

## Facilitation skills training for agriculture and agribusiness experts

### 1. Background and rationale of the assignment

AgroBIG programme (2013 – 2022) supports smallholder farmers and other agricultural value chain actors in eight woredas around Lake Tana in Amhara region by enhancing their access to finance and by providing demand-based capacity building. The objective is to improve farmers', brokers', processors', wholesalers' and producer and consumer cooperatives' ability to utilise the food supply and value addition potential that the targeted woredas have, which is in turn envisaged to help the value chain actors gain decent income and livelihood from their economic activities.

AgroBIG records reveal that in 2019/2020 over 24 000 farmers and other value chain actors attended the programme supported trainings, capacity building schemes such as Farmer Field Schools, market forums and other events. Trainings for trainers (ToT) are mostly provided by regional bureau experts, woreda sector office and AgroBIG Technical assistance (TA) team staff, while kebele experts, supported by woreda staff, carry out trainings for farmers. Financial cooperatives (SACCOs) and their unions (COSACUs) operating in the targeted areas are also assisted to improve their business management and to provide capacity building to their staff, board members and loanee clients.

Techniques to improve productivity and profitability in agriculture and horticulture and methods to add value along the selected value chains are typically addressed in AgroBIG supported capacity building activities. Enhancing entrepreneurship and basic business management skills are increasingly attended to. Practical exercises, field experiments, team works and group reflections are included as much as possible. Direct market linkages between suppliers and buyers are promoted in joint forums and B2B events to create mutual trust and long-term business relations between the actors. Negotiation skills are of value in these events.

The participants in AgroBIG supported trainings and events are always adults, many of them having limited formal education background. Both men and women are included. By tradition, women often remain quiet in public events, especially when men are present. Apart from technical competences on subject matters, the trainers and facilitators thus need thorough understanding of adult learning, and strong communication and facilitation skills to ensure that participants can benefit from the time they invest in trainings and meetings. The facilitators should encourage and enable participants to process the provided information into a form that is meaningful and has practical value to them in the end. Giving room for participants to share their opinions, doubts and experiences, and facilitating reflections over alternative views should be an integral part of all capacity building events. Appropriate attitudes, values, participatory techniques and practical tools do help trainers perform well in such situations.

#### **Background of AgroBIG Programme**

**Programme for Agro-Business Induced Growth in Amhara regional state (AgroBIG)** is a bilateral agribusiness development programme funded by the Ethiopian and Finnish governments. The Bureau of Financial and Economic Cooperation (BOFEC) of Amhara region is the responsible government coordinating agency of the Programme.

**AgroBIG phase I** was implemented during 2013-2017 in two woredas, Fogera and Mecha, aiming at improved productivity and further value addition along onion, potato, maize and rice value chains. **AgroBIG II (2017–2021)** is designed to sustain the gains of Phase I, and further strengthen agribusiness development in eight woredas in the Tana sub-basin: N/Achefer, S/Achefer, N/Mecha, S/Mecha, Bahir Dar Zuria, Dera, Fogera and Libokemkem. In total 89 kebeles are targeted with the aim to reach 300,000 direct beneficiaries in total, including farmer household members.

**The long-term goal** of AgroBIG II is to contribute to development that enables agriculture to provide decent sustainable livelihood to people in rural Amhara regional state. The Programme aims at value addition within eight agricultural value chains to increase incomes and create jobs for farming households and other actors, with a particular emphasis on women and youth. AgroBIG supports producers', traders and processors' access to finance and financial services to strengthen the sustainability of their enterprises. Moreover, the Programme supports capacity building to value chain actors to improve their capability to seize market opportunities in a profitable and sustainable way. Gender equality, reduction of inequalities and climate sustainability are promoted as cross-cutting objectives.

The total support from the Finnish Government to AgroBIG implementation and technical support is EUR 9,399,550. Of this, EUR 5,399,920 is allocated for BOFEC channel as implementation budget, and EUR 3,806,630 for technical assistance (TA), and EUR 193,000 is kept as contingency.

In order to strengthen the trainers' competences in **adult learning, communication and facilitation skills**, AgroBIG will organise a set of three-day trainings to selected woreda and regional level experts focusing on these topics. A short-term expert (lead consultant) with an assistant co-trainer, recruited by the lead consultant, will be contracted to design and carry out the training as outlined in this Terms of Reference.

## 2. Description of the assignment

The assignment is to **design and carry out a three-day training programme** for **three groups** of agriculture, agribusiness and other experts from relevant regional bureaus, woreda sector offices and AgroBIG TA team.

The programme shall provide the participants with an orientation to adult learning, deepen their understanding of the qualities needed in effective communication and facilitation, and encourage and enable to learn practical techniques that will improve their work performance and satisfaction.

The following topics are proposed to be covered in the programme (subject to further considerations):

- a. "Me as communicator, facilitator, trainer" – Identifying own behaviour and communication styles, strengths and development areas (self-assessment, done before the actual training commences)
- b. Adult learning – Constructivism in learning; Characteristic of adult learners; Principles to adhere to when training adults; Tactics to influence and support adult learners to attain learning objectives; Creating conducive learning environment.
- c. Communication – Function and importance; Active listening, asking and answering questions; Giving and receiving feedback; Factors causing communication breakdowns.
- d. Facilitation for active participation – What is facilitation; Roles of a facilitator, qualities of a good facilitator; Effective facilitation techniques; Gender-sensitive facilitation; Handling group dynamics.
- e. Conflict management – Positive and negative impacts of conflicts in groups; Understanding the roots of the conflict, selecting appropriate resolution approach.

Final decisions regarding priority topics, training schedules and other details will be discussed with the consultant(s) and AgroBIG representatives after rapid pre-assessments are done.

The number of trainees in the three groups is **maximum 25 per group**, men and women will be included.

Providing some **basic reading material** to the participants in advance to orient to the coming training session could be considered (brief, in Amharic).

**Practical group and peer exercises** shall be included in the programme. The aim is that the participants not only participate, but also practice and themselves learn selected participatory techniques that they can utilise in their daily work when dealing with farmers, entrepreneurs and colleagues.

The trainers must ensure that **gender-specific aspects and disability-inclusiveness** are addressed in the programme and during the training.

The lead consultant is requested to **compile training handouts/manual** for the trainees, **and trainers' materials** (in Amharic) and provide to AgroBIG for printing minimum one week before the first group training starts. Any further use of the materials (texts, ppt files) in their original form shall be allowed for AgroBIG and the trained experts. The re-users shall ensure that the original author as copy-right holder is always shown in the materials whether re-used in electronic form or as copied prints. No commercial use of the original materials will be allowed.

**Training/ assignment report** shall be provided two weeks after the group training sessions are completed. The report should include, among others, review on the observed/ assessed qualities before and after the training, progress made during the programme, and recommendations for monitoring the implementation of the acquired knowledge and skills post the group trainings. An exit meeting will be held with the trainer team and AgroBIG representatives once the training sessions are completed.

## 3. Expected deliverables

- a. **Inception report** (in English) describing the work approach, pre-assessment methods and results, proposed learning objectives, training programme and schedule, and monitoring and evaluation plan for immediate results and recommendations for post-monitoring.
- b. **Training materials** (handouts/manual for trainees, trainers' slide presentations, other)
- c. **Three groups of experts trained.**
- d. **Assignment report** (in English).

#### 4. Organizational setting

The Consultant team will perform its tasks independently, as scheduled and agreed upon with AgroBIG. The Lead consultant is responsible of the assignment, and reports to AgroBIG CTA.

When needed, AgroBIG office can provide work premises for the trainers before /during the assignment. Transport within the AgroBIG operational area, organising training venue, stationeries, catering and the like will be facilitated by AgroBIG as agreed upon with the trainers in advance.

As a tentative plan, the trainings will be organised in Dangila town.

#### 5. Duration of the assignment

Allocation of chargeable days is 30 in total:

- Lead consultant/trainer: maximum 19 fee days for pre-assessment, training material compilation, carrying out the trainings, and report preparation (draft and final)
- Assistant consultant/co-trainer: maximum 11 fee days for preparations and performing as co-trainer during the three training sessions.

#### 6. Required qualifications and preferred skills

##### Lead Trainer/ Lead Consultant

- a. University degree in adult education, communication, agricultural extension with suitable specialisation, or other field of science relevant to the task. Minimum five years of post-graduate professional work experience.
- b. Proven record and references of successful performance in designing and carrying-out short and/or long-term capacity building programmes in participatory training techniques, communication, negotiation and facilitation skills particularly for technical experts who deal with farmers, cooperative staffs, traders, entrepreneurs and other rural actors.
- c. Strong practitioner of participatory techniques.
- a. Ability to develop tailored exercises and learning tools that are applicable for the targeted trainees in their field work.
- b. Demonstrated ability to create conducive and inspiring learning environment that helps the trainees identify their strengths and development areas and enhance their metacognition.
- d. Sound understanding of the environment where farmers and other rural actors operate and normally participate in capacity building activities.
- e. Ability to produce concise, informative reports in English language.
- f. Fluency in Amharic, oral and written, as working language.
- g. Proficient in MS Office Applications (Word, PowerPoint).

##### Assistant trainer:

- a. University degree in education, communication, agricultural extension or other field of science relevant to the task description. Minimum five years of post-graduate professional work experience.
- b. Strong practitioner of participatory techniques.
- c. Proven record of successful performance in carrying out adult trainings in communication and facilitation skills.
- d. Fluency in Amharic, oral and written, as working language.
- e. Conversance with the work environment of woreda and kebele experts.
- a. Excellent communication skills and ability to work as part of an expert team.

#### 7. Budget and cost sharing

AgroBIG (TA channel budget) will cover the following costs related to the assignment:

- a. Fees for effective working days (assessment, material preparation, trainings, and reporting)
- b. Transport cost to/from Bahir Dar when the consultants come from outside the area.
- c. Local transport in the region as required when carrying out the assignment.
- d. Accommodation in Amhara region during the time the trainers need to stay out of home.
- e. Per diem according to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) travel regulations.
- f. Stationeries, photocopying of handouts/ manuals, and other necessary material needed to support the training.

The Consultant is expected to cover the following costs:

- a. Use own computer
- b. Insurance and tax obligations
- c. Any other costs not covered by AgroBIG.

Upon signing the contract, the consultants are requested to confirm their availability during the timeframe agreed for the assignment.