

Chapter 6 - Organizing a workshop

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It is expected that workshops using the CSAM methodology will be held in third world countries, sponsored by one or more national institutions, with perhaps an international institution providing technical or financial assistance. Participants in the workshops will form an interdisciplinary group, including farmers, marketing intermediaries, and public sector professionals. A coordinating individual or group will be designated to oversee all aspects of the workshop, including planning, implementation and presentation of the results to appropriate authorities.

Coordinating Committee

A Coordinating Committee for the workshop should be formed several weeks or months prior to the expected inauguration of the event. Members of this committee should be drawn from each of the sponsoring and support institutions. The Coordinating Committee should determine the objectives of the workshop, identify the needs in personnel, financial and logistical support to obtain the desired results, identify the type of support to be provided by the sponsoring institutions and take care of the necessary organization and management.

Chairperson: Selected as the head of the Coordinating Committee, the Chairperson is responsible for communication and coordination with other institutions involved in the

event, oversees all sub-committees, has the final word on all decisions affecting the workshop, and is responsible for its success or failure.

Secretariat: The Secretariat includes a coordinator, designated by the Chairperson, one or more secretaries, one or more drivers, and a support staff (as needed) to provide drawing, copying and other required services. Provided on a full-time basis by the respective institutions sponsoring the workshop, the Secretariat provides all the necessary secretarial and administrative services to the resource persons and the

the workshop as a very serious training event. Consequently, the level of learning and transfer will be low. However, if participants are relieved of their normal duties, allowed to participate on a full-time basis and are notified that they will be expected to apply the methodology in their future activities, a more positive message will be sent.

The type of institutional support required from the sponsoring institution(s) can be summarized as follows:

Participants: All participants will be expected to be involved on a full-time basis for the duration of the workshop. This will also apply to administrative and secretarial support staff.

Equipment: Sponsoring institutions will make available all necessary equipment to assure a successful workshop. This will include transportation for resource personnel, administrative staff and field trips; overhead and slide projectors; access to photographic equipment to document the commodity system; at least one word processor; access to photocopying services; and others as determined necessary.

Materials: Participants and administrative personnel must have access to the materials required to satisfactorily undertake their assignments. These will include such items as pads, pencils, slide film, overhead projection laminates, flip charts, computer diskettes, binders and paper for documents, and others.

Meals: For the duration of the workshop, arrangements should be made for participants to take their lunch as a group. This will facilitate maintaining a rigid schedule - a requirement if the desired outputs are to be achieved. Given the intensive nature of the workshop, morning and afternoon breaks with refreshments may be desirable. These breaks also help build rapport between participants.

Miscellaneous: Depending on the host country and the commodity being studied, there may be unforeseen expenses such as payments to resource persons, purchase of small volumes of produce being studied, and transportation costs. It may be necessary to hire someone from the private sector to prepare tables, graphs, maps, or other visual aids. A small fund should be established to cover these types of miscellaneous expenses.

Baseline documents

Workshop participants will include a large number of individuals specialized in specific areas who, more than likely, are unfamiliar with other disciplines. For example, macro-economists are likely to know relatively little about production and postharvest handling of a particular crop; agronomists and food technologists may well find economic terminology confusing, and marketing specialists may know little about pest and disease constraints.

As a means of informing the participants about the state-of-the-art of a particular commodity, baseline documents should be prepared by the respective coordinators of the working groups prior to the workshop. During the first two days of the workshop, the baseline documents will be presented and discussed among the participants. Each

baseline document will provide descriptive and quantitative information on the particular crop as indicated below.

Macro-economic baseline document: will include information on the relative importance of the particular commodity to the economy; public sector institutions and their functions and services; national agricultural policies; special projects, programs and plans which may affect the commodity being studied; incentive programs and policies (tax, finance, exemptions); private sector institutions and organizations and their services and functions (farmer organizations, non-profit support organizations); principal problems; and others.

Production baseline document: should contain information on the history of national production of the particular crop being studied; actual and potential land use and area in crop; environmental requirements of crop; agronomical characteristics; actual production constraints; farming systems; planting material; cultural practices; pests and diseases; production costs; principal problems and needs; and others.

Postharvest baseline document: will cover the identification and description of postharvest handling practices; available infrastructure and equipment; agroprocessing potential and characteristics; principal problems and needs; and others.

Marketing baseline document: should consider imports and exports of the commodity being studied; national and external demand; marketing channels; marketing margins; and characteristics of demand; consumption patterns; marketing costs; market potential; and others.

e. Functioning as a central clearing house for all material produced for and during the workshop and assisting the Coordinating Committee in the preparation of the final workshop report.

f. Others that the Coordinating Committee may determine.

Planners: An introductory presentation to the workshop should be given by some decision maker from the agricultural sector (National Planning Office, Ministry of Agriculture) focusing on national development plans with respect to the commodity being studied.

Farmers: In addition to the farmers selected to participate in the workshop on a full time basis, representative farmers, with different size operations and methods of farming, should be selected as resource persons. Ideally, field trips to their farms could be arranged. These farmers should be asked to discuss such things as their cultural practices, pest and disease constraints, costs of operation, methods of postharvest handling and marketing, their decision-making processes for their farming operations, and their principal problems and needs.

Intermediaries: Depending on the crop to be studied, intermediaries involved in transportation, assembly, wholesaling, retailing, storage, and export should be identified and arrangements should be made for field visits to their sites of operation. These intermediaries should be asked to describe their operations; their interrelationships with farmers, other intermediaries and government; and their principal needs for improvement. Each visit should include a period for questions and answers.

Agroprocessors: For those products which undergo some form of agroprocessing, arrangements should be made to visit agroprocessing facilities and to discuss with management their operations, problems and needs.

Selection of participants

While the number of workshop participants should be adjusted to meet local facilities and circumstances, in general, the number should not exceed twenty-five. Groups larger than this become difficult to manage, particularly when making field visits. The participants should include farmers, intermediaries, and specialists from disciplines such as: economics, agricultural economics, agronomy, entomology, food technology, engineering, marketing, sociology/anthropology, resource development and others relevant to the case at hand.

Participants may be drawn from those institution(s) sponsoring the workshop, as well as from other public sector institutions, private sector organizations or businesses and the farming community.

Development of workshop agenda

Each workshop agenda will be adapted to the local needs and the available resources of the sponsoring institution(s). While most workshops should be similar in content, the time dedicated to each element will likely vary. The workshop program should include:

- registration of participants and inauguration of workshop;
- presentation of the CSAM methodology;
- presentation of baseline information on commodity being studied;
- identification and collection of missing information;
- field trips to farms, postharvest handling and agro-processing facilities;
- description of the distinct components of the commodity system;
- analysis and prioritization of problems in the commodity system;
- identification of project ideas and required actions; and
- formulation of project profiles.

The actual workshop program will be determined by the Coordinating Committee, assisted by the CSAM specialist, during the week preceding the workshop.

The actual time dedicated to the different subject materials during workshops executed

The workshop should be conducted in an informal atmosphere and should be dynamic and flexible enough to adjust to needs as they develop. Each workshop should have a moderator or facilitator who is specialized in communication and group dynamics. This person may be either a natural leader or formally trained in these areas. This facilitator should be a key person in integrating workshop participants so that they play active roles in the discussion of problems and solutions. S/he may also assist the Chairperson in overcoming logistical and other problems as they arise.

After the opening ceremony has concluded, the CSAM resource person will present an overview of the methodology to be used during the workshop, showing how a systematic step-by-step analysis can result in a rapid assessment of a specific commodity system. Immediately thereafter the coordinators from each of the working groups will summarize the information contained in the baseline documents. The need for additional information will then be evaluated, and subsequent activities will include the design of questionnaires, interviews and field visits to collect missing information.

Due to the difficulty of working in large groups, the plenary body should be divided into interdisciplinary sub-groups of from five to eight persons. Each sub-group should include farmers, people with postharvest and marketing experience and professionals from as many disciplines as possible. Whenever group work is required, i.e., for the collection of missing information, for problem analysis, for the identification of project ideas and other solutions, and for the formulation of project profiles, these sub-groups should be convened. Each sub-group should select its own coordinator and rapporteur for reporting back to the plenary session.

Plenary sessions are required each time new information, methodologies or working instruments are introduced. Longer plenary sessions are required to present and discuss the results of the working groups and to carry out activities of mutual interest, such as brainstorming.

The workshop facilitator and Coordinating Committee should periodically evaluate the progress of the workshop. When certain sessions seem to become tedious or boring, a field trip can be planned or new subject material introduced to stimulate the group. The order of presentation of subject material can be modified to fit the specific needs of the participants.

The typical workshop will span a two-week period, but can be longer or shorter based on detail desired, resources available, and the complexity of the systems being studied.

Collection of missing information

Chapter 3 describes in considerable detail the type of information which should be obtained on each of the relevant components of a given commodity system. A comparison of Chapter 3 guidelines with the baseline documents presented by the working groups will give an indication of the missing information which needs to be collected. Some of the missing information may be collected from secondary documents. Some may also be collected during field

Each working group will determine its particular requirements for information and will develop methods to generate it during the time allocated for this activity. In some instances the necessary information may be impossible to collect in the short time period available. In these cases, recommendations should be made for developing longer-term research activities to be carried out after the workshop.

Checklist for organizing a workshop

To facilitate the organization of the workshop and to insure that all members of the Coordinating Committee and institutional decision makers aorgmbers of the

13. Materials and equipment:		
<input type="checkbox"/> - paper etc.		
<input type="checkbox"/> - projectors/camera		
<input type="checkbox"/> - transportation		
<input type="checkbox"/> - computer/word processor		
<input type="checkbox"/> - copying facilities		
<input type="checkbox"/> - other		
14. Food arrangements		
15. Transportation arrangements		
16. Execution of workshop program		

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