



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

# Annual Report on The Implementation of Farm together Cooperative Training Programme

2012 2013



**agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries**

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **Annual Report on The Implementation of Farm together Cooperative Training Programme**

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## *Contents*

ACRONYMS.....	iv
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## Acronyms

AgriSETA	Agriculture Sector Education Training Authority
CED	Cooperative and Enterprise Development
CODAS	Cooperative Data Analysis System
CPA	Communal Property Association
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PDA	Provincial Department of Agriculture
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SMME	Small Medium and Micro Enterprise
ToT	Train of trainer
US	Unit Standard

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accredited training provider:	Refers to a person, a body or an institution certified as having the capacity to provide training against the specified unit standard and qualifications
PWD:	People with disabilities
Portfolio of evidence:	Evidence that the trainee submits to the assessor to prove his/her competence. It includes written tests, assignments and other supporting documents
Credit bearing training:	A short learning programme for which credits, in relation to the course's contribution to a particular programme, unit standard and qualification are awarded
Training reports:	Reports indicating a total number of participants trained in a course who have been attend progress made and the total budget incurred. reports
Train of trainers:	Participants of the programme that have to lead and guide all processes relating to the programme
Self help group:	A group of individuals with a common purpose which are not registered as a legal entity

## Executive Summary

The 2012/13 Annual Report on the implementation of Farmtogether Training Programme gives details on the outcome of the partnership between the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, as well as the AgriSETA. The objectives of the partnership were two-pronged:

- increase the number of officials trained as facilitators of the programme in provinces,
- improve operational efficiency in cooperatives, Self Help Groups and Communal Property Associations in the provinces.

The thrust of the partnership was to train cooperatives within the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme sites as defined by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The target was to provide training to 189 officials and 2300 enterprises in all the provinces.

According to the report, only 82 officials in five provinces of the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu- Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, and the North West were trained instead of 189 as projected or targeted by the project. This was mainly the result of delays caused by procurement processes. On the other hand, only 1 114 beneficiaries participated in the training as compared to the targeted 2 300. Again this was the result of delays in transferring funds from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to AgriSETA to implement the project.

Despite these challenges, DAFF is committed to conclude the training of officials in the provinces in the current financial year and plans are under way to achieve this. The department will continue to provide training to SMME's in the sector to ensure that they are able to contribute to economic growth and job creation.

## 1. Introduction

Historically, smallholder farmers have proved to be key players in meeting food demand. Despite past successes, smallholder farmers will need to overcome considerable constraints if they aim to compete in modern markets. Generally, smallholder farmers in developing countries face major challenges such as poor access to land, lack of on-farm and off-farm infrastructure, lack of access to finance for production inputs, lack of access to mechanisation, transport logistics, extension and research support, and limited access to high-value markets. For smallholder farmers to be able to overcome these barriers, they need to organise themselves. Cooperatives have been found to be effective organisations in assisting smallholder farmers to deal with the challenges they face. In the agricultural sector co-operatives contribute to food production and distribution, and in supporting long-term food security.

While agricultural cooperatives in other countries play a crucial role in the development of smallholder farmers, unfortunately the same cannot be said about South African cooperatives in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector post 1994. To understand the causes of poor performance of cooperatives in the sector, the department conducted a study in 2007 whose aim was to get to the root cause of this undesirable state of affairs in cooperatives in the sector. The outcome of the study painted a rather disturbing picture in the sense that it revealed that agricultural co-operatives generally lack capacity in business and entrepreneurial skills, lack basic understanding of governance of cooperatives, they lack ability to operate within a community and do not have the general understanding of agribusiness functions and management.

Based on these findings, the department partnered with the AgriSETA as the Sector Education Training Authority for the agricultural sector to develop a training programme aimed at addressing these challenges facing cooperatives in the sector. This programme has come to be known as the Farmtogether Cooperative Training Programme. This is a learning programme whose main aim is to assist farming cooperatives to integrate into the broader South African context by addressing a range of skills that include governance, business skills and business choices.

Farmtogether is accredited by AgriSETA and the material is based on 7 unit standards that make an accumulated total of 18 credits, which translate into 180 notional hours. The programme has been carefully designed such that low literacy levels as is the case with majority of our cooperatives is not a disadvantage. Learners with matric and those with virtually no schooling can contribute and benefit equally from the learning process. Succeeding in the learning process requires people to apply their experience and wisdom to solving a carefully graded range of challenges and problems they would otherwise face in real life. Although the materials are written in English, all the discussions, and most of the learning inevitably happens in the home language that learners find most comfortable.

## 2. Background

In 2012/13, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) together with AgriSETA entered into a partnership whose purpose was to train officials as well as farmer organisations/ cooperatives using the Farmtogether Programme. In terms of the Partnership DAFF was to train 189 officials (both from DAFF, DRDLR and PDA's) as facilitators of the programme and equip them with knowledge to be able to monitor facilitation of the programme. DRDLR was to train 2300 members of cooperatives, self help groups (SHG's) in agriculture and communal property associations (CPA's). As the project manager AgriSETA was responsible for the overall management of the DRDLR funded project.

This report provides the outcome of such partnership, processes that unfolded prior, during and after training as well as challenges encountered during the implementation of this partnership.

## 3. Main Objectives

The main objective of this partnership was to ensure that the number of officials trained as facilitators of the programme in the provinces both from DAFF and DRDLR is increased. Secondly, it was the objective of this project to build capacity in as many cooperatives as possible including SHGs and CPAs to ensure that they are able to manage their businesses effectively and efficiently.

### 3.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Apart from the main objective, the following are some of the specific objectives of the project:

- Assist both the Department of Agriculture, farmers and other relevant stakeholders who are the beneficiaries of the

programme, by making sure that co-operatives as commodity groups understand the tools and methodology of maintaining their co-operatives as business entities .

- Develop the skills and capacity of the previously disadvantaged people to direct commercially viable enterprise and engage effectively with the markets
- Equip members of co-operatives with the necessary skills that enable them to address the key issues affecting co-operative performances on their daily operations.
- Ensure that co-operative members gain the knowledge and skills to make informed production and investment choices.
- Equip them to be able to evaluate how well they are doing in their enterprises using generic focus areas, e.g. land issues, systems, resources, markets, skills, support, etc.
- Provide cooperatives with highly skilled people and address the skills gaps within the agricultural co-operative sector.
- Demonstrate a high level of managerial skills and increased employment opportunities.

#### 4. Target

The programme targeted 2 300 beneficiaries focusing on the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) sites in the first phase of the programme. Beneficiaries were drawn from cooperatives in the sector, SHGs and CPAs. With regard to officials the target was to train 21 officials from each province, bringing the total number of officials to be trained to 189.

#### 5. Selection Of Participants

The identification of the participating enterprises was a joint responsibility of all the partners (DAFF, DRDLR and AgriSETA) which also included the PDA's. Training sites were identified in all the provinces, each with ten sites with the exception of KwaZulu-Natal that had 11 sites. DAFF with the assistance of PDA's was responsible for identification and selection of cooperatives while the DRDLR identified and selected the SHGs and CPAs. According to the diagram below, each training site comprised two cooperatives, each represented by five members, two CPA's each also represented by five members and one SHG also represented by five members as follows;



FIG 1: An example of how a training site was constituted

### 6. Assessment Of Selected Cooperatives' Prior Training

In order to provide appropriate training packages for participating cooperatives, a skills audit exercise was conducted by the Department of Agriculture prior the implementation of the Farmtogether Programme. Cooperatives were assessed, profiled and captured in the Cooperative Data Analysis System (CODAS) of DAFF. This exercise aimed at unearthing stumbling block towards the success of existing enterprises. Not all unsuccessful enterprises required training. It is only after completing the assessment/skills audit that appropriate rescue packages can be proposed. Hence Farmtogether was identified as a first intervention programme to build capacity and strengthen enterprises for various gaps identified during the assessment process.

### 7. Project Implementation

For implementation purposes the project was divided into three phases, viz. Planning and preparation phase, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

#### 7.1 PLANNING AND PREPARATION PHASE

This is the initial phase of the programme. As the programme was implemented in the provinces, it became crucial that provincial departments of agriculture are engaged and sensitised on the project and be expected to participate in the project. This was to make sure that they understand the objectives of the programmes and solicit their support. A committee comprising DAFF, DRDLR and AgriSETA was constituted at national level to drive this project. At a provincial level the same partners also constituted provincial committees which include the provincial departments of agriculture.

The planning phase entailed identifying and selecting agricultural cooperatives that have a potential for growth and development. The Cooperative Data Analysis System (CODAS) was identified as point of departure to draw up a list of agricultural cooperatives. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and the provincial departments of agriculture were also involved in identification and selection of participating and operational businesses.

#### 7.2. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Based on the outcome of the above exercise the national implementation plan was drawn up and agreed upon with the provincial structures. AgriSETA engaged and contracted accredited service providers that facilitated the programme. For effective implementation, the provinces were clustered into three as follows;

TABLE 1: Clustering of cooperatives according to provinces

CLUSTER 1	CLUSTER 2	CLUSTER 3
Eastern Cape	Limpopo	Free State
KZN	Mpumalanga	Gauteng
Northern Cape	North West	Western Cape

The service providers were grouped into ten batches per province each with the responsibility of training 25 participants per session for the period of ten days. While logistics were under way to train the identified cooperatives, SHGs and CPAs, DAFF on the other side continued training officials in provinces as facilitators. The actual training of cooperatives started in the first week of February 2013 and ended up on the second week of May 2013. The delay in commencement of training for cooperatives resulted from late transfer of funds from DRDLR to AgriSETA as an implementing agent.

#### 7.3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For monitoring purposes, officials of the department as well as provincial officials regularly visited the training sites as part of ensuring quality training is provided to participants. Evaluation will be conducted a year after cooperatives would have undergone training to determine the impact of the programme has had on cooperatives. DAFF has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for this purpose.

## 8. Analysis Of Training In The Provinces

### 8.1. NUMBER OF OFFICIAL TRAINED IN PROVINCES

As indicated in the background above the project aimed at training 189 officials drawn from DAFF, DRDRL and PDA's. For reasons beyond the control of DAFF not all the provinces were trained. In some provinces no adequate number of officials was made available from both DRDRL and PDA's. The table below indicates the number of officials who participated in the training in each province.

TABLE 2: Number of officials trained in provinces

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF DELEGATES	PROGRAMME	NQF LEVEL
Eastern Cape	22	FARMTOGETHER	4
KwaZulu-Natal	13	FARMTOGETHER	4
Mpumalanga	20	FARMTOGETHER	4
Northern Cape	15	FARMTOGETHER	4
North West	12	FARMTOGETHER	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>		

According to Table 2 above 82 officials were trained on the programme from the five provinces of the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and the North West. The Eastern Cape had the majority of officials trained at 22 with the North West having the least number of officials trained at 12.

FIG 2: below is a graphical representation of the above situation.

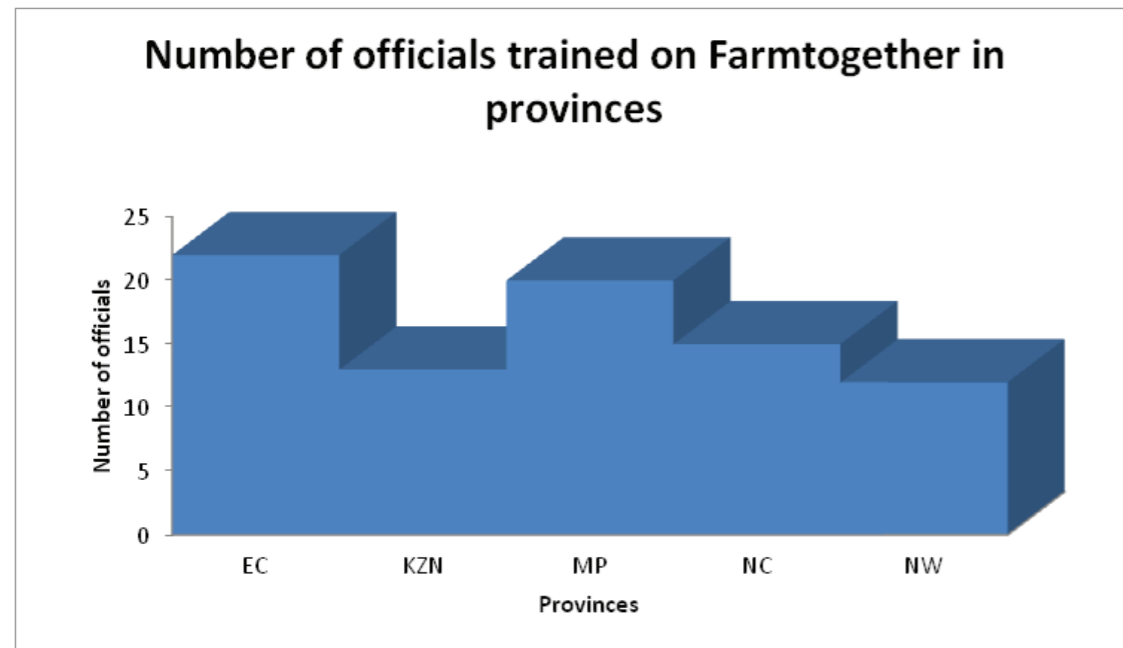


FIG 2: Number of officials trained on Farmtogether

### 8.2. GENDER ANALYSIS OF OFFICIALS TRAINED

In terms of gender analysis, 74% (61) of officials trained as facilitators of the programme in the provinces were male with the remaining 26% constituting 21 were females.

Table 3: Gender analysis of officials trained in the provinces

Province	Gender	
	Male	Female
Eastern Cape	16	6
KwaZulu-Natal	9	4

Figure 3: Gender analysis of officials trained in the provinces

### 8.3. NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES, SELF HELP GROUPS AND COMMUNAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATIONS TRAINED

Training of cooperatives, SHGs and CPAs was the responsibility of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The target was to train 2300 members of cooperatives, SHG's and CPA's within the CRDP sites in the provinces. However, owing to late transfer of funds to the implementing agent the target could not be achieved in 2012/13. Only five provinces were covered, resulting in 1 114 members from 108 cooperatives trained. The remaining provinces will be concluded in the financial year 2013/14.

Table 4: Number of farmer organisation/ Cooperatives, SHGs and CPAs trained in the provinces.

### 8.4. TYPES OF COMMODITIES

Cooperatives, SHGs and CPAs that were trained under the partnership are involved in different commodities. The following table indicates the different types of commodities these cooperatives, SHG's and CPA's trained are involved in.

Table 5: Types of commodities that were involved

### 8.5. COOPERATIVES TRAINED AS FACILITATORS OF THE PROGRAMME IN KZN

In the same financial year, 2012/13 the province of KwaZulu-Natal decided to massive the programme by training members of cooperatives in the province as facilitators of the Farmtogether Programme. Eighty-four participants drawn from 28 cooperatives were trained on the programme. Furthermore the trained cooperatives were also trained as facilitators, assessors and moderators.

Table 6: Number of participants trained as facilitators in the province of KwaZulu- Natal per district.

Table 6 above indicates that eThekwini district had most of the participants trained on the programme with 21 members of cooperatives trained.

Figure 4: Number of cooperatives trained as facilitators in KwaZulu-Natal according to districts

According to Figure 4 above eThekwini district had the largest number of cooperatives trained as facilitators of the programme with seven cooperatives followed by UMgungundlovu with five cooperatives.

Figure 5: Number of participants trained per district

Figure 6: Gender analysis of participants trained as facilitators in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

## 8. ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

For any project to succeed it relies on a number of stakeholders and partners each with a key role to play. In this project, four key partners have been identified and their roles are explained in the table below.

Table 7: Stakeholder matrix

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Successful implementation of any project depends on funds availability. As indicated this is a partnership between three institutions, each had a contribution made towards the implementation of the projects. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform contributed an amount of R10 980 000 that went into training of cooperatives in the provinces. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries funded the “train the trainers” which involved training of officials in the provinces. These officials were drawn from DAFF, PDAs and DRDRL. An amount of R1, 5 m was invested in the project. This amount went into contracting services to train officials, securing venues and providing catering during training.

## 10. CHALLENGES

The implementation of agricultural cooperative development programmes does not come without challenges. The following are some of the challenges experienced during the implementation of this project:

10.1. The plan was to train officials from at least six provinces in 2012/13. However, owing to delays experienced with procurement processes it had not been possible to complete all the six provinces. Only five were completed.

10.2. There were also delays in transferring funds from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to AgriSETA for training of cooperatives. As a result only cooperatives in five provinces completed their training, forcing the project to roll over to the current financial year 2013/14.

10.3. It was not always possible to commit extension officers for two weeks as they are directly involved with farmers in their localities. This also limited the number of officials trained in the programme.

10.4. In most cases provincial departments of agriculture and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform could not send in the required number of officials to be trained. This affected the achievement of the targeted number of officials to be trained under the partnership.

Despite these challenges five provinces managed to complete trainings as scheduled with the others rolling over to the 2013/14 financial year.











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