GUIDELINES FOR MONITORING
AND EVALUATION OF
PARTICIPATORY RURAL DEVELOPMENT
IN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

The literature on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has been growing especially since the seventies. An illustrative survey of M&E literature in 1990 listed as many as seventy three studies/reports/manuals, which were published by the scholars and the agencies both within and outside the United Nations System. M&E became an 'expertise' itself, with 'experts' being seconded to various programmes/projects to monitor and evaluate them. The 'expertise' were growing more sophisticated and the 'experts' professional with base far removed from people and their habitat.

But, based on the sad experience with imitative growth model of three decades in Africa, as the emphasis shifted from export-led 'growth', to human centred participatory self-reliant development, with agriculture and rural based economic activities as engine of growth, questions began to be raised about the applicability of conventional models and tools of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to the new objectives. If the key to the agriculture and rural development lies with the vast multitude of spatially spread out small farmers, including women then Guidelines need to be developed to self-monitor and self-evaluate their performance themselves.

Given their current level of illiteracy and non-familiarity with quantitative techniques; such Guidelines to be useful, should meet *inter alia* the following requirements, viz.,

(i) rural people, who can read and write with some understanding, should be able to comprehend it and explain it to others who are illiterate;

(ii) leaders or office bearers of associations/groups of (i) above should be able to apply or use it with minimal initial training or guidance from the specialists/experts;

(iii) the paper work, record-keeping or data required for using the guidelines should be minimal so also the need for simple arithmetic let alone mathematics and
(iv) The use of the guidelines ought to be cost-effective and lead to better planning, more effective implementation and greater quality performance with more meaningful participation at all stages and levels over the base period.

The central message of these requirements is that "simple is useful". Keeping this in view, the Guidelines presented below try to make a contribution to de-mystify the M&E 'expertise' and make them a widely understood and used management tools in a largely illiterate environment of Africa today.

Assumptions

The Guidelines make two heroic assumptions. The first assumption is that Africa has firmly committed itself, besides others, to the principle of participation, at all levels and stages of development, as enunciated in, inter alia, the ECA's 'African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transfórmation', 1989 and the 'African Charter for Popular Participation in Development', 1990. They further assume that the member-States have also started the logical follow-up actions, including the establishment and or encouragement of organization of the required mechanism arising out of this principle. The short-hand version of these two assumptions is an enabling climate and facility. After all, participatory M.&E. in a way comes at the tail end of the development cycle. If the preceding parts of the cycle were not participatory; M.&E. logically cannot be either.

If for cultural, structural or practical reasons, a population group is unable or unwilling to participate, it is even less likely to be interested in participatory M&E exercises, which are time consuming and may have the additional defect, in their eyes, of obliging them to voice opinions which they would rather keep to themselves for reasons internal to the group or pertaining to the environment in which it operates. The first challenge then would be to address those constraining factors, see what participatory procedures emerge in response to enabling environment that also stimulate them and then provide whatever technical assistance may be requested for to strengthen participatory M.&E. - and indeed other participatory structures as tools of individual or group survival, growth and development. The alternative might lead to the impression that participatory M&E is being promoted as an end in itself rather than a means for development.
Another relevant point to recognize that participatory M & E informally takes place all the time whenever people are grouped or otherwise associated for common purposes. Such informal monitoring and evaluation of groups and group activities cannot be ignored without risking the failure to understand why people join, leave, refuse to participate, participate reluctantly, or show negative attitudes like apathy or disloyalty to groups or activities they formally participate in. Formal M&E methodologies thus do not fill in a participatory M&E vacuum: they only, supplement informal monitoring and evaluation of groups and group activities by members. The point is not academic, for a recognition of alternative M&E practices should help provide a realistic assessment of the climate in which a new M&E methodology is being introduced, how it should be introduced and what it can learn and adopt, adapt or reject from existing M&E procedures and criteria.

Limitations

In the text the Guidelines refer to the groups and group activities in rural sector in broad terms. They do not, therefore, distinguish between:

(i) single purpose group or activity, such as groups formed for the sole purpose of obtaining credit, without collateral, its utilization and reimbursement;

(ii) multi-purpose group or activities like most of the co-operatives and their objectives, which, for example, cover a number of activities or needs and

(iii) communal organizations, religions and other groups that "add on" economic, social, cultural or technical activities as supplements to traditional group activities. They cannot be assessed solely or even principally by the quality of those additional objectives and activities.

However, it is hoped the Guidelines provide enough materials to pick and choose, add to them, or amend them to meet specific requirements of a group or inter-group organizations and have it "tailor-made". It may be added that Guidelines are not Manual. They are suggestive and indicative, whereas a Manual is generally exhaustive and its compliance binding. So, these Guidelines, by their very nature and broad sweep, should only be used as an
input to develop situation or activity or group specific participatory M&E Manual.

The other limitation of these Guidelines is that the methodology presented here is for M&E of group performance. It does not cover the issues of group rationale and group legitimacy per se on the premise that the rationale and legitimacy of group formations are by now well established practical wisdom at all levels from hamlets to seats of national Governments. In fact, such understanding is the condition precedent for group formations and group activities.

Organization of the Guidelines

The Guidelines are organized in three Parts. Part I gives a methodology for participatory M&E. This Part has four sections. Section I deals with the process of M&E. Section II covers the benefits of M&E. Section III gives an outline of the process for introducing the M&E system. Section IV discusses the issues in participatory M&E.

Part II provides a list of questions for M&E. The list is suggestive. The rural people, their groups and/or the Group promoters may select from it, modify it as appropriate, after field testing.

Part III selectively reproduces a set of forms, which have been revised and/or condensed, along with instructions, for keeping records to illustrate the type of forms, which may be required. These were originally developed and field tested for participatory M&E of rural development in one of the member-States of Africa.³
PART I:  
METHODOLOGY FOR PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M.&E.)

SECTION I  
THE PROCESS OF PARTICIPATORY M&E

When groups of people engage in participatory M&E they recognize and know better their strengths and weaknesses and become motivated to build on the first and to minimize the second. The first step for participatory M&E is for the group to decide what things it thinks it should be accomplishing and how it should be carrying out its activities. These constitute a basis for M&E which has some chance of improving capacities and performance. The methodology introduced here covers over eighty different activities or modes of operation from which a group may choose as being relevant to its own situation and goals.

As few as a half dozen might be chosen, or possibly several dozen. The number can be increased as new questions are selected by the group for evaluation, or decreased as previously-selected ones are dropped by agreement of the members.

Once the questions concerning performance and capacity have been agreed upon, the next important thing is the extent and honesty of discussion that is devoted to each question, to arrive at a shared understanding of how well or how poorly the group is doing in that particular regard. This is best done by taking an example. Let us assume that the group has agreed it wants to have active participation from all members in its meetings and group activities.

Whoever is leading the discussion will ask the group: Which of the following statements best describes members' participation in the group?

(a) All members participate actively in meetings and group activities.

(b) Most members participate actively in meetings and group activities.
(c) *Some* members participate actively in meetings and group activities.

(d) *Few* members participate actively in meetings and group activities.

This pattern of *four alternatives* is repeated for all of the evaluation questions. The first (a) represents an ideal situation. The second (b) describes a satisfactory situation, but with some room for improvement. The third (c) characterizes an unsatisfactory situation with definite room for improvement, while the fourth (d) presents a very unsatisfactory situation with very much room for improvement.

For the sake of giving *some* simple scores to the answers, the first answer is counted for *3 points*, the second for *2 points*, the third for *1 point*, and the fourth is *zero*. Three points are considered an excellent score; two points very good but can be improved; one point is fair, with much room for improvement. Zero indicates very poor performance and should seldom occur.

The numbers are not the most important result of evaluation. More important is the discussion that goes into agreeing on them. Groups would like to think that their performance is top-rate or ideal. But, before they can achieve the top score (3 points), all members have to agree that everyone is participating actively in meetings and group affairs. If anyone thinks otherwise, the group needs to resolve any differences of opinion. Members can give examples of when *everyone* participated or when they did not, when some did not attend meetings or turn up for group work. If a top score cannot be justified, can it be said that *most* members are actively participating, or only that *some* are? This is a matter of judgement as no strict numerical standards are possible. In a weak group, the disagreement will turn on whether *some* participate actively, or only *a few* do.

Simply *discussing* this question will bring to everyone’s attention the extent and quality of members’ participation in group affairs. Whoever is dissatisfied with the current situation is legitimately entitled to give his/her opinion during self-evaluation so that the group can carry out this exercise constructively. The persons who have been shirking responsibility may be named. It may become known that the group has not communicated its expectations adequately to all members. May be some members do not know when and how hard others are working. All this can and should come up when
trying to decide which of the four statements "best describes" the group. If persons, who thought only some are participating, become satisfied that most are participating, that will help group morale. If those who insist only some but not most are participating can persuade the rest of this, the group's level of participation has been made an issue for all.

If it is not possible for everyone in the group to agree on one answer, it can take a vote and record the majority view, or even better, it can agree on some compromise score for a particular question, such as 2.5 or 1.5. In this way both majority and minority view points get reflected in the score, which will be compared with scores decided on in future M&E.

The number a group arrives at for any particular question in its self-evaluation is not so important in itself. What is important is that all members come to understand and agree on what are the group's areas of strength and what are its areas of weakness. An example of a performance question in the technical area concerns the maintenance of any equipment, machinery, facilities or buildings the group may have. Is adequate provision made for this?

(a) The group carries out excellent regular maintenance work so that there are no breakdowns and no avoidable deterioration of equipment, machinery, facilities, etc. (3 points).

(b) The group does reasonably good and fairly regular maintenance, but there are some breakdowns and some avoidable deterioration which could be reduced by better maintenance. (2 points).

(c) The group does some but irregular maintenance, that is, there are breakdowns and there is avoidable deterioration. (1 point).

(d) The group does no maintenance at all. Breakdowns and deterioration are common (Zero).

A group could be proud if it did at least (b), but it could aspire to (a), getting 3 points instead of just 2 on this item. If the group's performance is only (c), the group should recognize a need to improve its maintenance a priority for the immediate future. If there is consensus on (d) as the best description of current group capability, there would be reason to attach great
urgency for making improvements. If the group had no equipment, machines, buildings or facilities of its own, this question would be irrelevant. Then, no maintenance would not be a black mark against it. But then also, this item should not have been chosen as one for evaluation. Each group will have its own set of questions that reflect its own needs. These questions should be considered on a regular basis, usually once a year. Communication among members and getting decisions made to take appropriate remedial action will be facilitated by group discussion of each question and reaching conclusions about how well or how poorly the group is dealing with the functions it has agreed should be assessed.

When groups have gone through the agreed upon questions, they should review the scores they have assigned themselves on the various items. On questions where all agree that a 3 is appropriate, the group need only try to maintain this very high standard of performance. Where a 2 is decided upon, the group should consider what it could do to improve its performance so it would deserve a 3 in the next self-evaluation. A score of 1 should be regarded as a challenge to make substantial improvements, whereas zero at any time is a real warning sign.

The group should select a number of priority areas for making an effort to improve capacity (or to maintain it). These would be chosen by members because the areas are very important, and falling below a 3 is regarded as undesirable by the group; or because improvement could be made quite easily or quickly. By having an agenda for action that emerges out of the group's own self-evaluation, available resources will be used more effectively.
SECTION II
THE BENEFITS OF
PARTICIPATORY SELF-EVALUATION

This methodology has several advantages over conventional evaluation methodologies. These are: (i) self-education; (ii) self-improvement; (iii) monitoring and (iv) training and support. These benefits are discussed in turn. The first, second and fourth are specifically related to the methodology of participatory M&E. Only the third overlaps substantially with the standard kinds of evaluation.

Self-Education. With this approach to M&E, groups' performance is not assessed by a set of standards determined externally. Each group has to think about which things it can and should do well. Should it be:

(i) generating more income?
(ii) providing emergency loans to members?
(iii) learning and spreading technical skills?
(iv) reducing illiteracy?
(v) improving nutrition?
(vi) gaining community support?
(vii) working without Group Promoters' (GP) assistance?
(viii) holding more productive meetings? or
(ix) sharing organizational responsibilities more widely?

Each Group and Inter-Group Association (IGA) must select from a wide variety of possible economic, social and organizational objectives. Each group or association should consider its members' needs and circumstances, discuss possible goals, and select those on which there is the greatest agreement. Members are likely to be more committed to goals that they have chosen themselves through group discussion, than to goals determined for them by an outside agency.

They may initially be satisfied to have half a dozen task-related and organizational goals. But, over time they may want to add more objectives to make their Group's performance more rounded. Such decisions should be made by each Group or IGA based upon members' needs and circumstances. How many or how few objectives is up to the members to decide. The
important thing is that all members discuss these goals to see on how they agree. The fact of reaching some agreement on a certain set of goals helps to commit members to their achievement.

Experience shows grassroots organizations are more likely to be too ambitious (rather than be too cautious) in choosing objectives. There are so many ways in which they want to improve their lives that they may want to have too many goals (questions) for their regular M&E. If they insist on having a long (or short) list, the GP should accept this. It is, after all, their list and their organization. But the GP may encourage the group later to shorten its list (or add to it) if this seems appropriate. Once the group has some experience with the methodology, it will want to revise its initial selection of items anyway. Some goals may no longer seem important and others may now appear more important or more attainable.

If members consider periodically what their group can and should achieve it will help them educate (and re-educate) about group objectives and potential. Discussion of what is worth doing and what is feasible will bring out into the open the needs and hopes of members so that a substantial base of agreement can be built as a foundation for successful collective action.

**Self-Improvement.** By assessing together progress in its self-chosen goals, a group will be led to consider what changes might enable it to achieve those goals better. If there is group consensus that members' participation is less than full, or that maintenance of equipment and facilities is inadequate, the group can encourage reticent members to be more active and change any practices that discourage their participation, or it can assign maintenance responsibilities to certain persons and set aside some funds for cost of repair. Most of the solutions can be planned and implemented by members without outside assistance, or with the GP playing only a facilitative role, once there is agreement that a problem exists.

Often correcting undesirable situations is a matter of bringing them to everybody's attention and taking a problem-solving approach. This means gathering necessary information, choosing the most promising strategy, agreeing on a plan of action, carrying this plan out, and then following up with group evaluation. If the problem persists, the plan or strategy may need to be changed by further discussion and agreement.
A good example concerns the pool of leadership from which a group's office bearers can be drawn. In some groups, only one person or just a few are ready, willing and apparently able to take responsibility. When it comes to discussing this item, if there is agreement that only few persons are at present capable of leadership positions, this gives the group just 1 point. If a majority is ready, willing and able to assume positions of responsibility, this warrants 2 points, and only if all are ready, willing and able can the group claim 3 points.

In assessing the potential leadership pool in the context of participatory M.&E., one has to examine it in dynamic terms - is the leadership pool growing or going down? Is there greater or less willingness among members to assume leadership positions or acquire leadership skills? These and other possible questions are related to evolving group performance and members' perceptions of the continuing relevance and efficiency of the groups and the benefits derived by collective action, which would not otherwise be available if each member acted or re-acted on their own.

In some groups there is just one person who runs things. He may do this because he likes the prestige and power, or because he thinks nobody else is capable or interested to take on responsibility for the group - or because nobody else has been identified by the group as a successor. He may be a very good and effective leader, but the pool from which leadership can be drawn for the group is very small, and this makes it very vulnerable. It deserves only 1 point in this situation, no matter how well it scores on other questions.

If after some discussion it is agreed that between a quarter and a half the members are willing and able to serve in leadership roles, this means the group has more capacity and thus can get 2 points in this regard. If a majority are willing and able, this puts the group in a strong position with regard to potential leadership and it should get 3 points, the top score.

Discussing this question focuses attention on who within the group is willing and able to serve in a leadership role? Some persons who have been overlooked - perhaps because they are relatively young, or because men do not think women would have the time and interest to take on responsible positions - may volunteer or may be suggested.
Everyone will learn, by discussing this item, who is in the category of "potential leader." This does not challenge the incumbent leader, but it lets him or her and all others know who else could share in carrying out group responsibilities. If very few can be identified, this suggests that the group should be "grooming" less active members for leadership responsibility by giving them small tasks to begin with. By considering this question will oblige a group to take seriously the question of the size and depth of its leadership pool.

Solutions to enlarge a limited pool will vary from group to group, but they will emerge once a group becomes conscious of deficiencies in this regard. Discussing this problem is not a criticism of the incumbent leader, so it should not threaten him (or her). It is in everyone's interest that the group be able to say during subsequent evaluations that on this question, it deserves a 2 instead of a 1 - and preferably a 3 instead of a 2. A look at the various questions will show how self-improvement can be initiated by considering how high or how low a group should be scored.

Monitoring. It might be expected that this would be the first and most important goal of any evaluation scheme, but self-evaluation, self-education and self-correction come first. In fact, this scheme can contribute to more useful monitoring and evaluation than the standard evaluation methods because this approach addresses the group's own goals.

Monitoring should proceed at two levels. IGAs, where they exist, should be monitoring the progress and performance of their constituent member groups. This means that the office bearers of an IGA should regularly review the self-evaluations of each member group and compare them:

First, with previous self-evaluation of the same group, to see what progress has been made and where performance may have gone backwards over base period and

Second, with self-evaluation of other groups in the same IGA, considering each group's performance in relative terms.

It is possible to calculate the simple average score for a group, and to compare such a score with its previous scores and with other groups' scores.
This will give a rough idea of (i) whether some progress has been made and (ii) whether or not the group is performing better than average (better than the average for all other groups). As discussed in Section IV, this methodology can be spoiled, however, if groups see themselves in competition with each other and thus fail to present the most honest self-assessment possible. Comparisons between groups, therefore, can be potentially damaging to the methodology if much attention is given to differences in average scores, especially if prizes or recognition are given on the basis of such scores. On the other hand, wise and sensitive IGA office-bearers can review the scores like "good elders" who are seeking to promote the welfare of everyone. In that case, their knowing which groups are having more or less success is in everyone's interest.

More significant will be some analysis and comparison of where a group or IGA is strong and where it is weak, by its own assessment and diagnosis. Monitoring areas of strength and weakness is more illuminating and helpful than comparing average scores because the latter cover up highs and lows. Thus it is advisable that high and low scores be more attended to than average scores in any monitoring use of this methodology.

Training and Support. Finally, the methodology can be used to design training and support efforts that will remedy the weaknesses that groups and IGAs themselves recognize and are prepared to try to correct so that they can judge themselves improved in future self-evaluations. If it is agreed that records of meetings are poorly kept, or that access to better technologies is inadequate, or financial resources are not secure, special training programmes can be designed to give members and/or office bearers the necessary information and skills. Depending on the nature of the problem, GPs may make special efforts such as arranging with the Extension Service to have its agents visit the groups more often, or negotiating with commercial banks to let the groups open special accounts.

Training programmes are too often designed on the basis of what outsiders think the groups should know, not finding out what the groups themselves think they need to know to achieve their immediate goals. People's attention will be more focused and training will be more effective if sessions deal with trainees' own perceived needs. This methodology will help to plan training initiatives which are targeted to specific problems and deficiencies.
When planning supporting activities for the groups and IGAs, GPs can review the self-evaluations to see where groups and IGAs feel they are not performing up to the highest standard. Where they see some groups and IGAs are achieving the top level of performance, they can study how and why this performance is achieved and can undertake their supporting activities based on what works, why it works and whether it works optimally for at least some groups and IGAs, rather than based on some hypothetical solutions.

Some thought also has to be given regarding the optimum size of a group. At initial stage it may be prudent to follow the maxim, "small is homogeneous, efficient and, therefore, beautiful". How small a group should be or can be will depend primarily on the basic or dominant activity(ies) for which it is formed or how dispersed or close the hamlets of the rural population. If it is a single purpose group (for example, for obtaining credit, it could be of seven or eleven people). If it is multi-purpose group the number may have to be higher for the sake of economies of scale. If it is a rural workers' organization, the number has to be much higher in order to have the necessary bargaining power with impact.

Again, the question of optimum size has to be periodically reviewed as progress is made or setback suffered. It is a moving par. With time, experience and confidence and extension of activities, beyond the original terms of reference, the size is very likely to increase in the interest of greater efficacy but within the limits dictated by considerations of homogeneity, inter-personal contact and confidence and feasibility of participatory M.&E.

**Self-Evaluation of and for IGAs**

The methodology that is presented here is illustrated with questions that are more geared for groups of rural people. However, it can be adapted for use by IGAs as well. IGAs using this methodology on a regular basis can achieve the benefits of self-education and self-improvement as described for groups. For monitoring, in addition to IGA officers and members keeping track of their own progress (or lack thereof), the staff members of and for the groups and any involved government or NGO officials will want to follow IGA performance over time and on a comparative basis (among IGAs). They will of course be interested in the performance of individual groups as well. It may actually be possible to have the groups that make up an IGA review its self-evaluation to get an idea of where it is or is not meeting expectations. The benefits of
improved training and support described above can be achieved for IGAs as much as for groups by targeting assistance to the areas of weakness that an IGA has itself identified.
SECTION III
THE INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M.&E.)

Although this methodology is an "external" one, prepared far from the rural communities, in the process of introducing it, both GPs and group members are expected to contribute their ideas and suggestions. By adapting it to local conditions and goals, they should be able to make this methodology into one that they rightfully regard as their own. The process of introducing it should proceed with at least the following six steps.

Step 1: Review and Screening of Questions by GPs.

The staff responsible for promoting evaluation should begin by meeting with as many GPs as can come together for one or two days to start the process of M. & E. GPs should have this guidelines in advance to read so they will be familiar with the subject to be discussed.

The first thing is to consider the purposes and philosophy of M.&E. The ideas in these guidelines can serve as a starting point. But participants in this first discussion should develop their own understanding through discussion and debate, leading toward some shared agreement for their programme.

A good exercise would be for a drafting sub-committee to prepare a one or two-page statement of the purposes and philosophy of participatory M.&E. This can be considered by the whole group and when agreed upon with any amendments, it can be used as the programme's own understanding and approach for conducting M.&E.

Next, the whole group should consider the list of draft questions which is presented in Part II. The list should first be reviewed as a whole, to get an overview of the scope of this methodology. Then the individual questions should be discussed. Some will appear relevant and useful for all groups, others may fit only certain groups, and some may not apply in a particular country's circumstances. Some with a change in wording may be judged appropriate for some, many or all groups. And such changes should be made.
The examples in the draft list may lead GPs to think of certain other questions that would be useful, and these can be worked out following the pattern presented by this methodology. Four alternative descriptive statements should be worded:

The first will describe an excellent condition worth 3 points where there is little room for improvement;

A second describes a very good situation worth 2 points but with definite room for improvement;

A third characterizes a reasonably good situation, worth only 1 point, leaving much room for improvement; and

A fourth presents a barely fair level of performance, worth zero points, calling for drastic improvements.

Groups should seldom perform so poorly that they rank in this last category, so there should be few demoralizing zeros in self-evaluation. But if they are deserved, they should be recorded. Groups should be able to give themselves at least 1 point on an item, most of the time, but they will also know what they have to do to rise to a 2 or a 3 in the next evaluation.

When GPs have reviewed the list, they will have their own list of questions they want to present to groups. It will probably be much shorter than the draft list included here. The long list is intended to stimulate ideas and not to be a burden because of its length. The list that emerges from the GPs' review may be only half as long as the list in Part II. It should include any additions that GPs wish to make.

**Step 2: Preparing Questions for Review with Groups.**

Once it is agreed which questions the GPs want to go forward with, these will then usually need to be translated into local language so that they will be readily understandable to group members and they will be comfortable with the wording. Very specific care should be taken that the wording of the questions and the alternative descriptive statement is simple and straightforward, the everyday language that adults use when talking among themselves.
Each question should be written on a separate card so that the physical form of this methodology is a pack of cards that can be tied up with string or kept in a box. If put on standard-sized cards, the questions can be stored in small standard card-file boxes. The questions are put on one side of the card, and the score that a group assigns itself can be recorded on the back of the card along with the date. For the first testing of the questions, however, this is not necessary. It should be noted that this methodology is designed so that no more than one member of the group needs to be familiar only with Arithmetic.

Step 3. Discussing the Methodology with Active Participants

The next step is for a small group of GPs to meet with half a dozen selected members or office bearers, who have shown the keenest sense of commitment to the programme and its goals. They will be the quickest to understand the purpose and the value of this methodology and to be able to give good feedback. The group should be told about the purpose and philosophy of self-evaluation, based on the statement prepared by the GPs at their initial review meeting.

The whole list of questions that came out of that meeting should be reviewed to get an overview of all the items and then the questions should be discussed with the members or office bearers one by one to get their feedback. Critical comments and suggestions should be encouraged, both as to whether the question is relevant and will contribute to self-strengthening of groups, and whether the question is worded in an easily understood way.

As a result of the discussion with these members, the list of questions will be somewhat changed with some questions dropped and some others added, and the wording of questions may be improved or amended according to suggestions made. The assembled members are the best judges of what wording will communicate most clearly and easily to other members.


With the revised and reworded set of questions, GPs should spend some time with about ten groups each of which is willing to go through this exercise on a trial basis. A GP will act as the group's self-evaluation facilitator, though in the future this role will be played by a group member chosen for this purpose. The only requirement is that he or she be literate, though an
enthusiastic personality is also helpful for getting active participation from members.

The GP and group will go through all the questions on a trial basis, seeking consensus from group members on which of the four descriptive statements best describes the group's situation with regard to the particular question. If there are any questions or objections about an item or its wording, this should be noted on the card. When the exercise is completed, the GP and the group should review those items where questions or objections were raised to clarify what the problem might be. Suggestions for improving the item should be entertained and noted down.

\section*{Step 5: Revisions Based on Initial Trials.}

When the methodology has been tested with the several groups the GPs should review the results and feedback they have received. If only one or two groups have difficulty with a question but the others find it reasonable, it can be kept in the set. Suggested improvements in wording that seem helpful, even if coming from only one group, can be made. Ideas for additional questions should be worked out with four alternative descriptive statements. Some testing of the wording for these should be done before they are included in the final set of questions. The result of this step will be a refined final set of questions which can be reproduced on cards as described above, with provision for recording results on the back.

\section*{Step 6: Introduction to Groups}

With the methodology pre-tested and revised in a participatory manner, with active involvement of GPs and groups, it is ready for use within a country programme. Even at this stage, however, the first year's use will be experimental, and suggestions from all groups are welcome so that they do not see this as simply being imposed from above.

The first time the methodology is used, a GP will take the lead in introducing it and starting the self-evaluation process, but the group should be asked to designate one member who will be their self-evaluation facilitator. This person will take over the process even during the first session once it has been started by the GP and he or she has been able to see how the GP presents the questions and leads the discussion.
The first step at this stage is for the group to review all the questions in the master set and to decide which of these are desirable objectives for the group. It may choose as few as half a dozen or as many as two dozen, but probably not more to begin with. If it wants to add some items already at this stage, it is free to do so, and the GP can help the group to describe four alternative conditions. (There should be some blank cards included in the pack provided to groups). Those questions not chosen by the group can be put together in a separate section of the pack or box.

Once there is agreement on which questions are to be used for the self-evaluation, the GP will begin discussion of each question one by one. (The GP will hand over this responsibility to the group member chosen as self-evaluation facilitator after it is clear the group and the facilitator have a good idea of how this process works). The score representing the statement which the group agrees on for each question should be written on the back of the card.

By putting the score on the back, it will not be visible when the cards are used again (probably a year later) and should not influence the evaluation at that time. If some members recollect the previous score or scores, this causes no problem. But it should be stressed that members are to focus on describing as best as they can the current situation. After they have agreed on this and have written it down, they can compare the score with earlier ones, seeing whether or not they have improved their level of performance.

When all the selected questions have been discussed and decided on, the group should review their scores on the cards and decide which ones represent the most significant shortcomings in performance for the group. It should decide on its own agenda for improvement which focuses on one, two, three or more things (but probably not more than half a dozen). It ought to discuss how best to make the improvements desired and it should agree on a plan of action to achieve the goals of better performance.

Follow-up: By the end of this first self-evaluation, the whole group should have a good understanding of how this methodology works and how they can continue to use it in the future. It is desirable to have a fixed date for doing this self-evaluation on an annual basis. After each self-evaluation has been done, the GP working with the group should review the evaluation results with the group officers, to reinforce the plan for dealing with any identified short
comings/bottlenecks. The results can be copied down by the GP and noted in the records each group keeps. Where there is an IGA, the results should be communicated to it for its consideration of how constituent groups are making progress (or not).

The group should find the self-evaluation worthwhile enough that it needs no persuasion from the GP to follow up with at least annual repeats. Groups can use this methodology as often as they like. In the event that a group is disinterested or so disorganized that it cannot conduct regular self-evaluations, the GP can give encouragement. But, disinclination to use this methodology may be indicative of other deficiencies.

Groups should not be forced to do self-evaluation if they are unwilling or unable to follow through. Where there is an IGA with active officers, they can encourage regular self-evaluations by all constituent groups. The GP should make every effort to get this process institutionalized within the groups and IGA so that its continuation does not depend on his or her efforts.
SECTION IV
ISSUES IN PARTICIPATORY SELF-EVALUATION

The approach of this methodology is amenable to considerable adaptation in its application. A number of issues can be identified of which supervisors and GPs should be aware.

The Problem of Language. Although numbers are used in this scheme, it is essentially more qualitative than quantitative. The success of this methodology depends on how well words are used and understood. For this reason, use of simple language has been stressed, with an emphasis on consulting the users of the methodology to get the best possible wording.

If members normally use a local language (even though they may be able to converse in English), the question should be translated into the local language. Literal translations should be avoided. Persons who are fluent in both languages and who understand the principles of participation and its goals should find wordings that are truly equivalent in meaning. Sometimes it is hard to make an idea expressed in one language understood in another language. If this happens, very free translations to capture the spirit of the question should be sought - or the question should be dropped.

Sometimes other languages may not have adjectives that can be used to construct the "four-level" alternatives shown in Part II. The word for "some" may mean something more like "most" or like "a few" than a number mid-way between "most" and "a few" as in English. It is not necessary that the four alternatives represent exactly equal steps along a continuum, but approximating this is desirable.

The key concept behind the methodology is that the first description represents an excellent situation and the fourth represents a dismal situation. In between (a) almost no room for improvement, and (d) immense scope for improvement there are two situations. One (b) is a good circumstance with some room for improvement but no major problems, while the other (c) is a poor situation which is in need of much improvement.

If the same wording is maintained over time and if all groups use the same terminology, anyone can see when progress is being made or when not. The
purpose of identifying which are the excellent and which are the dismal situations can be achieved with wordings that are only approximate. This is also true for identifying performance levels that are more good than poor - or more poor than good.

Having four alternatives rather than five pushes groups in the middle range of performance to decide whether they are more good than poor, or more poor than good, that is, whether their shortcoming in this regard is minor or major. If the methodology provided a middle alternative, groups might too quickly agree on this as a compromise, without exploring why some members think performance is poor or why others think it is good.

If a group cannot get consensus on their the second or their alternative, it can give itself a score of 1.5. This is a compromise between 1 and 2, which is all right if it best represents the group's situation. A group that thinks its performance is better than the second alternative but not perfect enough to match the first description could agree on a score of 2.5. While results get communicated in terms of numbers, it is still the words behind them that are the most important element of this methodology.

The Comparability of Numbers. The steps described for developing this methodology should produce questions and answers that are both reasonably valid and reliable in specific country settings. But since one is not conducting independent measures of each performance variable, people can always wonder how comparable the results are.

Since the principal purposes of this methodology are self-education and self-improvement, this problem of comparability of numbers is not as serious as with an activity whose sole purpose is evaluation. There are many benefits to be attained from the process of discussion within groups no matter how reliable and valid the results are for formal evaluation. But this system intends to help supervisors keep track of group performance too.

The methodology is clearly most reliable for monitoring the progress of individual groups by comparing them with their own previous self-evaluations. It should produce valid results also for comparing the performance of groups within a cluster where they know each other's work and have each other as implicit standards of comparison. The further one stretches comparison across
space or over time, the less sure one can be that similar increments are being identified and contrasted but this applies to more formal evaluation tools as well.

**Avoiding Errors.** There are two kinds of errors that groups can make in self-evaluation. They may think they are performing better than they really are, or they can underestimate how well they are performing. The following two principles may help to reduce such errors.

First, make it a policy that the results of this self-evaluation are not to be used for **either prizes or penalties.** The exercise is for a group's own self-strengthening. Those with the highest scores should not get any special financial or other rewards because their good performance should be ample reward in itself. Neither should low-scoring groups be embarrassed or otherwise punished. Poor performance should prompt GPs and others to make greater efforts to help raise the level of performance, which benefits members. If some external rewards or punishments result from this exercise, groups may score themselves higher on the scale than they know they deserve.

Second, the process of deciding on what score the group should have on a particular item should never be hurried. The GP or group member facilitating the discussion should not move on quickly to the next item but instead should solicit all members to comment on the question, voicing any opinions or experience they think are relevant. If discussion is slow to begin with, this should be accepted. Once the group becomes familiar with the process, ideas will flow. The facilitator indeed will then more likely have the problem of moving discussion along because each item could take an hour. But 15-20 minutes for an item is not too much. Once discussion starts flowing, shortcomings that have been ignored or suppressed will come to the surface and honesty is likely to prevail. Experience suggests that people's groups are if anything too critical of their limitations rather than blind to these.

**Making Comparisons.** For purposes of comparison, as noted already, a group's previous assessments of its performance are most relevant. Where has progress been made, and where not? Have there been improvements made on
those items put on last year's agenda for action? These questions are certainly the most important.

From a participatory rural development programme supervisor's point of view, however, it may be desirable to have some overall picture of group performance, not just to compare groups with themselves. For this, calculating average scores will give some idea of performance trends. It will be good to "track" not just the average score for all groups, but to have average scores for all groups on a particular item, like repayment of loans or size of leadership pool. Rather than just know total trends, it will be instructive to see what if any improvement is being made in particular categories of interest to those responsible for performance.

In order to monitor overall performance and progress of groups in an area or in a whole country programme, supervisors may think it desirable to have some common set of core questions that all groups will address on a regular basis. This gives some basis for making standardized comparisons, though it should be kept in mind that comparisons based on individual questions will be less valid and revealing than careful study of the groups' total self-evaluations.

A small set of standard questions will also call groups' attention to things that the Programme itself gives priority to. For example, including a question about women's participation in all group self-evaluations should increase awareness about the extent to which women have an active role in group management. (If a group has no women members, the fact that it must consider the question on a regular basis may suggest to the men that it should open up their membership). If a programme has a large credit component and repayment of loans presents a special difficulty, having all groups consider their repayment record annually is one way to heighten consciousness and improve performance in this regard.

However, supervisors must realize that specifying some common "core" questions for all groups' self-evaluation represents a compromise with the principle that this methodology "belongs" to the groups and not to the Programme. It is likely that these "core" items will be ones that the groups would select for themselves anyway, especially if the choice of standard questions is made with the IGAs. After individual groups have chosen the set of questions they want to consider on a regular basis, the GP may ask them to
add a few more questions for the sake of strengthening the Programme as a whole. If there is resistance and CPs cannot easily persuade members of the value of these additional questions, any that are objected to should be dropped rather than impose them on a group. Where there is a lack of rapport, this indicates a potential problem for the Programme.

The Problem of Objectivity. It may be thought that this methodology is limited as an evaluation tool because it is entirely "subjective". In fact, if the scores are recorded only after some collective discussion, 10-15 minutes, may be even half an hour, during which time members compare their understanding and assessment of the "true situation" in their group, considerable "objectivity" is gained. It can be argued that this method is more objective than when an outsider comes in with an interview schedule and asks questions of individuals, who do not have to compare and justify their views in front of one another. They have no obligation to speak truthfully or fully with this outsider whom they do not know and who probably knows little about the workings of the group anyway. Their misunderstanding of his questions and his misunderstandings of their answers are likely to add up to significant miscommunication.

With this field methodology, the Group-based Programme is taking a large step toward operationalizing and institutionalizing its philosophy of self-reliant, participatory development. Even without the services of a GP, each group and IGA can continue this method of self-evaluation for as long as it exists, making whatever modifications are thought to be useful. In its box of self-evaluation cards, the group or IGA can maintain a history of its progress made over many years. Where members conclude that improvements have been made, or where they find that their performance has deteriorated, this is recorded by themselves and for themselves. In their hands is placed a power to self-identity and self-correct problems that should make collective action a greater force for development at the grassroots than has been seen before.
PART II: QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPATORY M. & E.

INVENTORY OF QUESTIONS

I. GROUP OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Style of Management: How are group activities managed?
3 = Decisions are always made with all members’ knowledge and participation.
2 = Decisions are usually made with all members’ knowledge and participation.
1 = Decisions are sometimes made with all members’ knowledge and participation.
0 = Decisions are never made with all members’ knowledge and participation.

Sharing of Responsibility (within group):
How widely are responsibilities for group activities shared?
3 = Most of all members have responsibility as office bearers, committee members, or in other roles.
2 = Many members have such responsibilities.
1 = Some members have such responsibilities.
0 = Only a few members have such responsibilities.

Supervision of Office Bearers: (by members)
How informed are the members of their representatives’ activities?
3 = Members are very active and informed in keeping track of what their representatives do on behalf of the group.
2 = Members are sometimes active and informed in keeping track of what their representatives do.
1 = Members are from time to time active and informed in keeping track of what their representatives do.
0 = Members pay no attention to their representatives’ activities.
Rotation of Office Bearers: How much sharing of responsibilities is there?
3 - Office bearers serve a fixed term and then others are elected to take their places.
2 - Office bearers are replaced from time to time but not regularly.
1 - Office bearers can be replaced if they do not perform well.
0 - Office bearers once chosen remain in their posts indefinitely.

Pool of Leadership: How large is the number of persons from whom the group can draw its leaders?
3 - Most members are ready, willing and able to assume positions of leadership in the group.
2 - A quarter to a half of members are ready, willing and able to assume positions of leadership.
1 - Only one or two members are ready, willing and able to be leaders.
0 - Nobody is ready, willing or able to assume leadership.

Specialized Functions: How much organization is there in the group to provide certain kinds of expertise, supervision, etc.?
3 - Group has many specialized sub-committees to deal with particular tasks like marketing, training, book-keeping, etc.
2 - Group has some specialized sub-committees to deal with particular tasks.
1 - Group has at least one specialized sub-committee.
0 - Group has no specialized sub-committees.

B. MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATION
Frequency of Meetings: How often are group meetings held?
3 - Weekly and whenever needed.
2 - At least monthly and more often if needed.
1 - At least every two months on average.
0 - Irregularly.

Decision Making Method: How are decisions made?
3 - By consensus with agreement reached by all.
2 - By majority vote.
1 - By group office bearers.
0 - Not made in any regular way.
(Note that by consensus (3) or by majority vote (2), members can decide that their representatives should make certain decisions on behalf of the group. This indicates group solidarity and organizational capability rather than the opposite).

**Speed and Effectiveness of Decision Making:** How quickly are decisions made and with what likelihood that they will be implemented?

3 = Decisions as a rule are made quickly and effectively implemented.
2 = Decisions are generally made quickly but not always followed up.
1 = Decisions are only sometimes made quickly and effectively followed-up.
0 = Decisions take a long time and are seldom effectively implemented.

**Member Participation:** How fully do members participate in the decision-making and work of the Group?

3 = All members participate actively in meetings and group activities. Everyone feels free to speak up and play an active role.
2 = Most members participate actively in meetings and group activities.
1 = Some members participate actively in meetings and group activities.
0 = Few members participate actively in meetings and group activities.

**Women's Participation:** How fully and actively do women participate in the operation and management of the group?

3 = Women participate as fully as men in running the group.
2 = Women participate almost as fully in running the group.
1 = Women participate somewhat in running the group.
0 = Women do not participate in running the group.

**Productivity of Meetings:** How productive are group meetings?

3 = Group meetings are always very productive; time is well spent; decision clearly made and followed up.
2 = Group meetings are usually reasonably productive.
1 = Group meetings are sometimes productive.
0 = Group meetings are never productive.

**Attendance at Meetings:** How many members usually come to meetings?

3 = Almost all members usually come; average attendance over 90%.
Most members usually come; average attendance 70-90%.
A majority of members usually come; average attendance 50-70%.
Less than a majority usually come; average attendance under 50%.

Records of Meetings: Does group keep useful minutes of meetings?
Secretary always keeps complete and correct minutes.
Secretary usually keeps reasonably accurate minutes.
Somebody usually keeps some minutes of meetings.
Nobody keeps any useful minutes.

Progress Reports: Does group maintain and utilize progress reports?
Group has and pays attention to monthly progress reports.
Group has and pays attention to quarterly or less frequent progress reports.
Group has occasional progress reports.
Group has no progress reports.

Facilities for Meetings: How well provided for are group meetings?
Meetings are held in a comfortable and congenial setting, either through having a regular meeting place or a satisfactory rotation among members' homes.
Meetings are held in a satisfactory place for everybody.
Meetings are sometimes held in a satisfactory place.
Meetings are held in uncomfortable and uncongenial settings.

C. OPERATION OF GROUP

Constitution and By-Laws: Does the group have a written basis?
Group has clear and adequate constitution and by-laws.
Group has some written basis for electing office bearers, holding meetings, handling funds, etc.
Group has some agreed precedents for electing office bearers holding meeting, handling funds etc.
Group has no basis for electing office bearers, holding meeting and handling funds etc.

(Note that a group need not start with formal written documents; they can operate by consensus and indeed may be more effective beginning this
way; but for continuity and minimizing misunderstandings and problems later on some written basis for group operation is desired).

**Communication:** How good is communication within the group?
- 3 = All members are always kept informed about plans, programmes, etc.
- 2 = Most members are usually kept informed.
- 1 = Some members are generally kept informed.
- 0 = No member is as a rule kept informed.

**Quality of Discussion:** How do members communicate with one another?
- 3 = There is always frank and constructive discussion.
- 2 = There is usually frank and constructive discussion.
- 1 = There is sometimes frank and constructive discussion.
- 0 = There is seldom frank and constructive discussion.

**Interpersonal Relations:** How do members relate to one another?
- 3 = All members maintain friendly and mutually supportive relations.
- 2 = Most members maintain friendly and supportive relations.
- 1 = Some members maintain friendly and supportive relations.
- 0 = No member maintains friendly and supportive relations.

**Discipline:** How is a group able to deal with problems among members, such as laziness, non-attendance of meetings, shrinking duty, or stealing group property, if these arise? Are there provisions for fines, or even expulsion from membership in serious cases?
- 3 = Group is able to impose and get accepted any penalties for behaviour judged by other members to be harmful to it.
- 2 = Group is able to persuade any members to stop or avoid harmful behaviour.
- 1 = Group is sometimes able to stop harmful behaviour by members.
- 0 = Group is unable to prevent or avoid harmful behaviour.
(Note that (3) is not to be judged as necessarily "better" than (2) since persuasion may be preferable to penalties; but the possibility of penalties (3) usually makes persuasion (2) more effective and it for this reason represents greater group capability).

**Assignment of Tasks:** Are all members clear about their tasks within group and satisfied that these are assigned fairly?
3 = All members are clear about tasks and consider them fair.
2 = Most members are clear about tasks and consider them fair.
1 = Some members are clear about tasks and consider them fair.
0 = Few members are clear about tasks and consider them fair.

**Conflict Management:** How able is a group to resolve conflicts?
3 = Group is always able to resolve conflicts among members and with any external bodies.
2 = Group is usually able to resolve such conflicts.
1 = Group is sometimes able to resolve such conflicts.
0 = Group is never able to resolve such conflicts.

**Problem-Solving:** Is a systematic problem-solving approach followed?
3 = Always
2 = Usually
1 = Sometimes
0 = Never.

D. **WORK OF GROUP**

**Work Plan:** Are group activities guided by a suitable work plan?
3 = Group follows detailed but flexible plan that is worked out in advance with members' agreement.
2 = Group has a firm work plan but it has some shortcomings that can be corrected with experience.
1 = Group has an incomplete work plan that needs improvement.
0 = Group has no work plan, everything done on an ad hoc basis.

**Assistance of Group Promoters:** Does the group assist the Group Promoter in his or her work?
3 = Group actively assists GP and takes initiative to go beyond his or her suggestions.
2 = Group assists GP and goes beyond his or her suggestions.
1 = Group accepts GP and his or her suggestions.
0 = Group is indifferent to GP and to his or her suggestions.

**Group Goals:** How well are group goals understood by all members?
3 = Goals are understood by all members.
2 = Goals are understood by most members.
1 = Goals are understood by some members.
0 = Goals are understood by no members.
(When discussing this question, members may ask each other to say what they understand to be the group's goals, to test whether there is agreement on them).

**Group Achievement:** How well are the goals of the group achieved?
3 = Goals are fully achieved.
2 = Goals are generally achieved.
1 = Goals are partly achieved.
0 = Goals are not at all achieved.
(In discussing this question, the group may usefully discuss also the reasons why members may think the goals are not being fully achieved.)

**Group Work:** How is group work shared among members?
3 = Group work is clearly and fairly shared among all members?
2 = Group work is participated in by most members.
1 = Group work is done by some members.
0 = Group work is not clearly or fairly shared.

**Contributions:** How much and how willingly do members contribute inputs and implements etc. to the work of the group?
3 = All members contribute inputs, implements, etc. whenever needed.
2 = Most members usually contribute inputs and implements, etc. when needed.
1 = Some members contribute inputs and implements, etc. when needed.
0 = Members never contribute inputs and implements, etc. when needed.

**II. ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE**

**Income Generation:** To what extent has the group succeeded in income generation?
3 = Group has been very successful in raising incomes of members.
2 = Group has been fairly successful in raising incomes of members.
1 = Group has been a bit successful in raising incomes of members.
0 = Groups has been unsuccessful in raising incomes of members.
Economic Diversification: To what extent is group able to diversify economic activities, for example, to take up village based non-farm activities?
3 = Group has diversified into many economic activities.
2 = Group has diversified into several economic activities
1 = Group has diversified into one new economic activity.
0 = Group has diversified into no new economic activities.

Expansion: How successful are activities as judged by expansion of scale?
3 = The scale of group activities has increased remarkably.
2 = The scale of group activities has increased somewhat.
1 = The scale of group activities has remained constant.
0 = The scale of group activities has had to be reduced.

Production: Has output of goods or services increased?
3 = Acreage planted and/or yields in agricultural activities, or output of non-agricultural activities have increased substantially.
2 = Acreage, yields or output have definitely increased.
1 = Acreage, yields or output have increased a little.
0 = Acreage, yields or output have not increased or even declined.

Production Credit: Has group facilitated members getting access to credit when needed for productive activities?
3 = All members now able to get whatever credit they need with or without security.
2 = Most members able to get credit when needed with or without security.
1 = Some members able to get credit when needed with or without security.
0 = No member is able to get credit when they needed it with or without security.

Emergency Loans: Has group established fund or mechanism so members can get emergency loan when they need it (e.g. for medical emergency or other crisis situation) so members need not go to moneylenders?
3 = All members are able to get emergency loans and avoid indebtedness and impoverishing mortgages to outsiders.
2 = Most members are able to get emergency loans.
1 = Some members are able to get emergency loans.  
0 = No member is able to get emergency loans.

**Assets:** How much has the group increased its assets (the combined value of fixed capital, equipment, working capital, inventories, savings, etc.)
3 = Group has substantially increased the value of its assets.  
2 = Group has somewhat increased the value of its assets.  
1 = Group has managed to maintain the value of its assets.  
0 = Group has not maintained the value of its assets.

**Savings:** How has the group built up and managed its group fund?
3 = Group has rapidly increased its group fund through savings and is using these savings for substantial group benefit.  
2 = Group has increased its group fund with savings used for group benefit.  
1 = Group has made some increase in its group fund but is not using this for group benefit.  
0 = Group has not increased its group fund.

**Group Purchases:** Does group engage in bulk purchases of production inputs, capital goods, or consumer goods to reduce the prices members would otherwise pay?
3 = Group makes regular beneficial purchases on behalf of members.  
2 = Group makes occasional beneficial purchases for members.  
1 = Group makes a few purchases to aid members.  
0 = Group makes no purchases to aid members.

### III. TECHNICAL OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

**Improved Technologies:** To what extent are members getting access to and using improved technologies?
3 = All members are acquiring knowledge of better technology.  
2 = Most members are acquiring knowledge of better technology.  
1 = Some members are acquiring knowledge of better technology.  
0 = No member is acquiring knowledge of better technology.

**Local Technologies:** To what extent does the group rely on locally-known technologies, local equipment and locally available materials?
3 = Local technologies, equipment, etc. are fully utilized.
2 = Local technologies, equipment, etc. are frequently utilized.
1 = Local technologies, equipment, etc. are somewhat utilized.
0 = Local technologies, equipment and materials are not utilized.

Technical Information: To what extent is group working with extension personnel? (Which personnel is relevant depends on group's and members' needs. They could be for agriculture, fisheries, marketing, small-scale industry, credit etc.)
3 = Group has regular and fruitful interactions with extension personnel (through visits to extension agents, visits by agents, written materials, etc).
2 = Group has fairly good interactions with extension agents.
1 = Group has little interaction with extension agents.
0 = Group has no interaction with extension personnel.

Maintenance: Does the group make provision for maintenance (as well as protection) of its equipment and facilities? This includes maintenance and repair of any buildings (shed, storehouse), vehicles (truck, motorcycles), equipment (grinding mill, pumps, saws, etc.)
3 = Group carries out excellent regular maintenance, so that there are no or very few breakdowns and no avoidable deterioration.
2 = Group does reasonably good and thorough maintenance.
1 = Group does some irregular maintenance.
0 = Group does no maintenance.

Quality Control: Does the group monitor and improve quality, especially in producing non-agricultural goods and services?
3 = Group is organized for regular and rigorous quality control.
2 = Group is increasing its consciousness of the need for and is making provisions for quality control.
1 = Group is becoming aware of need for quality control.
0 = There is no consideration of quality control.

Technical Responsibilities: How active and responsible are members for maintaining the technical performance of the group?
3 = All members feel responsible for maintaining and improving the technical performance of the activity, such as early detection of crop pests or diseases or sharpening grinder blades before they get blunt.
2 = Most members feel responsible for technical performance.
1 = At least few members feel responsible for technical performance.
0 = No member feels responsibility for technical performance.

Technical Diffusion: Does technical know-how introduced and learnt in group activities get adopted by members in their individual or family activities, or by friends and neighbours?
3 = Technical knowledge gets widely and quickly spread.
2 = Technical knowledge gets often spread.
1 = Technical knowledge gets somewhat spread.
0 = Technical knowledge never gets spread.

IV. FINANCIAL OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

Financial Affairs: How is the business of the group managed?
3 = All members are informed and involved in financial decisions.
2 = Most members are informed and involved in financial decisions.
1 = Some members are informed and involved in financial decisions.
0 = Members are not informed and involved in financial decisions. Everything is managed by the group president or treasurer.

Financial Records: How are accounts and other records maintained?
3 = Group keeps thorough and detailed written records of its production activities and all financial transactions.
2 = Group keeps some written records of its production activities and financial transactions.
1 = Group keeps a few written production and financial records.
0 = Group keeps no written production and financial records.

Depreciation: Does the group make provision for depreciation of its equipment and facilities? Does it set aside funds to replace the physical assets of the group when they are no longer functional, or has it made provision to get loans for replacement when needed?
3 = Group fully sets aside funds to maintain its physical assets.
2 = Group fairly well sets aside funds to maintain its assets over time.
1 = Group somewhat sets aside funds to maintain its assets over time.  
0 = Group does not at all set aside funds to maintain its assets over time.

**Profits:** How does the group handle the profits from its economic activities?  
3 = Group saves and reinvests all profits for expansion of activities.  
2 = Group saves and reinvests some profits.  
1 = Group saves and reinvests few profits.  
0 = Group saves and reinvests no profits.

**Repayment of Loans:** How promptly and fully do members repay loans?  
3 = All members repay their loans promptly and fully.  
2 = Most members repay their loans promptly and fully.  
1 = Some members repay their loans on time and sufficiently.  
0 = Few or no members repay their loans when due.

**Security of Resources:** How are the group's financial resources kept?  
3 = All group funds are kept securely in a bank account drawing interest.  
2 = Group funds are kept securely in a bank account without interest or are loaned out non-institutionally to draw interest.  
1 = Group funds are sometimes kept in bank or loaned out carefully.  
0 = Group funds are left in individual hands or are loaned out privately without assurance of repayment.

**Contributions of Resources:** How adequate are contributions?  
3 = Members contributions are fully sufficient and fair.  
2 = Members contributions are substantial and usually fair.  
1 = Members contributions are modest and not often unfair.  
0 = Members contributions are insignificant or unfair.

**Inventories:** How does the group manage the stock of products it has manufactured and/or the crops it has produced?  
3 = Inventories are very well managed and maintained, with no spoilage of stock, or no excess build-up of unsold goods.  
2 = Inventory is fairly well managed with little spoilage or build up.  
1 = Inventory is periodically managed with some avoidable spoilage or build-up, imposing some costs on the group.
Inventory is not managed resulting in substantial spoilage and/or build-up. So group incurs serious losses.

V. GROUP INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND SELF-RELIANCE

A. POTENTIAL AUTONOMY

Progress toward Self-Reliance: How dependent is the group upon the Group Promoters?

3 = Group can now or very soon operate essentially on its own with only minimal assistance from GP and programme.

2 = Group can within 6-12 months operate on its own with minimal assistance from GP and programme.

1 = Group can within 12-24 months operate on its own with minimal assistance from GP and programme.

0 = Group cannot within foreseeable future operate on its own.

(Length of time specified for categories 2 and 1 for ending dependence on GP can vary from country programme to country programme, so these numbers should be specified with regard to specific conditions).

Independence from Group Promoter: How able is the group to operate without direction or intervention of GP?

3 = Group always tries to solve a problem itself before taking it up with the GP.

2 = Group often tries to solve a problem by itself before seeking the help of GP.

1 = Group occasionally tries to solve a problem by itself.

0 = Group never tries to solve a problem by itself.

Meetings without Group Promoter: How well does the group carry on its meetings without Group Promoter?

3 = Group is able to meet regularly and effectively without GP.

2 = Group can meet without GP, but GP's periodic attendance of meetings is necessary for regular and effective meetings.

1 = Group can from time to time meet effectively without GP.

0 = Group cannot meet successfully without the presence of GP.

Legal Status: What is the legal status of the group?
3 = Group has **all necessary recognition and approval** to be able to get loans, hold property, etc.
2 = Group has **some ability** to get loans, hold property, etc.
1 = Group has **plans** for getting recognition and approval.
0 = Group has **no legal status** and **no plans** for getting it.

**Resource Mobilization:** To what extent is the group able to mobilize resources from within group and/or externally to meet its needs?
3 = Group can now **always** mobilize resources from savings, loans, sales or other means to meet its financial needs.
2 = Group can mobilize **most** of the resources it needs now from its own resources or from outside.
1 = Group can mobilize **some** resources internally or externally.
0 = Group is **unable** to mobilize resources to meet its needs.

**Broader Benefits:** How able is the group to produce benefits beyond those to group members as group members? Are benefits being generated also for individuals and for the community?
3 = Group has produced and is producing **substantial benefits beyond** its original economic activities, such as building a school or repairing roads.
2 = Group has created **some benefits beyond** its original economic activities.
1 = Group **has considered** producing benefits which are **not** in its original plan.
0 = Group has undertaken and is concerned **only** with original activities.

**B. MEMBERSHIP BASE**

**Group Solidarity:** Do members help each other apart from group activities?
3 = Group members **frequently** help each other with planting, harvesting, loans, or other acts of service to others.
2 = Members **sometimes** help each other.
1 = Members **once in a while** help each other.
0 = Members **never** help each other.

**Knowledge Sharing:** Do members who get training **share their new knowledge** with others?
3 = Group actively provides for the sharing of members' new knowledge and skills with others and even persons outside the group.
2 = Group supports sharing of members' new knowledge.
1 = Sharing of new knowledge occurs only at individual initiative.
0 = There is no sharing of new knowledge.

Members' Self Confidence: Do members show increased self-confidence as result of participation in group activities?
3 = All members have gained much self-confidence from group.
2 = Most members have gained some self-confidence from group.
1 = Some members have gained some self-confidence from group.
0 = Members have not gained any self-confidence from group.

Membership Growth: Has group membership grown? Or have new groups arisen alongside the original group?
3 = Group has enjoyed substantial increase in membership, or to keep its size small, parallel group or groups have been started because others have been impressed with the group's accomplishments.
2 = Group has enjoyed some increase in membership.
1 = Group has had no increase in membership.
0 = Group has had a decline in membership.

Reasons for Group Formation: Why was the group formed?
3 = Because of shared conviction that collective self-help would improve position of all members.
2 = Because some members had conviction about collective self-help and others anticipated personal benefits.
1 = Because members anticipated cheaper credit or other material inducements.
0 = Because Group Promoter got people together, not that they had any clear idea about purposes of group action.

Ensuring Effective Leadership: Does the group have capability or experience in replacing ineffective leadership?
3 = Group has replaced ineffective leadership or is very confident that it could and would do so. It has specific procedures and provisions for this.
2 = Group agrees that it should and could replace ineffective leadership.
1 = Group is **willing to consider** replacing ineffective leadership.
0 = Group is **afraid** to take action to replace ineffective leaders.

## C. KNOWLEDGE BASE

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** How does the group get and ensure feedback on its performance?
3 = Group has **well established procedures and roles** for monitoring and evaluating group performance.
2 = Group has **periodic** monitoring and evaluation of its performance.
1 = Group has **occasional** monitoring and evaluation of its performance.
0 = Group has **no provision** for monitoring and evaluating performance.

**Evaluation for Self-Management:** Does the group use participatory monitoring and evaluation for improving capacities of organization?
3 = Group maintains **good records and analyzes them regularly.**
2 = Group maintains records and analyzes them **periodically.**
1 = Group maintains **some records and considers them.**
0 = Group maintains **no records.**

**Experimental Approach:** Do the members adopt an empirical, trial-and-error method to experiment with and test innovations?
3 = **All members are very active** in innovative experiments.
2 = **Some members are very active** in innovative experiments.
1 = **A few members are active** in innovative experiments.
0 = **No member is active** in innovative experiments.

## D. BROADENING THE BASE

**Spreading the Programme:** Does the group take initiative to spread programme to other areas and other groups?
3 = Group has helped **numerous other groups** to get started or to become more successful.
2 = Group has helped **some other groups** to get started or to become more successful.
1 = Group has helped **one other group** to get started or become more successful.
0 = Group has **not helped** other groups.
Linkages Outside Programme: How does the group relate to government agencies?
3 = Group has excellent interaction with many relevant agencies that can help it achieve its goals.
2 = Group has some good interaction with several relevant agencies.
1 = Group has few linkages with IGA and NGOs, or outside programme.
0 = Group has no reliable linkages with IGA or NGOs, or even outside programme.

Linkages with Other Local Organizations: Does group have linkages with other groups at the local level, like co-operatives, religious associations, youth clubs, etc.?
3 = Group has very active and good co-operation with other voluntary organizations at local level.
2 = Group has some very good co-operation with other voluntary organizations at local level.
1 = Group has at least one co-operative link with another voluntary organization at local level.
0 = Group has no links with other voluntary organizations.

Support of Programme at Several Levels: Does Inter-Group Association (IGA) monitor and assist groups with programme?
3 = IGA actively and effectively oversees group activities and takes steps to help weaker groups, utilizing the skills and experience of stronger groups.
2 = IGA undertakes some monitoring and assistance of groups.
1 = IGA has plans for monitoring and assisting groups.
0 = IGA does not exist or does nothing to help groups.

Community Support: How much understanding and support has the group created within the community?
3 = Group enjoys strong and enthusiastic support from the community at large for its activities and continuation.
2 = Group has good understanding and support from some parts of the community, such as chief or local administrators.
1 = Group has little understanding and support from the community.
0 = Group has no understanding and support from the community.
Abilities To Resist Pressures: How able is the group to withstand economic or social pressure from opponents of collective self-reliance, such as merchants or shopkeepers who lose from group bulk purchase of consumer goods or officials who want to keep rural people dependent?

3 = Group is fully united to resist hostile outside pressures.
2 = Group is generally united in resisting pressures.
1 = Group is somewhat united in resisting pressures.
0 = Group is not at all united in resisting pressures.

Continuation of Groups: How confident is the group that it can maintain itself after an externally-assisted programme is withdrawn some time in the future?

3 = Group is quite confident it can maintain itself on its own.
2 = Group is somewhat confident it can maintain itself on its own.
1 = Group thinks it might be able to maintain itself on its own.
0 = Group lacks confidence it can maintain itself on its own.

VI. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Access to Assets: Does the group have access to needed resources such as land for growing crops or to oxen and ploughs for ploughing?

3 = Group has assured access to all required resources.
2 = Group has usual access to required resources.
1 = Group has occasional access to required resources.
0 = Group has no access to required resources.

Reducing Inequalities: Does the group through its activities contribute to more equitable income and status of its members (and others)?

3 = Group contributes substantially to equalizing opportunities and outcomes for members (and others in the community).
2 = Group contributes somewhat to equalizing opportunities and outcomes.
1 = Group does not make opportunities and outcomes more inequitable.
0 = Group contributes to the maintenance and increase of inequity in opportunities and outcomes.

Improvements in Nutrition: Has food intake increased and/or is there a better choice of food as a result of the group activities?
3 - Members and their families enjoy greater amount and better variety of food as a result of group activities (directly through group production activities or indirectly as result of income earned).

2 - Members and their families enjoy improved amounts and variety of food as a result of group activities.

1 - Members and their families have some improvement in the amount or variety of food as a result of group activities.

0 - Members and their families have no improvement.

Literacy: Has the group activity contributed to the spread of literacy where this was limited before?
3 - Group has helped or encouraged all members to become literate.
2 - Group has helped or encouraged some members to become literate.
1 - Group has helped or encouraged a few members to become literate.
0 - Group has helped or encouraged no member to become literate.

Health Improvements: Has the group taken steps to increase its members' knowledge and practices for preventing illness and reducing its effects, such as malaria prevention and control or vaccination of children or improved sanitation in community?
3 - All members have much better health knowledge and practices.
2 - Most members have better health knowledge and practices.
1 - Some members have better health knowledge and practices.
0 - No member has better health knowledge and practices.

Socially Undesirable Activities: How conscious are the groups of the social effects of their activities?
3 - Group is unwilling to undertake activities that have negative social consequences even if these generate income.
2 - Group is concerned about activities with negative social consequences and tries to avoid or reduce these.
1 - Group at least acknowledges negative social consequences of certain activities.
0 - Group is oblivious or unconcerned about negative social consequences.
Environmental Protection: Does the group take action to protect and improve the natural environment by planting trees, combating erosion, etc.?
3 = Group has active programme to protect/improve environment.
2 = Group has several activities to protect/improve environment.
1 = Group has one or two activities to protect and improve environment.
0 = Group does nothing to protect and improve environment.

Agricultural Improvement: Do the members participate in agricultural shows and other activities that promote a better level of productivity and status of agriculture?
3 = Members are very active in agricultural activities outside and inside community.
2 = Members are somewhat active in agricultural activities.
1 = Members are occasionally active in agricultural activities.
0 = Members are never active in agricultural activities.

Breaking Impediments: How successful is the group in identifying and removing barriers to higher level of productive activity?
3 = Group has been able to make major improvements in members' situation, such as ensuring timely and adequate delivery of fertilizer before planting season.
2 = Group has been able to make several improvement.
1 = Group has been able to make at least one improvement.
0 = Group has been unable to break any impediments to increased production.

Balanced Programme: Does the group strive for and maintain a balance between economic (individual benefit) and social (community benefit) activities?
3 = Group has active programme of both economic and social activities.
2 = Group has active programme of either economic activity or social activity with some of the other kind of activity.
1 = Group has some economic activities or some social activities, but not both.
0 = Group has little programme for either kind of activities.
PART III

FORM 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE GROUP

This form contains the basic information on the group as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(A) 1. Name of group:</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Change (New members/new activities)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Village:</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Cluster:</td>
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<td>4. Year when it was started:</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Name of Group Promoters:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(B) List of members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Change (New members/new activities)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<th>Under</th>
<th>Over</th>
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<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer

(C) Main Group Activities
(What is the group producing together)
GUIDE TO FORM 1A: REPORT OF GROUP MEETING

Purpose: To keep track of the frequency and substance of Group meetings; to monitor participation in them and to provide a basis for pinpointing recurrent problems.

To be completed by: Secretary of the Group or some other person chosen by the Group to keep records.

To be forwarded to: Group Promoter, so that in case if he/she was absent, the substance of the meeting is known and can be monitored and followed up as necessary.

This form should be completed in two copies, one is to be retained by the Group for its records, and the other sent to the Group Promoter.

Length of Meeting: In hours with fractions like half or quarter of an hour; this can be very approximate.

Current Number of Group Members: How many members (men and women) the Group considers to be members.

Number of Group Members Present: How many members (men and women) came for at least part of the meeting.

Presence of Group Promoter: Circle Yes or No to indicate whether or not a Group Promoter attended at least part of the meeting.

Matters Discussed: Briefly describe questions, problems, items brought up for discussion at meeting, indicating who raised them, if this seems important.

Result of Discussion: Briefly describe any decisions taken, any agreements reached, any action planned, or if possible, any result achieved.
FORM 1A: RECORD OF GROUP MEETING
(to be completed by the Secretary of the Group)

Date of Meeting

Length of Meeting

Inspected by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Number of Group Members</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Group Members Present</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Members Present Who Participated in Discussion</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presence of Group Promoter

|  □ Yes  |  □ No |

MATTERS DISCUSSED:  

<table>
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<tr>
<th>RESULT OF DISCUSSION</th>
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<td>1.</td>
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GUIDE TO FORM 2: GROUP PROMOTER'S SEASONAL REPORT

Purpose: To summarize the activity and participation levels of all the Groups in each area served by a Group Promoter; to compare these levels with those in the previous period (previous season), to know whether and how much progress is being made by the Groups as a whole.

To be completed by: Group Promoters and forwarded to the Project Co-ordinator of the area.

These reports should be completed at certain pre-determined periodicity depending on the nature of activities.

Period covered: Period I, II or III. The first time this Report is completed, it will not be possible or necessary to give information on Last Period.

To be compiled by the Project Co-ordinator to have a profile for all the Groups of the Area, for review and for taking problem-solving action; if necessary. He/She will compile a composite report for the Area which will be forwarded to the Local Management Board or Project Implementation Committee, and others concerned following the established chain of communications.

1. Number of Groups and Members: Total from General Information on the Group (Form 1), including Record of Group Meetings (Form 1A).

Type of Group:

(i) Listing of number of groups and members by primary activity,

(ii) Listing of members by gender: is intended to give the break-down by sex and provide record to show the ratio of female membership to male membership; which will indicate how balanced or imbalanced is female participation.

(iii) Under 25/Over 25: This breakdown of membership by age is intended to give an idea whether younger persons are well represented
within the groups. The categorization of members as "under 25" or "over 25" can be approximate.

2. **Potential Member Households**: An estimated number of all the households in the communities; where there are groups that might ideally be brought together organizationally because of their need and would benefit from collective self-reliance effort. This number should be estimated by each Group Promoter (GP) when he/she starts organizing a group to have an idea of the target against which to assess how complete the coverage has become. It need not be revised unless there are substantial changes in population. The number of households with group members is to be divided by this estimated number (target). Note: the definition of a "household" will be whatever is understood in the community/area as a "household". Households, which are large or rich enough that they are already quite self-reliant and do not need benefits of collective efforts, should not be included in this estimate of potential membership.

3. **"Active" Groups**: Groups can be classified as "active" if they have some combination of the following characteristics: growing membership, attendance in meetings and participation in group activities, etc. To classify Groups as "active" requires some judgement by the GP, but it is based on quantitative evidence.

4. **Average Number of Meetings**: This may be calculated on the basis of average number per Group per month. So; the following calculation may be done: the total number of Group meetings in the GP's area, divided by the total number of Groups in the area, divided again by the number of months in the reporting period.

   It is suggested that GPs maintain a wall chart listing all groups in their area down the left-hand side, with months of the year across the top, and then meeting dates on lines across the chart. Planned meeting dates, regular or ad hoc, would be entered on the chart, and then circled when the Report of Group Meeting (Form 1A) is received, or crossed out if not held. Such a chart will enable the GP as well as the Project Co-ordinator and others to do a quick visual inspection and monitoring of the frequency and distribution of Group meetings in a year and to know how well the meetings are being reported to the programme.
An example is given below:

GPs can see which groups are lagging behind in their reporting of meetings or which may not have held meetings as scheduled, requiring some inquiry or follow-up. Such a chart will make it easy to calculate the average frequency of meetings per month (Item 4).

5. **Average Percent of Members Attending Meetings**: The average is arrived at from the records of Group Meetings (Form 1A) by calculating the percentage of members attending each meeting during the reporting period.

6. **Average Percent of Members Participating in Discussion at Meetings**: These are calculated from the records of Group Meetings (Form 1A) simply by calculating the percent both attending and participating in each Group meeting during the reporting period and then calculating the average percentage figures for those respective activities. The rationale for this information is that mere passive attendance is not participation. It is this difference, which distinguishes it from (5) above.

7. **Average Percent of Members Participating in Specific Group Activities**: The GP should determine the most frequent and common specific activities and should list these in ascending or descending order, together with the average of the percentage figures for those respective activities.

8. **Average Percent of Members with Specific Responsibilities**: This may be calculated by consulting the Group members and their promoters.

9&10 **Average Estimated Financial Benefits and Contributions per Member**: These will have to be calculated by consulting the Group members and their promoters. For Range (9a. and 10a.), the lowest and the highest averages per member reported by any Group within the area should be entered, to indicate what is the poorest and best performance within the area (which will be obscured by the "average" figure). At some point in the future, when Groups are familiar with estimating average benefits and contributions (costs), they may be asked to report for each group the range for both benefits and contributions, to have an idea of the distribution of benefits and costs within the Group.
11. **Non-Financial Benefits to the Groups:** The GP should separately list such benefits, where possible, such as Improved Water Supply, number of Kilometers of Road Maintained/Improved and number of Community Storage Facilities and so on.

12. **Number of All-Women’s Groups:** To be collected from GP’s own records, confirmed by Records of Group Meetings (Form 1A).

13. **Number of Women Members in Mixed Groups:** To be collected from Records of Group Meetings (Form 1A).

14. **Percent of Women in Mixed Groups:** To be calculated from Records of Group Meetings (Form 1A).

15. **Percent of Women Members in All Groups:** To be calculated from Records of Group Meetings (Form 1A).

16. **Estimated Percent of Women Members:** Under 25 and Over 25: This is only an estimate, in percent. Members need not be asked for their specific ages. The purpose is to know how large a proportion of members is young.

17. **Women Members as Estimated Percent of Population of Women in Area:** Just as the potential member population is to be estimated (item 2), there should be some estimate of the number of women in the villages, where groups have been started, who may become members of mixed or all-women’s groups (all women from potential member households over 25 years, or whatever age is thought reasonable). The number of women Group members will then be divided by this estimated number.

18&19. **Estimated Average Financial Benefits and Contribution per Member:** This compares the average benefits and contributions, between all-women’s groups and mixed groups to assess whether the former (all-women’s groups) are performing as well as the rest of the groups.
FORM 2: GROUP PROMOTER'S SEASONAL REPORT
(to be filled in by the Group Promoters)

Name of Area: ____________________________________________
Submitted by: ____________________________________________
                (Group promoter) (Date)
Period covered: ____________________________________________
Received by: ____________________________________________
                (Project Coordinator) (Date)

1. **NUMBER OF GROUPS AND MEMBERS IN AREA, by Type of Group, by Gender and by Age.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Group</th>
<th>This Period</th>
<th>Last Period</th>
<th>Base Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
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2. **MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS AS PERCENT OF ESTIMATED POTENTIAL MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS**
   This Period ________%  Last Period ________%  Base Period ________%%

3. **"ACTIVE" GROUPS IN AREA AS PERCENT OF ALL GROUPS IN AREA**
   This Period ________%  Last Period ________%  Base Period ________%  

4. **AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEETINGS PER GROUP PER MONTH**
   This Period ________%  Last Period ________%  Base Period ________% 

5. **AVERAGE PERCENT OF MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS**
   This Period ________%  Last Period ________%  Base Period ________% 

6. **AVERAGE PERCENT OF MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN DISCUSSION AT MEETINGS**
   This Period ________%  Last Period ________%  Base Period ________% 

7. **AVERAGE PERCENT OF MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN SPECIFIC GROUP ACTIVITIES**
   Specific Activities | This Period | Last Period | Base Period |
<table>
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8. **AVERAGE PERCENT OF MEMBERS WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**
   This Period ________%  Last Period ________%  Base Period ________%
Form 2 (continued)

9. **AVERAGE ESTIMATED FINANCIAL BENEFITS PER MEMBER**
   This Period _______%  Last Period _______%  Base Period _______%

9a. **RANGE OF ESTIMATED FINANCIAL BENEFITS PER MEMBER**
   From average lowest benefit per member this period ____________
   to average highest benefit per member this period ____________

10. **AVERAGE ESTIMATED FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS PER MEMBER**
    This Period _______%  Last Period _______%  Base Period _______%

10a. **RANGE OF ESTIMATED FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS PER MEMBER**
    From average lowest contribution per member this period ________
    to average highest contribution per member this period ________

11. **NON-FINANCIAL BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS** (summary description and tabulation)
    ___________________________________________________________________
    ___________________________________________________________________
    This period  Last period  Base period

12. **NUMBER OF ALL-WOMEN’S GROUPS IN AREA**

13. **NUMBER OF WOMEN MEMBERS IN MIXED GROUPS**

14. **PERCENT OF WOMEN IN MIXED GROUPS**

15. **PERCENT OF WOMEN MEMBERS IN ALL GROUPS**

16. **ESTIMATED PERCENT OF WOMEN MEMBERS UNDER 25 OVER 25**

17. **WOMEN MEMBERS AS ESTIMATED PERCENT OF POPULATION OF WOMEN IN AREA**
Form 2 (continued)

18. **ESTIMATED AVERAGE FINANCIAL BENEFITS PER MEMBER**
   - All-women groups
   - Mixed groups

19. **ESTIMATED AVERAGE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION PER MEMBER**
   - All-women groups
   - Mixed groups
GUIDE TO FORM 3: SEASONAL GROUP CAPACITY EVALUATION

**Purpose:** To assess each Group's progress, if any, toward becoming more self-reliant, taking initiative, solving problems, and also building up Group solidarity on their own without waiting for Group Promoters' advice and assistance.

**To be completed by:** Group Promoter, in consultation with Group members and office bearers, and after reviewing any relevant reports, records, etc. which give some evidence of any of the things asked about in Form 2.

**To be forwarded to:** Project Co-ordinator to review and for him to compile a summary (Form 4) for the Local Management Board/Project Implementation Committee and others concerned.

This form (Form 3) should be completed in triplicate so that the Group and Group Promoter can each have a copy for their continuing reference. On his/her copy, the GP should enter the mark (no evidence/some evidence/considerable evidence) given in the previous season and the previous year to monitor changes in group capacity over time.

This evaluation method is rough and attempts to "convert" often qualitative information into approximate but comparable semi-quantitative information for monitoring and evaluation. Thinking through the items listed in Form 3 will give the Group and GP an occasion to reflect on whether the Group is getting stronger and more self-sufficient or not.

Sometimes the Group will indeed be making progress in certain ways but there may be no evidence that comes to mind to show this. By having the GP complete this form, in consultation with Group members and office bearers, it is less likely that evidence of any progress will be overlooked. But, if there is such an "error", it is not a serious one because any lack of evidence that a Group is making progress will alert both the Group and the GP that there may be a problem with the Group and they will thus look harder in the future for any such evidence - or will work harder to make progress and thus have evidence to point to in subsequent evaluations.

Under sections I and III, a distinction is made between things the Group does with GP assistance, and things it does without GP aid. There is nothing wrong with the first kind of activity. Any initiative and attempt to settle problem are to be welcome. But, it is only when they occur without GP initiative and guidance, it can be said that a capacity for self-reliance is growing in the Group. So note should be made whether
the activity reported is attributable to the Group and GP together or to the Group alone.

IA. New Programmes and Activities: Listing of any new Group activities, like group marketing of vegetable or maintaining village roads or getting in an agricultural officer to explain new techniques.

IB. Contact and Co-operation with Government/NGO Personnel:
   The last example given above would also qualify under this heading. The Groups, forging links with relevant officials of line departments, with bank offices, or with non-governmental organizations can benefit from them through technical assistance, advice, training, etc.

IC. Link Up with Other Groups: This can occur either with Groups at village level co-operating in things like joint purchase of equipment or joint marketing of produce to reduce transport costs or co-operation in road maintenance; or with Groups co-operating more formally through some kind of federation, which can take action on behalf of all member Groups. This will expand the capacity and effectiveness of individual groups which have limited membership, finance and influence by themselves.

IID. Problem Identification, Specification and Prioritization:
   These are the first steps in a purposive, systematic problem-solving approach. Does the group specifically and explicitly take time to identify common problems, analyze and specify them and decide which are the most important and pressing ones deserving concentrated effort to solve? To leave problems ambiguous and unspecified means no Group action is possible, and not to narrow the identified problems down to a few which are vigorously tackled means efforts will be scattered.

IIE. Strategy Formulation and Action Plan:
   Once priority problems have been agreed upon, the next step is to formulate a strategy by consensus for the most promising way to tackle the problem (or problems). Any strategy needs to be translated into a concrete plan of action, specifying who will do what, when and how.

IIF. Implementation of Action Plan:
   The next step is to carry out the actions agreed to by the group. A Group which can do this without assistance from the GP is obviously more self-reliant than one which needs his/her assistance.

IIG. Assessment, Feedback and Innovation:
   The last step, is to make an explicit and systematic attempt to review the Group's problem-solving efforts periodically, to determine whether the problem has now been
solved. If not; what can or should be done? Was the plan not implemented? If not, why not? Should it be modified or should further attempts at implementation be made? Was the strategy faulty? Should it be changed and something new tried? Does the Group need to gather more information about the problem and possible alternatives to be able to formulate a more realistic plan and strategy? Was the problem itself correctly identified and understood? Indeed, is the problem still a priority issue? This kind of self-correction and self-redirection exercise is the culmination of the problem-solving process.

III. Enthusiasm and Spirit in Group Activities:
    Do all members participate actively and willingly in group work? Do individuals take responsibility for facilitating the work of the group? Is there support for group activities which are cultural or recreational?

III. Group Participation in Other Activities:
    Apart from group participation in income generating activities, do members do things together? If one member is bereaved, do other members help and participate beyond what would be normally expected? Do they go to events like sports together.

III. Building UP Members' Knowledge and Awareness of Solidarity:
    Are there formal or informal training activities or discussions to reinforce members' understanding of the value of group effort? Are there explicit efforts to build up solidarity through things like common dress or insignia?
FORM 3: SEASONAL GROUP CAPACITY EVALUATION

Name of Group _________________  Season _________________
GP ___________________________  Date _________________

Based on review of reports, discussions and observations, Group Promoter will list any evidence he/she has of group capacity under these different headings and will indicate for each whether there is no/some/considerable evidence of capacity.

I. **GROUP INITIATIVE AND SELF-RELIANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>No evidence</th>
<th>Some evidence</th>
<th>Considerable evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. NEW PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>B. CONTACT AND CO-OPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT/NGO PERSONNEL:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>C. LINK UP WITH OTHER GROUPS:</strong></td>
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</table>
II. PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH AND SELF-RELIANCE

D. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION, SPECIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION:
   (1) With GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

   (2) Without GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

E. STRATEGY FORMULATION AND ACTION PLAN:
   (1) With GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

   (2) Without GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

F. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLAN
   (1) With GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

   (2) Without GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

G. ASSESSMENT, FEEDBACK AND INNOVATION:
   (1) With GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

   (2) Without GP Assistance
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________ __________

III. GROUP PERFORMANCE AND SOLIDARITY
H. ENTHUSIASM AND SPIRIT IN GROUP ACTIVITIES:
(1) With GP Assistance

(2) Without GP Assistance

I. GROUP PARTICIPATION IN OTHER ACTIVITIES
(1) With GP Assistance

(2) Without GP Assistance

J. BUILDING OF MEMBERS' KNOWLEDGE/AWARENESS OF SOLIDARITY:
(1) With GP Assistance

(2) Without GP Assistance
GUIDE TO PPR FORM 4: SUMMARY OF SEASONAL GROUP CAPACITY EVALUATIONS

**Purpose:** To summarize the level of progress of Groups in an Area toward greater self-reliance, group initiative, problem-solving approaches and group performance and solidarity.

To be completed by: **Project Co-ordinator**, tabulating the results from Form 3 which will come in from each Group within the Area, presenting them in terms of simple frequencies with which Groups show no evidence, some evidence, or considerable evidence of certain capacities.

To be forwarded to: the local Management Board or Project Implementation Committee, and the Project Review Committee, with copies to the Group Promoters within the Area.

**NOTE:** Group Promoters may also with the use of Form 4 make a summary of the capacity of Groups within their own areas.
**FORM 4: SUMMARY OF SEASONAL GROUP CAPACITY EVALUATIONS**  
(to be completed by Project Co-ordinator)

Name: _______________  Season: _______________  Date: _______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>This period</th>
<th>Previous period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some Considerable</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. GROUP INITIATIVE</td>
<td>(evidence)</td>
<td>(evidence)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. New Programmes and Activities (With GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Contact/Co-operation with Govt/NGO Personnel (with GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Link Up with Other PPP Groups (with GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH</td>
<td>(with GP)</td>
<td>(with GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Problem Identification and Prioritization (with GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Strategy Formulation and Action Plan (with GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Implementation of Action Plan (with GP)</td>
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<td>D. Assessment, Feedback, Innovation (with GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. SELF-RELIANCE</td>
<td>(without GP)</td>
<td>(without GP)</td>
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<td>A. New Programmes and Activities (without GP)</td>
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<td>B. Contact/Co-operation with Govt/NGO Personnel (without GP)</td>
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<td>C. Link Up with Other Groups (without GP)</td>
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<td>D. Problem Identification and Prioritization (without GP)</td>
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<td>E. Strategy Formulation and Action Plan (without GP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Implementation of Action Plan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
G. Assessment, Feedback, Innovation

IV. GROUP PERFORMANCE AND CAPABILITY
   A. Enthusiasm and Spirit in Group Activities
   B. Group Participation in Other Activities
   C. Building Up Members' Solidarity
GUIDE TO FORM 5: DIRECT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Purpose: To assist Groups in periodically assessing their financial performance

To be completed by: Group members assigned with the responsibility to maintain books of accounts

Period Covered: It is important to specify whatever period is covered by the information recorded on the particular page (or set of pages, if there are several pages, listing items like Total Expenditure).

Type of Activity: Separate sets of records should be kept for different kinds of activities. For example, if a group grows and mills maize, there should be a separate set of forms for each activity,

(i) Item: What was money spent on? Items of expenditure, such as fertilizer, seed, pesticide, labour etc. should be listed.

(ii) Quantity: How much was used? Days of labour? Bags or kilograms of fertilizer?, etc.

(iii) Total Cost: This is the amount of all the items of expenditure.

(iv) Total Income: This is the total income from sales, and it will determine the profit or loss from production activity. It should be added up for each page, and if there are several pages because not all the information on production, sales and income could be entered on a single page for the season, the several totals will be added up to arrive at a Total Income for the season.

(v) Balance: Profit (+) or Loss (-): This is calculated by subtracting Total Cost from Total Income. If Income has been more than Cost, this represents a profit, indicated by a (plus). If Cost has been greater than Income, this represents a Loss, indicated by a (minus).

(vi) Remarks: If certain facts explain the profit or loss or put it into context these should be noted. It is possible that there was a remaining balance of unsold product which would, if sold, have brought in enough income to make a recorded loss into a profit and groups will get income from the unsold balance in a subsequent period. Or costs may have been inflated
during this period due to the purchase of certain equipment (which as a capital investment will bring more benefit in following periods). Or total cost might have gone up because of a pest attack requiring extra purchase of insecticides, making profit less than what was expected.

NOTE: Unless the "cost" of members' own labour has been entered in this Form 5 any "profit" or "loss" will not include the value of own labour contributed. Any such monetary profit might indeed be partly regarded more as wages for own labour than as "profit". This is to say that what is "profit" for the group may partially be "wages" for members. Also, unless other costs of production are added in from Forms 7 and 8, a complete picture of profit and loss will not be available.
FORM 5: DIRECT INCOME & EXPENDITURE
(to be completed by Group members, who are assigned to maintain accounts)

Type of Activity: ____________  Period covered: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Total cost</th>
<th>Total income</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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GUIDE FOR FORM 6: PROJECT INPUTS/CREDIT

This form is intended to help Groups keep track of what inputs they have received and to whom these inputs have been distributed, as well as of repayments, amounts owned and inventory of stock remaining.

For a more complete picture of costs of production and of any resulting profit or loss, it is suggested that members’ or Group expenditure on project inputs for any amount owed (but not yet paid) be entered also on Remarks Col. of Form 5.

**Item Received Input/Credit:** When some amount of project inputs, including credit, are received, it should be entered as fertilizer, seed or loan and so on. The quantity or amount: may be recorded as number, bags, amount whatever is the unit of counting.

**Total Value/Amount:** The price of the total deliveries of inputs or of total credit received in a given period. (Quantity received times Unit Price should equal Total Price/Value).

**Distributed to:** This will list the names of members who have got some of the Project inputs, including credit.

**Total Quantity or Amount:** Number, amount, bags, whatever is the unit of counting.

**Amount Paid:** The payment received for the inputs distributed or repayment of credit given.

**Amount Owing:** If full payment is not received at the time of distribution, the value of the item will be entered as Amount Owing. As and when this is paid, the record can be changed to reflect this.

**Balance:** As the inputs/credits are distributed to members, these amounts should be subtracted from the Quantity Received to indicate the balance of inputs still available for distribution by the group. When all inputs including credit have been distributed, the Quantity Remaining should be zero.

**Remarks:** Any information about arrangements for repayment or any Group write-off of loan shares should be noted. If more space is needed, the Remarks space can be used to refer to the back side of the Form where more detailed information can be given.
FORM 6: PROJECT INPUTS/CREDIT RECEIVED AND DISTRIBUTED TO MEMBERS
(to be completed by Group members, who are assigned to maintain records)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Item received input/credit</th>
<th>Total value/amount</th>
<th>Distributed to (Name)</th>
<th>Total quantity or amount</th>
<th>Amount paid</th>
<th>Amount owing</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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Period covered: ____________________________________________________________

Type of Activity: __________________________________________________________

Area or Scale or operation: ________________________________________________

Total Total Total Total Total Total

70
GUIDE TO FORM 7: GROUP ASSETS AND EQUIPMENT

This form is to help Groups to keep track of their common property, and to help them adopt realistic understanding of its management and valuation.

Asset or Equipment: These are items like pumps or grinding mills, that are owned together and which are not used up in the single process of production.

Cost of Purchase: Amount paid for equipment; total purchase price to be shown even if purchased with down payment with arrangement for installment payments.

Expected Life: The number of years it can reasonably be expected for the asset or equipment to operate satisfactorily, with normal maintenance. This alerts the Group to the need that they will have to replace the asset or equipment at some future time.

Estimated Current Value: At least once a year, the Group should consider how much the asset or equipment is worth in current market price - if they had to sell it at the time, considering any deterioration in performance or depreciation. (It is possible that inflation will have increased current market value above the original purchase price - but then replacement cost would probably also have risen substantially). If a member were to leave the group, he/she could expect the other Group members to buy his/her share. So it is important to have some agreed "current value" so that such transactions can be amicable.

Estimated Current Replacement Cost: At the time current value is estimated, the Group should find out how much it will have to pay to buy the item new. As an asset or piece of equipment nears the end of its expected working life, the Group should be prepared to finance its replacement, through credit or individual contributions.

Provision for Covering Maintenance Costs and Eventual Replacement: Making plans for maintenance or replacement will seem much more sensible, and even urgent, when considering how much it would cost to replace the item, if no longer functional. A good plan for periodic, routine or preventive maintenance can prolong the life of machinery. Members are most likely to be willing to commit time, money and effort to maintenance when they are thinking about questions like current value and replacement cost. So some "plan" for maintenance and also for eventual replacement should be noted on this Form from time to time.
FORM 7: GROUP ASSETS AND EQUIPMENT
(to be completed by Group members, who are assigned to maintain records)

Period Covered: _______________________________________

Name of Group: __________________________ Type of Activity: __________

Area of size/ Scale of Operation ______________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Asset or equipment</th>
<th>Cost of purchase</th>
<th>Expected life (year)</th>
<th>Estimated current value</th>
<th>Estimated current replacement value</th>
<th>Provision for covering maintenance costs/ eventual replacement</th>
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GUIDE TO FORM 8: PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION

This Form is intended to record problems and possible solutions rather than just numbers as used on the previous three Forms. At the end of each season/period, Group members should consider the problems they faced and dealt with, suggesting, where possible, what might be done to alleviate or eliminate each problem next time. (For non-agricultural activities, such self-evaluation should be done every three or six months, though they could be done more often, if members agree).

The back of the form can be used for more detailed notes if more space is needed.

Estimated Target of Production: It is good for any group engaged in productive activity to have some idea of what level of production could be attained. This may be expressed in figures such as kilograms per acre if the activity is agricultural, or bags or tons if the activity is non-agricultural.

Actual Level of Production: This is what the Group managed to produce, expressed in comparable numbers. Any difference between this and the preceding figure represents a productivity "gap" which the Group should try to fill.

Reasons Identified for Difference: The Group should "brain-storm" to get ideas and suggestions for how to fill or narrow the gap identified. This form encourages Group self-evaluation in the economic sphere just as Form 4 filled by the Group Promoter with Group participation clarifies organizational capacity.
FORM 8: PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION
(to be completed by Group members, who are assigned to maintain records)

Period covered: ______________________

Name of Group: ______________________
Type of Activity: ______________________
Acreage or size/scale of operation: ______________________
Date: ______________________

ESTIMATED TARGET PRODUCTION: ______________________
(yield per acre or output per week/month)

PRODUCTION ACTUALLY ACHIEVED: ______________________

REASONS IDENTIFIED FOR SHORTFALL: ______________________

PROBLEMS FACED BEFORE, DURING AND/OR AFTER PRODUCTION:

CREDIT: ______________________

TRANSPORT: ______________________

MARKETING: ______________________

STORAGE: ______________________

CROP PROTECTION: ______________________
(if applicable)

SPARE PARTS: ______________________

LABOUR: ______________________

OTHER: ______________________
NOTES


2. IFAD, with its specific mandate for alleviation of rural poverty but with headquarters in the capital of a country of the affluent North, has a full fledged Division for Monitoring and Evaluation.

3. FAO, Guide Book of Manual for Participatory Monitoring and On-Going Evaluation, FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAFR) Accra, June, 1986. RAFR organized a People's Participation Programme (PPP) in two regions of Ghana between 1982-86, held a Workshop, which developed a set of forms to maintain records for Participatory M.&E. RAFR very generously made available to JEFAD the Guide Book and some of the records of the PPP to facilitate the preparation of this Guidelines.

4. Major and intrinsic flaws in conventional "objective" social science research are documented and analyzed in Campbell et al (1979). When villagers' answers to standard, properly-conducted surveys were compared with the "real" situation as two anthropologists and a linguist were able to construct it in three rural villages of Nepal, it turned out that average errors of 50%, 100%, even 150% were common on questions as simple as "how much land do you own?" or "how much labour did you contribute to your village's group projects last year?" Campbell and associates concluded that "non-sampling" errors are so great, and unavoidable, that evaluators and researchers would be better off conducting smaller, more intensive and longer-term studies than the usual kind of large sample surveys with standard (long) questionnaires that are completed during a single visit. Not only the reliability, but the validity of such instruments is suspect, as quoted in Monitoring and Evaluation by Beneficiaries, (JEFAD/ERDEA/1990/8), paper presented in ECA/FAO Inter-Governmental Regional Workshop on Evaluation of Rural Development Experiences in Africa, ECA, Addis Ababa, 19-24 November 1990. Parts-I & II of this Guidelines draws very heavily from this paper.