Report on the Capacity Needs Assessment of Extension and Advisory Service (EAS) Providers in Bangladesh

Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network

Agricultural Extension in South Asia

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Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA) is a network of all those who are interested and involved in Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) provision in South Asia (www.aesa-gfras.net). Our vision is to improve food and nutrition security through efficient and effective EAS in South Asia. Our mission is to promote sharing, learning and networking for building effective and efficient EAS.

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Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) is a national platform of agricultural (crops, fisheries and livestock) extension actors and advisory services in Bangladesh. (http://www.baenbd.net/)

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) has articulated a new vision for Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) within the Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS). This vision articulated in its position paper, called "New Extensionist", argues for an expanded role for EAS (Box 1) within AIS and development of new capacities at different levels. The motive behind the development of 'New Extensionist' comes from the realisation that the existing EAS need new capacities to respond effectively to the emerging challenges in agricultural development (declining water availability, increasing soil degradation, and changing climate and markets). In the past few years, capacities in EAS to perform their traditional roles such as training and communication of technical information have eroded. Meanwhile, the extension landscape has become increasingly pluralistic with greater participation of the private sector. All these warrant new knowledge, skills, and expertise among EAS providers.

> **Box 1: What is EAS?**
> Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) consists of all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in rural settings. The services assist them in developing their own technical, organizational, and management skills and practices so as to improve their livelihoods and well-being. EAS recognizes the diversity of actors in extension and advisory provision (public, private, civil society); much broadened support to rural communities (beyond technology and information sharing) including advice related to farm, organizational and business management; and facilitation and brokerage in rural development and value chains.
> Source: (GFRAS, 2012)

In addition to linking research to farmers, EAS is crucial for all other actors in the AIS involved in (a) delivery of credit and inputs; (b) provision of training and other services; and (c) marketing and policy development. Agricultural research system, agricultural education system, input and service suppliers and agricultural advisory services, private sector actors, producer organizations and financial service suppliers are involved in AIS which depends on the government policy, regulatory framework and consumers' demand (Figure 1).
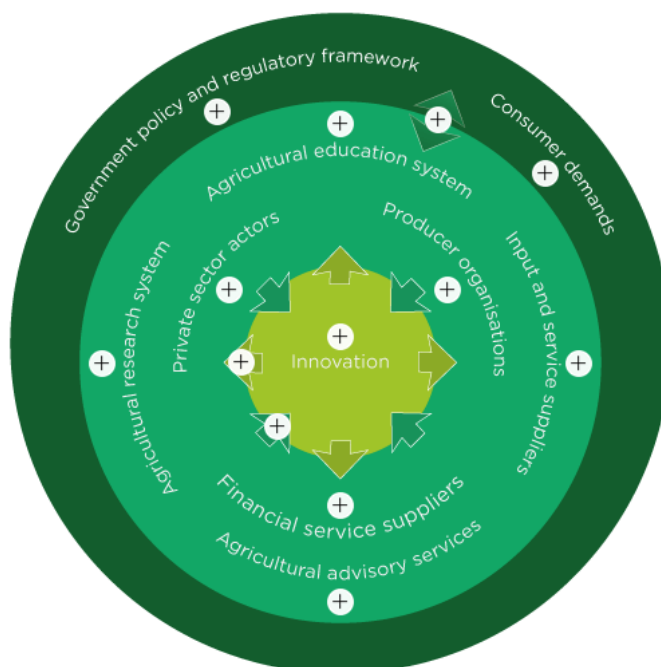

Figure 1: Agricultural Innovation System (Source: GFRAS, 2015)

To undertake the linking or bridging roles effectively, EAS need to broaden their mandate and strengthen their capacities. The increasing pluralism in EAS delivery has also brought an additional challenge of ensuring quality, collaboration and synergy among diverse EAS providers.

The participants of the first meeting of the Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA) identified capacity development (CD) as one of the major priority and agreed that much more needs to be done to strengthen the capacities and deal with the rapidly evolving challenges in agriculture (AESA, 2014).

One of the major priorities identified during the first meeting of the AESA network was CD of EAS providers. The participants agreed that much more needs to be done to strengthen the capacities and deal with the rapidly evolving challenges in agriculture (AESA, 2014).

PROCESSES

WORKSHOP

AESA organized a workshop on Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) for EAS in Bangladesh in collaboration with the Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) during 27-28 February, 2016 at Proshika Human Development Trust, Koitta, Manikganj. Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) need new capacities at different levels to effectively deal with the new and evolving challenges faced by rural communities. While the importance of developing new capacities among EAS providers is increasingly recognized, there is very little appreciation and acceptance on the need for a systematic CNA to guide CD interventions. Undertaking CNA is critical for organizing appropriate CD interventions. CNA is a capacity-strengthening process in its own right, and this process is as important as the outcomes. While several approaches and tools on CNA exist, these are yet to be adapted and used in the context of EAS. Lack of a clearly articulated list of core competencies for EAS adversely affect the recruitment of new staff, professional development of existing staff and also the quality of professional education in extension. The workshop was organized to achieve the following two objectives:

- Identify the capacity gaps among EAS providers
- Finalize a methodology for undertaking CNA

Pre-Workshop Activities

Several preparatory activities like e-discussion, review of literatures, interactions with key stakeholders and development of working paper were undertaken before this workshop. These are depicted in Figure 2.
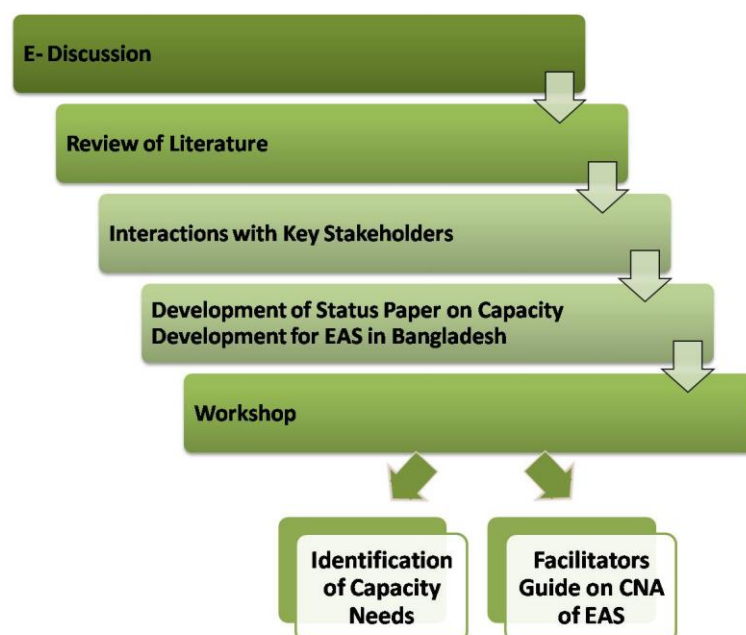
Figure 2: Pre-Workshop Activities

E-Discussion

From 4 June 2015 to 26 June 2015, AESA organized an e-discussion on "Capacity Development for Extension and Advisory Service Providers in South Asia". Twenty-four extension professionals participated in this discussion. See Annexure 1 for summary of this e-discussion.

Literature Review

An essential feature of CD is a common understanding of what capacity and capacity development mean. To some, the terms are synonymous with workshops and training. For senior managers, it might mean organizational development. Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) associate the terms with empowering individuals and grassroots organizations. In the case of international agencies and donors, capacity and capacity development is about national institutions, governance and economic management (Horton 2002). Another related issue is the lack of systematic efforts to identify the capacity needs of EAS providers, which should be the starting point for organizing CD. Though a range of tools and approaches exist for assessing capacity at different levels, the tools are not used in designing CD interventions in EAS. We undertook a literature review on different dimensions of capacity, capacity development and capacity need assessment.

Interactions with different stakeholders

To know more about the current approaches followed in CNA, interactions were made with different stakeholders involved in CD of EAS in Bangladesh. We interacted with officials in some of the major extension training centres such as National Agricultural Training Academy (NATA), Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Rural Development Academy (RDA), Graduate Training Institute (GTI), Sheikh Hasina National Youth Centre (SHNYC), Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation Training Complex (BPATC), Bangladesh Rural Development Training

Institute (BRDTI), Noakhali Rural Development Training Center (NRDTC), Human Resource Development Center (HRDTC) of Proshika (NGO) and major Departments of the Government of Bangladesh, involved in extension such as the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Department of Livestock Services (DLS) and Department of Fisheries (DOF). These interactions were helpful in understanding some of the existing mechanisms for capacity development and capacity needs assessment followed in Bangladesh.

Development of the Status Paper

This paper discusses the key challenges faced by farmers in Bangladesh and reviews the existing capacities of EAS providers in supporting farmers to deal with these challenges. It also reviews the existing mechanisms for capacity enhancement of extension staff and how capacity needs are identified.

Workshop

Twenty four (24) participants representing 15 organizations with diverse backgrounds and experiences across sectors in EAS delivery participated in this workshop. Annexure 2 has the list of participants. The list of participants is placed at Annexure 2 and the detailed proceedings are in Annexure 3.

OUTPUTS

CAPACITY NEEDS

The workshop identified the capacity needs of EAS providers at the individual and organizational level.

CAPACITIES REQUIRED AT FIELD LEVEL FOR EAS FUNCTIONARIES

Capacities for using ICTs effectively

Effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) can play an important role in supporting EAS in providing timely and relevant advice to different stakeholders. For that they should have access to ICTs, resources to make use of the different ICT tools and also expertise in accessing relevant information and disseminating information through ICTs.

> The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
> - Organising training and workshops for field level extension staff by specialists experienced in implementation of ICT in Agriculture projects, IT specialists and ICT focal points in the different organizations
> - Developing databases, expert systems and online package of practices that showcases technical suggestions that are adapted and made relevant to the specific locations
> - Providing ICT tools such as smartphones/tablets computers and other related accessories to EAS staff at the field level
> - Providing resources such as data card and data plans to use ICTs effectively

Capacities to organize need based training for farmers

EAS functionaries at field should have the latest technical knowledge and skill related to important crops and enterprises in his or her area of jurisdiction. They should also be aware of the different schemes/programmes (including eligibility criteria for availing support) implemented by their organizations and also other agencies in the districts where they are working. Field level functionaries should also support development of Farmer Trainer (FT) in specific crops and enterprises to enhance farmer-to-farmer extension activities. They should also have knowledge and skill on training needs assessment of the farmers and also in organizing effective training programmes.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organising trainings on conducting training needs assessment of farmers through participatory rural appraisals, focus group discussions and surveys
- Organising orientation workshops on new programmes and schemes being implemented or proposed to be implemented in the district (including eligibility criteria, nature of assistance etc)
- Organising regular training on new technologies and better management practices to the field level EAS providers so that they can better advise farmers
- Earmarking resources to support field level EAS providers to attend training, seminars and workshops organized by other organizations
- Establishing a training division in the organization that identify the training needs of field level staff and liaise with training centres on designing courses appropriate to the level of the staff
- Reviewing the capacity development curricula for field level EAS providers every year based on the needs, challenges and opportunities emerging at the field level

Capacities to develop Farmers' organizations

Field level EAS providers should have good understanding about formation and development of Farmers' Organization. They also have good understanding regarding group dynamics including system of behaviours and psychological processes occurring within a social group (intra-group dynamics) or between the social groups (Inter-group dynamics) and skills related to community mobilization and farmer organizational development. They should possess ample soft skills for effective communication, mobilization, facilitation, collaboration, and conflict management. EAS functionaries also have to be equipped with operational guidelines on formation as well as guidelines on promotion of groups including preparation of by-laws or constitution for the farmers' organization.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organising training programmes with the support of practitioners having experiences with mobilizing farmers into groups
- Training field-level EAS on collection of data to understand different types of farmers and their challenges so that decisions could be made on criteria for organizing farmers (eg: nature of crop/commodity; activity-wise (water management or marketing etc)
- Designing and developing appropriate CD programmes involving specialists having theoretical and operational knowledge about group formation and mobilization
- Developing and promoting guidelines on formation, preparing by-laws or constitution of the group, conducting group meeting and annual general meeting of the groups, and providing hand holding support to farmer groups

CAPACITIES REQUIRED AT MIDDLE LEVEL FOR EAS FUNCTIONARIES

Capacities to use ICTs

The middle level officials are often in charge of designing, implementing and evaluating EAS interventions. They should be able to use ICT applications such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), use of relevant databases, using field level data and designing micro level studies that can support planning. To support their subordinates in using ICTs at the field level, the middle level EAS functionaries should have expertise on using ICTs. They should also know how to develop appropriate content for use through different ICT tools.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organising trainings to (a) make use of ICT applications such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), (b) use relevant databases, (c) collect and use field level data and (d) design micro level studies that can support planning
- Deputing middle officials to workshops, seminars, symposia and conferences organized by other organizations to enhance their knowledge on use of ICTs in design, implementation and evaluation of EAS. Providing ICT tools such as smartphones/tablets computers and other related accessories to EAS staff at the field level
- Providing resources such as data card and data plans to use ICTs effectively
- Developing relevant software planning, organizing, directing, controlling, coordinating, reporting and budgeting

Capacities in Leadership skills

The middle-level officers need capacities to inspire his/her subordinates, build teams and lead the teams. They should also have capacities to represent the concerns and views of his/her subordinates or team members to senior management. He/she should also have capacities to organise CNA of the team members and supporting development of appropriate CD interventions for them. They also have leadership skills in planning, organizing, directing, controlling, coordinating, reporting and budgeting.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organising MDP (Management Development Programmes) for the middle level functionaries to develop their leadership capacities
- Developing their skills in undertaking CNA of their staff

Capacities on Networking and Partnership development

The middle level EAS providers should have required capacities on networking and partnership development. They should be fully knowledgeable about other actors in the Agricultural innovation System (AIS) and what roles they play in agricultural and rural development. They need guidance on developing collaboration, establishing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with others and how resources could be shared between organizations that work in collaboration. One can also learn from the good practices in networking and partnerships currently available online, but would still need interactions with those who are working in partnership and those who have reviewed these arrangements.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organizing workshop and face-to-face collaboration meeting of key stakeholders at regular intervals.
- Organising training to the middle level EAS providers on different networking and partnership arrangements that are important in agricultural and rural development
- Preparing guidelines on promoting collaborative work
- Developing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among different organization for using common resources for EAS
- Arranging events for increasing capacity to compile and analyse collected data in selecting, documenting and disseminating good practices and good approaches

CAPACITIES REQUIRED AT SENIOR LEVEL FOR EAS FUNCTIONARIES

Capacities in strategy development and decision making

The senior officials should have capacities in strategy development, decision making, strategic thinking and engagement in foresight and visioning exercises. They should be able to plan different programmes according to the vision and mission of the organization and undertake SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and decide on options to strengthen the organization. They should also be sound in partnership development and financial management.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organising Executive Leadership Training Programmes (national and global levels).
- Organising regular interactions among senior officials so that they could learn from experiences of others in these areas
- Deputing/Sponsoring their participation in national and international training programme meant for senior executives that inculcate/strengthen many of these capacities

Capacities on organizational development, mentoring and leadership

Senior level EAS functionaries should have capacities to periodically review the performance of their organization in the changing context and reinvent their organization to meet the new demands. They should be willing to listen to the internal and external stakeholders including the clients they serve. They should act as mentors to their middle level staff and should inspire confidence.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organising national and international Executive Leadership Training Programmes
- Organising training on organizational development aspects
- Hiring consultants who can work with the senior management and provide strategic advice
- Organising regular stakeholder consultations

Capacities on policy development and policy advocacy

Senior EAS functionaries should have capacities in policy development and policy advocacy to influence other policy makers and to influence the enabling environment around EAS so that they can better contribute to the effectiveness of the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS). They should be able to appreciate the importance of evidence in influencing policies and

should have capacities to generate the type of evidence that support appropriate policy advocacy. They should also have effective communication (written, oral, presentational) skills to influence the policy process and to work as part of interdepartmental and inter-ministerial, multi-stakeholder platforms.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Developing modules and organizing training programmes on advocacy and policy influencing
- Developing case studies on successful examples of influencing policies
- Organising consultations with policy relevant organizations
- Supporting generation of evidence to influence policies

CAPACITIES REQUIRED AT ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

Capacities on Resource mobilization

In Bangladesh, there is an urgent need for public EAS organizations to allocate more resources and efforts to educate farmers. Sustainable natural resource management practices can help farmers cope with the impact of climate change. As EAS has to perform several new functions to support farmers, it needs more financial and human resources. The organization therefore should have capacities to mobilize these resources. EAS needs a mix of generalists, specialists and consultants in different fields of expertise. Apart from funding the salary costs of its employees, EAS need funds to construct/hire venue and facilities at meetings and workshop venues, vehicles and ICT tools. Quite often operational resources are limited and this situation should change. EAS should therefore have the capacity to scout for resources, convince donors and national governments to allot more resources and lobby for more investments in EAS provision.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Having a group within the organization to lead mobilization of financial resources
- Supporting development of a Human Resource Development Strategy
- Undertaking regular exercise on manpower assessment.
- Engaging in more partnership activities that could lead to generation of additional resources and also sharing of costs.

Capacities on knowledge management (Infrastructure, ICT tools and networking)

Knowledge management is a critical function in an EAS providing organization. The new ICTs such as mobile, computer and internet offer new opportunities for organizations to enhance knowledge management, networking and convergence. EAS need support of specialists who can design, evaluate and adapt communication strategies to meet the needs of the organization. To communicate with internal and external EAS providers, social media tools provide new and effective opportunities.

The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Establishing a Knowledge Management Architecture (preferably an ICT platform) to share knowledge
- Developing, promoting and sharing locally relevant content though the KM platform

- Exploring the possibilities provided through the social media in networking with a wide range of stakeholders
- Organising workshop and face-to-face collaboration meeting at regular intervals to generate the right content and to build relationships with different organizations

Capacities in result based management (SMART project management, M&E System)

Result based management (RBM) system is important for every EAS provider as this would allow demonstrating measurable results and impact on commonly agreed outputs. Results-based management is a participatory and team-based approach to programme planning and focuses on achieving defined and measurable results and impact. It can help EAS in by improving performance, programmatic focus and delivery. Another mechanism is to set the goals as per the SMART goal setting (specific, measurable, achievable/attainable, realistic and time bound). Having these capacities to manage programs and projects is critical for the success of EAS.
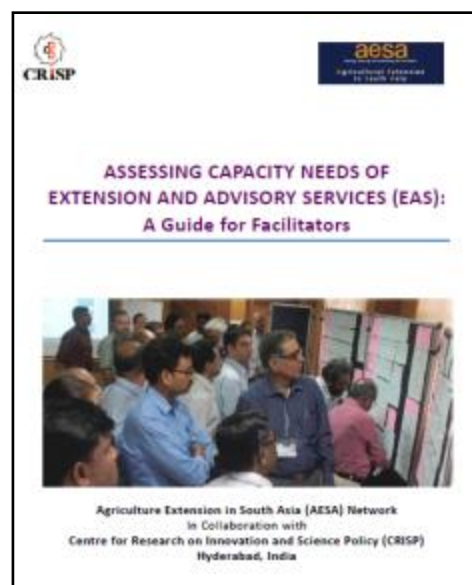
The capacities could be enhanced through the following activities:
- Organising training on RBM and SMART Project Management
- Support adoption of these management systems in all new projects and later to existing programmes and projects
- Strengthening M & E division in EAS by providing more human resources
- Preparing guidelines on RBM and SMART project management

The proceedings of the workshop is given in Annexure 3.

FACILITATORS GUIDE (Draft)

This guide intends to enable the use of a blend of interactive approaches that include sessions on reflection of participants' personal experience, card exercise and group work. This guide encompasses methods and modules for each session inbuilt with tips for facilitators for effective delivery. AESA developed a draft methodology which was adapted at this CNA workshop. AESA is trying to enrich the same currently with experiences from CNA workshops held in India and Sri Lanka and proposed to be held in Nepal in May 2016.

ASSESSING CAPACITY NEEDS OF EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES (EAS): A Guide for Facilitators

Agriculture Extension in South Asia (AESA) Network in Collaboration with Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP) Hyderabad, India

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Annexure

Annexure 1: Summary of E-Discussion on Capacity Development for Extension and Advisory Service (EAS) Providers, 4-25 June 2015

Context

While everybody recognizes the need for extension and advisory service (EAS) professionals to have new capacities (also articulated in the first meeting of the Agricultural Extension in South Asia AESA Network) to deal with the emerging challenges (declining natural resource base, supporting adaptation to climate change, linking farmers to high value markets, confirming to new standards and certification norms, etc), very little is known regarding how these capacities could be really developed. AESA (www.aesa-gfras.net) organised an e-discussion on the "Capacity Development for Extension and Advisory Service Providers" during 4-25 June 2015. Twenty-four extension professionals participated in this discussion.

Questions

The questions posed for the e-discussion are given in Box 1.

Box 1: Questions posed for e-discussion

1. Do you think EAS providers need new capacities? GFRAS Position Paper: The New Extensionist (http://www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/gfras-publications/file/126-the-new-extensionist-position-paper.html) lists several areas where capacity needs to be developed at the individual, organisational and the enabling environment levels. What are the other areas which you think capacities need to be developed? What methods and approaches are to be followed in developing these capacities among EAS providers?

2. As you are aware, capacity development is not confined to training, though many consider training as the main strategy for capacity development. Quite often, the topics for training are often decided by the training organisations. Do you think this type of supply driven approach to training is helping capacity development among EAS providers to improve their performance? What is your experience in this regard?

3. Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) is considered as the first step in organising effective capacity development programmes. What are your experiences (methodologies/approaches) with CNA in your organisation/ sector?

4. EAS providers need new capacities at the organisational level too (http://www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/gfras-publications/file/126-the-new-extensionist-position-paper.html).
   These include capacities related to (a) strategic management functions, (b) operational capacity (relationships, processes, systems, procedures, sanctions, incentives and values), (c) human and financial resources (policies, deployment and performance), (d) knowledge and information resources and (e) infrastructure. How can we develop these capacities? What is your experience in this regard? Where to start?

5. How do you assess capacity gaps in your organisation? What are your experiences (methodologies/approaches) with CNA (both at the individual and the organisational level) in your organisation/sector? Should there be a National Policy Framework for Capacity Development of EAS providers? If so, how to implement it?

6. How do you assess the impact of capacity development programmes at the functional level? Or in other words, how do you assess the contribution of capacity development to individual and organisational performance?

A number of interesting issues related to capacity development of EAS providers were raised in the e-discussion. These are summarized below.

New Areas for Capacity Development

Capacity development is important not only at the production/cultivation stage, but across entire value chain including processing, packaging, marketing etc. The conventional extension approaches have traditionally focused on production advice only. But with the new set of demands from the ground, farmers as well as EAS providers have to equip themselves with information related to the entire value chain. Capacity development for EAS should focus on these new knowledge demands at different levels. Capacity development of young farmers needs emphasis as they will be taking care of farming in the coming years.

The new requirements for trading/agri-business such as traceability, good agricultural practices etc, especially those requirements which have emerged after WTO agreements, have created new demands for enhanced capacities of extension personnel on these aspects. This is not going to be addressed by simply opening new Agricultural universities and research institutes but by improving the quality of education at existing institutions so that scarce funds are better utilized.

Almost every participant recognised the need for developing new capacities among EAS providers. The New Extensionist document articulates some of the major areas for developing capacities among EAS at the individual, organisational and enabling environment levels. The major areas identified in this e-discussion are as follows:

• Developing producers as effective producer groups/organisations- mobilising farmers into groups and developing forward and backward linkages,
• Management of natural resources
• Contingency crop planning to better adapt to climate change
• Capacities for partnering and implementation
• Developing value chains and sustainable farmer business enterprises
• Entrepreneurship and business management
• Support farmers to move from subsistence farming to commercial farming
• EAS providers should become more of a facilitator than disseminator of technologies
• Developing specific competencies among extension providers and certifying them as recognised advisors

However, all these competencies are not required by all EAS providers. Depending on the job profile and area of work (production, processing, marketing etc), the EAS providers should develop specific or core competencies at each level. For instance what core competencies are required at the levels of (a) field extension personnel, (b) extension research level and (c) extension educator (teachers) level? We need to identify these to really support capacity development of EAS.

The discussion also raised the issue of capacity development of researchers and faculty in extension. The areas suggested include the following:

- Research methodology
- Impact evaluation
- Designing, testing and evaluation of new modes of EAS delivery
- Development of intrinsic motivation to participate in e-discussions, webinars etc.

Challenges in Identifying the Capacity Gaps

- Lack of role clarity: If the roles of EAS providers are not clear and if different stakeholders have different expectations of EAS, how can they self assess their capacity gaps?
- Focus only on individual capacity: More focus on addressing individual capacities and low or no emphasis on addressing capacity gaps at the organisational and enabling environment level
- No mechanisms to undertake capacity needs assessment that should ideally determine the content of the capacity development programmes. Sometimes individuals are asked to identity their training needs, but that alone cannot determine the capacity development requirements at different levels
- Low personal motivation: There is neither a desire to provide or acquire new competencies nor the ability and willingness to pay for it, both from the trainer and trainee side.
- Different EAS providers need different types of capacities: Requirements of public sector EAS providers which focus more on free advice vary with those from the private sector where the cost of services is directly or indirectly paid by the farmers.
- No framework or specific manpower for providing EAS in the livestock sector and so no effort to identify the capacity gaps of EAS

Limitations of Existing Programmes for Capacity Development

- Mostly restricted to training individuals
- More focus on sharing knowledge and less emphasis on developing skills
- Mostly supply driven and not based on the analysis of capacity development needs
- Learning objective is not set and the contents are not decided based on meeting specific learning objectives
- Training organisations in most cases decide on the training topics (mostly title of the lecture only and leave the rest to the available faculty)
- Trainings are evaluated based on number of participants and expenditure utilised. However, these trainings are not evaluated based on the behavioural changes that are brought about.
- Trainers are not exposed to other forms of capacity development.
- Content, duration and purpose of training are inconsistent in many cases
- Seminars and workshops are often attended by researchers and teachers and only a few field professionals participate in such events
- While designing training and capacity development interventions, gender perspective is ignored or underrepresented

Varying Perception on Capacity Development

There is no clarity on the use of the term "capacity development" and people have different perceptions on this topic. Capacity development is not merely training individuals and it is more about organisational development. We need to do more to make our research and extension

managers aware about the role of capacity development in organisational development. There is also a need to address rivalry among different layers of the organisational hierarchy (eg: Para veterinarians vs veterinary doctors) in having specific types of knowledge, keeping in view the interest of the sector.

Capacity development is a long term process. Therefore, there should be a strategy for continuous capacity development for EAS including KVKs & ATMA that lead extension provisions at the district level.

Training vs Other Forms of Capacity Development:

- Capacity development is an organic process of developing new competencies through experimentation and continuous learning. There is a need to recognise that participation in one or two trainings is not enough.
- Trainings (including workshops, seminars, conferences etc) in most cases only help in building awareness and less in developing analytical and decision-making capacities.
- Apart from building awareness, capacity development should also include, exposure visits, documentation of good practices, networking, dissemination of relevant information, programmes for self-paced learning etc
- To be effective, EAS providers should be exposed to real field problems through placing them in farms, farmer organisations, mandies (markets), retail chain aggregation points, contract/corporate farming enterprises, agri business outlets, implementation sites of NGOs and development departments etc
- Need to build the capacities of training organisations to organise effective capacity development programmes
- Partner with NGOs and organisations in the private sector to support capacity development on soft skills
- Undertake nation-wide survey on capacity development needs of EAS providers (differentiated by their role- example; KVKs, agri-business companies, ATMA, NGOs, producer organisations, agripreneurs etc)
- Other methods might include (a) organising intensive Focus Group Discussions to elicit capacity gaps, (b) using self-assessment questionnaires(c) monthly review meetings, (d) suggestion boxes and(e) discussions on the current challenges and limitations in project management meetings.
- Development of a competency framework for Extension personnel (similar to competency framework for Civil Services in India)
- Undertake research on effective methods of capacity development
- Use of distance education – web-based interactive learning to support capacity development among EAS providers
- Linking of promotions with capacity development
- Development and use of a database (Management Information System) for a systematic selection of trainees (e.g., who has participated in which type of training and when?)

Capacity development is required not just for delivering information related to technology, but on the enabling processes as well. Design of a training course for maximum impact, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, formation and management of farmer producer organizations etc

are some areas to be paid attention too. It is also important to introduce paid training courses to improve trainee and trainer commitments.

Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) happens to be a key agency at district level responsible for overall management of agriculture extension system including preparation of Strategic Research and Extension Plan (SREP). ATMA personnel ,including Project Director, Deputy Project Director, Block Technology Managers, Assistant Block Technology Managers and Farmer Friend, should be targeted for continuous capacity development.

Lack of Supporting Environment

A "supporting environment" is required to take advantage of enhanced knowledge and skills gained by individuals through training. Quite often, lack of supporting environment such as lack of facilities in the host organization constrains those trained in new approaches and methods to put new knowledge into use. In some cases, lack of clear directions or thinking at the organisational level can be a disabling factor.

Lack of Efforts to Match Individual Competencies with Organisational Outputs

Lack of systematic efforts to identify the individual and organisational capacity gaps leads to mismatch of individual competencies and output. Most of the programmes are supply driven. The programmes often come with specific budget allocations for training in areas which are less important and the schemes are mostly funded centrally. Efforts aimed at linking or skilfully matching individual competence with organisational output are few or non-existent especially in the agricultural sector. This often gives freedom to individuals to choose their own interests not necessarily linked to enhancing knowledge, but linked to places of their interest to visit for personal reasons.

Biased Selection of Training Topics

A lot of training in animal husbandry unit is organised for the field veterinarians. The focus of these trainings is on advanced disease diagnostic methods, though under real field conditions (with limited field facilities), which is not practical. Though there is an increasing demand for extension training, only few programmes are organised. In India, many veterinarians need training in "group dynamics" as this knowledge is important for implementing government schemes such as "dairy/poultry venture capital fund" that involves selection and organisation of beneficiaries into groups. Similarly "computer based expert system in animal husbandry" is required if Kisan Call Centres (KCCs) have to effectively answer the queries on animal husbandry.

Lack of Capacity among the Training Organisations

Many training organisations lack capacity to train farmers or village youth in matters related to entrepreneurship development, value chain development or linking farmers to markets (e.g., Krishi Vigyan Kendras in India). Much of this knowledge is available with the private or NGO sector and the people in the sector should be invited to train the extension staff. Training in

some of the new areas which are critical for extension (the core competencies) needs to be outsourced. Therefore, a strategy for capacity development of EAS at the organisational level is necessary. The strategy should focus on areas and organisations with different expertise and ways of accessing the knowledge and services.

"Anyone can be a trainer?" This is the kind of perception many managers have. While staff at the training institutes have to be highly motivated and intellectually strong, the staff should have capacities to execute training programmes, posting at the training centres is often considered as a punishment posting (depending on the location of the training centre too).It is felt that unwanted and incapable staff members are posted at the centres. Most of the staffing in the training centres is based on seniority and not on skills or aptitude needed for training. This adversely affects the quality of trainings.

Poor competency of extension personnel is a reflection of poor standards of agricultural education system in the country. This leads to incompetent institutions including teachers and scientists. The capacity development can be effectively dealt with through qualified and experienced internal staff and by outsourcing. New training processes and methods like experiential learning, travel workshops and, mentored sessions need to be explored and standardized for different situations. The titles of training courses should be attractive. For example, "How to produce 100 tonne sugarcane from one acre" is better than "Improved sugarcane cultivation practices".

Policy on Capacity Development of EAS

Every organisation involved in agricultural development should have a capacity development policy. Some areas for prioritized attention towards enhanced capacities of EAS providersare as follows:
• Moving capacity development sessions out of the classrooms
• Reducing emphasis on numbers while stressing on quality
• Reducing pressure on training institutes by de-emphasising on quantitative outputs
• Phasing out supply driven training courses
• Designing customized training/capacity development courses
• Building capacity of extension professionals to articulate current agrarian policies and generate evidence on the implementation of these policies

Different sectors viz fisheries, horticulture and livestock have varying requirements for capacity development. EAS in the aquaculture sector is generally very weak. It has fewer human resources and lacks infrastructure facilities to organize extension activities. Majority of public extension service providers in aquaculture are often engaged with implementing welfare and other schemes rather than providing information, knowledge and skill to fish farmers. In order to improve fish production scenario, EAS in fisheries/aquaculture sector must be strengthened.

Annexure 2: List of Participants

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18.	Suman Sarkar	GKT Saturia, Manikgonj	

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Annexure 3: Proceedings of National Workshop on Capacity Needs Assessment of Extension and Advisory Service Providers in Bangladesh, 27-28 February 2016

AESA organized a workshop on CNA for EAS in Bangladesh in collaboration with the Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) during 27-28 February, 2016 at Proshika Human Development Trust, Koitta, Manikganj. Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) need new capacities at different levels to effectively deal with the new and evolving challenges faced by rural communities. While the importance of developing new capacities among EAS providers is increasingly recognized, there is very little appreciation and acceptance on the need for a systematic CNA to guide CD interventions. Undertaking CNA is critical for organizing appropriate CD interventions. CNA is a capacity-strengthening process in its own right, and this process is as important as the outcomes. While several approaches and tools on CNA exist, these are yet to be adapted and used in the context of EAS. Lack of a clearly articulated list of core competencies for EAS adversely affect the recruitment of new staff, professional development of existing staff and also the quality of professional education in extension. The workshop was organized to achieve the following two objectives:

- To identify the capacity gaps among EAS providers
- To finalize a methodology for undertaking CNA

The workshop was coordinated by Md. Sekender Ali, General Secretary of BAEN and Professor, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka. Rasheed Sulaiman V, Director, CRISP and Focal Point AESA; Nimisha Mittal, Programme Manager, CRISP; and Afzal Hossain, iDE, Bangladesh and Organizing secretary of BAEN acted as facilitators of the workshop.

PARTICIPANTS:

Twenty four participants representing 15 public and private organizations with diverse backgrounds and experiences in EAS participated in this workshop. The participants belonged to the following organizations:

Public University	Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU)
Public Extension Organizations	Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Department of Fisheries (DOF) Seed Certifying Agency (SCA) Cotton Development Board (CDB) Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) Palli Daridra Bimochon (Rural poverty reduction) Foundation (PDBF)
Public Research Organization	Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI)
International Organization	SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)
Non-Government Organizations	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) Proshika GKT
Private Company	ACI Formulation Ltd.

See Annexure 2 for the list of participants.

DAY 1

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION

The workshop started with a very brief and informal opening ceremony. Md. Sekender Ali, Secretary General, BAEN, and the Coordinator of the workshop welcomed the participants. He also presented a brief on "Evolution of Bangladesh Agricultural Extension (BAEN) and its future projection".

This was followed by a one minute self introduction by each participant and this helped everyone to know each other and the roles they play in EAS delivery in Bangladesh.

Rasheed Sulaiman V (Director, CRISP) made a presentation to introduce the context and the objectives of the workshop. His presentation focused on the diversity of actors in EAS provision in Bangladesh, the challenges EAS faces (Box 1), the importance of performing new tasks and the need for new capacities at the individual, organizational, and the enabling environment level. He also argued that we need to undertake a systematic assessment of capacity needs for organizing appropriate CD programmes.

Box 1: Bangladesh : Key Challenges in Agriculture and Extension

The 7th Five Year Plan of Bangladesh (2016-2020) noted that "the fast shrinking and deteriorating natural resources like land, water, biodiversity and changing climate are threatening sustainability of food and nutritional security. Yield and knowledge gaps exist. Water use efficiency at farm level is poor. Average post-harvest loss is around 15-20%. The problem of technological fatigue is further compounded with huge technology gap at various levels. This calls for developing science based technology generation, dissemination and application systems. To be competitive in the world 263 market, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures will also have to be popularized and promoted" (GoB, 2015a).

On extension, the background paper for preparation of the 7th Five Year Plan noted the following:
Over time, the role of agricultural extension in Bangladesh as a rural advisory and training service provider has changed significantly. Originally addressing production concerns of cereals (mainly rice) associated with the green revolution; extension now caters for a diversified demand for services, including a greater degree of advice on questions relating to high value corps, mechanization and value chains/marketing.
- Updating knowledge base of the extension service providers is very important task to be addressed.
- Appropriate design of training approaches involving relevant research institutes for the huge grass root workers (SAAO) will bring valued changes in the rural knowledge environment.
- Creating provision for in-country higher studies for extension agency staff is one way to improve the technical quality of extension work, while also linking extension to the education system (GoB, 2015b).

The document also argues for increased use of ICTs to reach farmers with information and advice and enhancing the availability of operational funds for extension.

The 7th Five Year Plan Document also calls for strengthening Technology transfer/dissemination activities "by revitalizing the District Technical Committee (DTC), Regional Technical Committee (RTC), Agricultural Technical Committee (ATC) & National Agricultural Technical Coordination Committee (NATCC) and operationalizing these committees" (GoB 2015a).

The Draft National Agricultural Extension Policy of Bangladesh also emphasised the need for initiating concerted efforts to develop knowledge, skills and mental conditioning of the extension officers and specialists in additional areas of facilitation skills, farmer institution building, supply chain development, etc (GoB, 2012).

Source:
GoB, 2012. Draft National Agricultural Extension Policy of Bangladesh, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Available at:
http://dae.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dae.portal.gov.bd/page/dd7d2be1_aeef_452f_9774_8c23462ab73a/National%20Agricultural%20Extension%20Policy_(NAEP).pdf
GoB, 2015a. Seventh Five Year Plan, FY2016- FY2020, General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Available at: http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf
GoB, 2015 b. Agriculture Sector Development Strategy: background paper for preparation of 7th Five Year Plan. Available at: http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/17_-Agriculture-Sector-Development-Strategy.pdf

This introductory presentation set the background for the rest of the two-day workshop.

SESSION 2: VISSION MAPPING – FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT

This session started with a card exercise. Each participant was asked to put the name of his/her organization on top of the card and then write the three main functions s/he performs in his/her organization to support EAS provision. The purpose of this session is to understand the specific functions different organizations perform to achieve the purpose. Actually, the rationale behind this exercise was that before we explore new functions and new capacities, we should assess the current functions being performed by different organizations engaged in EAS provision. A perusal of the displayed functions revealed the diverse functions being carried out in EAS delivery across the public, private and NGOs sectors.

This was followed by a presentation by Rasheed which focused on the new challenges before EAS and the new functions to be performed to address these challenges. This was followed by a group exercise. The participants were divided into four groups and they discussed the current

and new functions of EAS based on the following three questions:

1. Are the current functions performed by EAS adequate?
2. What other functions have to be performed?
3. Why these new functions are not being performed or not performed effectively?

The outcome of this exercise was presented by the facilitator identified in each group:

Group	Are the current functions performed by EAS adequate?	What other functions have to be performed?	Why these new functions are not being performed or not performed effectively?
Group 1	Inadequate	1. Provide more and easier micro-credit facilities in public sector 2. Ensure stable and profitable price of agricultural products 3. Ensure farmers' friendly agricultural market system 4. Ensure eco-friendly agricultural product 5. Strengthening communication between GOs and NGOs 6. Enhancing one stop service to the client 7. Client need based policies	1. Due to systematic complication 2. Middle men, transportation and storage problem 3. Underdeveloped market system 4. Top-down policies 5. Lack of awareness about agricultural products
Group 2	Inadequate	1. Entire value chain management 2. Supply chain management 3. Market linkage 4. Knowledge management & networking 5. Group mobilization 6. Digital technology transfer 7. More effective field interaction	1. Confining mandate in supply chain & market linkage 2. Gap in capacity, skill and knowledge 3. Inadequate capacity development 4. Inadequate need assessment
Group 3	Inadequate	1. Creating farmers' crop zoning, farmers' producer groups and marketing groups 2. Creating active farmers' cooperative societies 3. Ensuring market price of the farmers' products 4. Strengthening in collecting technology feedback from the farmers to develop sustainable technology 5. Ensuring easy access to credit system for the farmers	1. Lack of extension providers at field level 2. Theoretical (not practical) capacity building program 3. Weaker monitoring system 4. Poor marketing system policy
Group 4	Inadequate	1. Well and effective market linkage 2. Adaptation of e-agricultural practices 3. Region based media campaigning 4. Introduction of effective mechanization	1. Lack of proper planning & policy 2. Inadequate facilities and education 3. Insufficient policy 4. Lack of credit and capital

The presentations were followed by group discussions.

Introduction to the 'New Extensionist'

Rasheed while presenting the essence of "The New Extensionist: Roles, Strategies and Capacities to Strengthen EAS" summarized the new capacities needed at different levels. This was followed by a group discussion on the three levels of CD. The discussion highlighted the importance of technical (knowledge on new technologies / practices/ standards / regulations) leadership, problem solving, partnership building, reflective learning, and brokering) capacities among EAS providers at the individual level and also the need for generalists and specialists in EAS provision. As all technical and functional capacities won't be found in one single individual/organization, emphasis was to be placed on targeting CD to the nature of the task to be performed.

SESSION 3: INTRODUCTION TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In two brief presentations, Nimisha Mittal, CRISP discussed the core concepts of competency, capacity, capacity development vs. training, capacity assessment; capacity needs assessment and types of capacities. The FAO and UNDP frameworks on CNA were also discussed.

SESSION 4: CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Asset Mapping

Two exercises were conducted as part of this session.
The first exercise was conducted to assess existing capacities at the individual level. Three cards (different colours) were provided to each participant (one for each level) and they were asked to list out existing capacities of extension staff in their organizations at three levels:

- field level - pink card
- middle management level - yellow card
- senior management level - green card

These capacities were organized on three flannel boards separately for each level.

In the second exercise, the participants were divided into four groups and each group discussed the areas where new capacities are required. The groups also discussed some of the existing capacities that need to be strengthened at the same levels (field, middle management and senior management) in EAS (irrespective of organizational affiliation). The identified functions were organized on the flannel boards by the four groups and from each group a facilitator presented the exercise outcome.

SESSION 5: EXPERIENCE SHARING

Key Facilitator Afzal Hossain Bhuiyan facilitated this session. Several participants discussed their experiences on the approaches to CNA in the private and NGO sectors. Facilitators made notes of observation/ideas/insights shared. This session ended with the concluding remarks by Rasheed.

SPECIAL SESSION: INTERACTIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL DAE & PRESIDENT BAEN

In the evening of the first day of the workshop, Md. Hamidur Rahman, Present of BAEN and Director General of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) interacted with the participants. He emphasized on the importance of organizing this type of a workshop so that extension agencies could work on addressing the capacity gaps. Director (Administration) of DAE and Deputy Director of DAE (Manikganj) also participated in this meeting. This was followed by a dinner where everyone joined. Over dinner, participants interacted with Kazi Faruk Ahmad, President, Proshika.

DAY 2

SESSION 6: CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AT THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Before starting this session, Key Facilitator Afzal Hossain Bhuiyan and Rasheed Sulaiman asked one of the participants to reflect on Day 1. Kazi Afzal Hossain, PhD Fellow of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University presented his reflections on the first day programme and what he learnt from the different sessions.

This was followed by four presentations about the experiences on Capacity Needs Assessment and Capacity Development in four organisations -- BRAC, Proshika, ACI and DAE.

Jahirul Islam, Senior Agronomist, BRAC discussed the Technology Dissemination Strategy of Agriculture and Food Security Programme (ASFP) of BRAC with its goal and objectives. Zaharaby Ripon, Director and Head (Media Division), Proshika discussed about the formation of group and group federation of Proshika.

Md. Tanvir Abedin, ACI Formulation Ltd. discussed about the strategic management and marketing management system of ACI Formulation Ltd. Kazi Afzal Hossain, PhD Fellow of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University presented the experience with CNA in DAE.

This was followed by a presentation on new capacities that are needed at the different levels. Rasheed in his brief presentation introduced the new capacities required at organizational level:

- Institutions that enable sharing, interacting, learning
- Strategic management functions
- Structures and relationships
- Processes, systems and procedures
- Values, incentives/rewards
- Human and financial resource
- Infrastructure

Appreciative Inquiry

In this session, through a paired card exercise, individuals reflected on significant past achievements in their organisations to identify factors that led to the success. Participants

are paired and each one interviewed the other to enquire on the organisational elements that contributed to the success and recorded this in the cards. The identified success factors were organized on the flannel boards by the individuals.

The participants were again divided into four groups with one facilitator in each group. Each group identified the desired capacities at organizational level and presented the findings.

SESSION 7: CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AT THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT LEVEL

In this session, Rasheed in his brief presentation introduced the new capacities required at enabling environment level:
• Macroeconomic policies, incentives to increase production
• Political commitment to agricultural development
• Availability of policy framework
• Capacity of policy making bodies to adapt policies based on learning
• Capacity and willingness of other actors to share resources and engage in joint action
• Institutions that facilitate collaboration
• Availability and access to inputs

After the brief presentation of Rasheed, the participants were divided into four groups and each group reflected on the forces in the external environment and the capacities that are needed at the enabling environmental level to make positive changes in EAS. This was followed by a group discussion. Each group made a 5-minute presentation on the new capacities required at the enabling environmental level. Everyone agreed that a different set of participants at higher level is required to assess CD needs at enabling environment level. Moreover, those who can fairly represent different actors in the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) are also important for a discussion on this topic as capacities needed at the enabling environment cut across different actors in AIS.

SESSION 8: STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF EAS IN BANGLADESH: PRIORITIES AND WAYS FORWARD

The capacity development needs at individual (field level, middle level and senior level) and organizational levels identified by the four groups in the above sessions were summarized on four charts under the following heads:

a. Capacity development needs at individual level: field level
b. Capacity development needs at individual level: middle level
c. Capacity development needs at individual level: senior level
d. Capacity development needs at organizational level

Dotmocracy - Priority Setting on Capacity Development Needs

Dotmocracy is a facilitation methods used to describe voting with dot stickers. Participants voted on their favourite options using a limited number of stickers. It works well with large groups (e.g., 20-30 participants), in situations when a quick 'read' of the group feelings are required and when participants are not able to engage in very rigorous and analytical ranking processes.

In this exercise, each participant was provided with three dots (red stickers) per chart and they were invited to place the dots on top three priority capacity needs in each chart. Thus, each participant placed three dots in all the four charts and prioritized top three priority CD needs at the individual (field, middle, and senior) and organizational level.

Top Priority Capacity Development Areas

Individual Field Level
1.   Using ICT skills effectively
2.   Undertaking need based training for farmers
3.   Developing Farmers' organizations

Individual Middle Level
1.   Applicability of ICT skills
2.   Leadership skills
3.   Networking and partnership development

Individual Senior Level
1.   Strategic development and decision making
2.   Leadership, organizational development, mentoring
3.   Policy development and policy advocacy

Organizational level
1.   Resource mobilization
2.   Knowledge management (Infrastructure, ICT tools and networking)
3.   Result based management (SMART project management, Monitoring & Evaluation System)

SESSION 9: SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS (BETTER ADDRESS FOR PRIORITISED CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS)

The World Café

This was a group interaction session focused on conversations to discuss the way forward on how to implement the top three priority areas identified through Dotmocracy exercise in the above session.

The participants were divided into four groups. They sat around a table and held a series of conversational rounds lasting for 10 minutes about the way forward to implement the above three top priority capacity needs at each level. At the end of each round, the facilitator in charge of each table remained there as the host, while the others moved to other table. The hosts welcomed newcomers to their tables and shared the essence of that table's conversation so far. The newcomers deepened the conversations so far through their insights

as the round progressed. This process continued until all the four tables were visited by everyone in four sessions. Finally the four hosts from the four tables presented the outcome of the discussions on ways to implement the top priority CD needs at each level.

CLOSING SESSION

Before the closing session, participants were given one card each for feedback on both the positive and negative aspects of the workshop anonymously. This was followed by an open feedback of the participants about the workshop. The participants were awarded certificates for successful participation in the workshop.

Facilitators Afzal Hossain Bhuiyan, Nimisha Mittal and Rasheed Sulaiman V expressed their gratitude to all the participants and persons involved in the workshop.

Prof. Dr. Md. Sekender Ali, Workshop Coordinator and BAEN Secretary General expressed his gratitude to AESA for organizing this workshop in collaboration with BAEN and he closed the workshop after thanking everyone.