmes.

4. ERP expenditure for 2010/11

Table 12 on the next page shows that a total of R284 754 million was distributed among the nine provinces and they spent R22 366 million in quarter 1, R38 169 million in quarter 2 and R95 221 million in quarter 3, R103 322 million in quarter 4. A total of R261 838 million was spent in 2010/11 financial year. The totalpercentage spent is 87%.

The expenditure trend for the provinces in the 2010/11 financial year started with 39% in quarter 1; quarter 2, expenditure was 38%. The expenditure escalated in quarter 3, wherein 96% was spent against R99 664 million that was disbursed. In the last quarter the allocated amount which was R28 475 million was all spent.Rollovers from the previous quarters were used and the total spent was R103 322.

TABLE 10 : Different institutions in which extension officers were enrolled at

No. of personnel upgrading per province	Name of institution															
	UFS	CPUT	NMMU	UP	UFH	CIAT	CUT	TUT	US	UNISA	UWC	NAIRO BI	LIMP UNIV	UKZN	NW UNIV	GU
EC = 134	34		51	1	4		2		1	35				5		1
FS = 26	8			3			11	3		1						
GP = 7					21			5		2						
KZN = 215			194													
LP = 95	5			6				15		18		1	43		4	
MP = 65				1				12		39			14			
NC = 20							19									
NW = 67								30	5	30					37	
WC = 41		9	6		1	6					1					
Total = 670	47	9	251	11	27	6	32	66	6	98	1	1	57	5	41	1

TABLE 11 Number of personnel trained in skills programmes in 2010/11

Province	Soft skills	Technical skills	ICT skills	Total
EasternCape	145	439	326	910
Free State	64	50	0	114
Gauteng	0	0	0	0
KwaZulu-Natal	21	0	221	242
Limpopo	98	60	77	235
Mpumalanga	0	0	166	166
Northern Cape	0	55	0	55
North West	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	57	167	1	225
Total	385	771	791	1 947

TABLE 12 Expenditure per province

Province	DORA gazetted	Expenditure per quarte				Total expenditure for 2010/11	% spent
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
	R'000						
EasternCape	65 635	5 108	6 918	23 796	27 990	63 812	97
Free State	22 252	2 173	2 180	8 794	9 105	22 252	100
Gauteng	16 202	1 100	1 838	1 681	2 328	6 947	43
KwaZulu-Natal	38 136	2 760	2 443	1 569	26 880	36 412	95
Limpopo	60 761	6 048	12 294	37 136	5 289	60 767	100
Mpumalanga	23 112	2 204	2 260	9 174	6 403	20 041	87
Northern Cape	19 637	600	2 964	4 620	4 741	12 925	66
North West	20 273	0	3 474	3 476	12 992	19 942	98
Western Cape	18 740	2 373	3 798	4 975	7 594	18 740	100
Total	284 754	22 366	38 169	95 221	103 322	261 838	87

5. Responsibilities of DAFF in the implementation of the Extension Recovery Plan

According to the ERP implementation framework the responsibilities of the DAFF for 2010/11 financial year were as shown in Table 13. Table 13 shows the key responsibilities of DAFF for 2010/11 per pillar and time frame.

TABLE 13 Summary of DAFF responsibilities

Pillar	Key responsibility	Time frame
Ensure visibility and accountability	Evaluation of the use of the Famer's green book	May 2010
Re-skilling and reorientation	Training of currently employed extension personnel on soft skills as outlined in norms and standards booklet	April 2010 to March 2011
Provision of ICT and other resources	Centralisation of the Extension Suite Online	August 2010

5.1 Progress achieved on the evaluation of Famer's Green Book (FGB)

In order to ensure accountable and visible extension and advisory personnel, DAFF introduced and launched an extension management tool, Farmer's green book in 2008/9. It is a booklet in the hands of farmers intended to record all interactions between the farmer and the agricultural advisor. The tool is expected to promote an accountable productive and visible business relationship between the farmer and the advisor.

Provinces were requested to pilot the tool during 2009/10 financial year in order to ascertain if the tool was appropriate and efficient for the farmers or not. The Farmer's green book was piloted and an evaluation of its usefulness was conducted in all provinces that had piloted the tool. The Western Cape used the green book differently by digitalising it (used hand in hand with the Smart pen). It was used as a monitoring tool for management of staff. A study was also conducted to investigate responses from officials and farmers on the benefits of the Smart pen. The study indicated the following:

- That the Farmer's green book has solicited very high levels of use and satisfaction among smallholder farmers and extension officers
- That the Farmer's green book has met the twin objectives of ensuring the accountability and visibility of extension personnel and services
- The Farmer's green book initiative has become a valued planning and reporting tool by smallholder farmers who now advocate its continued provision and use.

- On the Smart pen model used in the Western Cape, there was agreement among officials and farmers that the Smart pen is good especially because Supervisors can monitor the work done by the officers in the field. Secondly, it is paperless and records the visits, decisions and the actions needed. However, the perception was that the Smart pen is merely a Clock Card system for management to monitor and supervise their extension officers. It is not accessible to the farmer and does not directly help the smallholder farmers as such.

5.2 Workshops on the benefits of the use of the Farmer's green book

In order to publicise findings of the study, DAFF conducted workshops in seven provinces.

In total, 350 extension management and officers plus 209 smallholder farmers attended the workshops throughout the seven provinces. In addition to publicising the findings of the study on the Farmer's green book, the workshops confirmed that the Farmer's green book is a useful tool especially for the smallholder farmer who has no access to any other form of farm management/record system. The areas of concern were around illiteracy of some of the farmers but could be addressed through ABET training. Farmers also requested that the training in the use of the green book be conducted to every farmer who receives the book.

In terms of the Western Cape, one key perception among farmers was that the Smart pen system is largely in support of the strategy of the department but not necessary the need of the farmer. The consensus from the provincial workshop was that the green book plus Smart pen can be effective, supplementary and supportive contribution tools of the future.

5.3 Progress achieved on the centralisation of maintenance, aftercare of the Extension Suite Online (ESO)

The implementation of the ERP has highlighted an urgent need for the adaptation of a decision support system for agricultural extension in South Africa, because this system is the most appropriate and cost-effective mechanism available to provide extensionists with quick access to relevant, appropriate and timely information. The system which exists in the market is the ESO and is an internet based system designed for agricultural Extensionists to access information relating to agriculture in broad. DAFF studied the benefits of utilising such a system in order to improve service delivery by the Extension Officers to the farmers and found it most efficient. It was therefore, recommended to provinces that they procure this system during 2009/10 financial year sourcing funds from the ICT pillar of ERP. The provinces were to provide funding for installation, maintenance, aftercare and training on the use of the system.

The provinces which managed to install the system in 2009/10 were North West, Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. The process of procurement was dragging on and there was no uniformity in the provision of the system among the provinces. In June 2010, DAFF decided on centralising the system to be coordinated nationally. The service provider of the system was then contracted to provide maintenance and aftercare in support of ESO. The maintenance and aftercare of the system has since been funded by DAFF.

5.4 Awareness and training in the ESO

As part of the package, training had to be conducted and awareness created in order to facilitate the utilisation of the system. The systems 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 include retraining, refresher courses as well as specialised courses in application of ESO in the provision of extension services.

TABLE 14 Number of officials trained on the use of ESO

Province	No. of personnel targeted for support	No. of officials trained
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	–	234
Total	53	1 950

Table 14 shows that 53 training sessions were held in 9 provinces in 2010/11. It further indicates a total of 1 950 Extension Officers received initial and refresher courses and/or were retrained in the system.

5.5 Administration and reporting for the Extension Recovery Plan

The ERP falls under the CASP pillar of Technical and Advisory Services. The ERP is therefore administered under the Division of Revenue Act, 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. The quarterly reports are forwarded by the provinces to the CASP office with the aid of a template designed by the National Treasury version 4.3, prescribed for the 2009/10 financial year.

DAFF has discovered that the previous template prescribed by the National Treasury did not allow 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 to the Directorate: National Extension Support office, which is coordinating ERP implementation at a national level.

In addition to written reports, DAFF convened extension recovery review workshops on a quarterly basis to verify reports received from the provinces and determine what challenges are experienced by the provinces in implementation.

6. Conclusion

For the 2010/11 financial year, a total of R284 754 million was gazetted for the implementation of the ERP. The money was allocated to provinces using the DAFF-recommended funding allocation range. The total amount of R261 838 million was spent during the 2010/11 financial year, which is 87% of the allocated budget. Through the ERP fund, a total of 346 Extension Officers were recruited, 670 officers were registered in 2010/11 to upgrade qualifications and 81 completed their studies, 1 947 officers were trained in skills programmes, personnel were supported with 4 054 ICT equipment which was procured in the financial year. A total of 23 162 copies of the Farmer's green book were printed and distributed to farmers in 7 provinces for their use.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

