Genebanks and Seed Systems Toolkit

Focus Group Discussion #2 - Seed security by key crop

Facilitator Guide

*This FGD will be conducted for up to 3 key crops. The questions below will be asked for each key crop separately.*

**KEY CROP**:

## Recent trends in the production of this crop

1. **How would you rate the production of THIS CROP in this community in the last 3 seasons (good, average, or poor)?**
* *Specify the approximate date of each season.*
1. **Please explain the reason for your rating. What factors influenced crop production?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Season** | **Approx. date** | **Rating\*** | **Explanation (factors that influenced crop production)** |
| **Most recent season**  |  |  |  |
| **Previous season**  |  |  |  |
| **2nd previous season**  |  |  |  |

\*Codes for rating: 1= good season, 2=average season, 3= poor season.

## Strategies for obtaining seed: mapping of seed sources

*Here you will work with the group to develop a map of seed sources used currently and in the past for THIS CROP. For more guidance and examples of seed maps see:* [*https://seedsystem.org/assessments-and-e-learning-course/seed-system-security-assessment/focus-groups/*](https://seedsystem.org/assessments-and-e-learning-course/seed-system-security-assessment/focus-groups/)

***Map the seed sources used in the most recent planting season:***

1. **In the most recent planting season, what sources did farmers in this community use to obtain seed for THIS CROP?**
* *As participants mention sources, DRAW a map showing the seed sources (see example in the annex below). Symbols/pictures can be used instead of text to represent each source. This can be done on the ground, on a large wall, or a flip chart.*
1. **Please rate the seed sources from most important to least. Why are some seed sources more important than others? Please explain.**
	* *Ask participants to rank the relative importance of each seed source (1= most importance, 2= second in importance, 3= third, etc.), and indicate these on the map.*
	* *If possible, ask participants to estimate the % of seed obtained from the most important source.*
	* *Note the explanations given on why some seed sources are more important than others.*

***Map the seed sources used in the past:***

1. **What seed sources were used for this crop** **in the past**?
	* *Add a second seed map to the drawing, indicating all seed sources used in the past.*
	* *Take a photo of the map when complete.*
2. **Compare the current seed sources with those in the past.**
	* *Facilitate a discussion among participants, probing with questions like:*
		+ *What have been the major changes in the seed sources used?*
		+ *Why have they occurred?*
		+ *Are they positive or negative changes? Why?*
		+ *Are there new “players” in the seed sources compared to the past? Who are they, and how/why have they become involved?*
	* *Where possible, try to determine how long ago these changes occurred.*

Comparison of current and past seed sources:

## Seed security parameters by source

*Use the following guiding questions to compare the seed sources currently used for THIS CROP. Use the map of current seed sources as a visual aid.*

1. **What is the quality of seed of THIS CROP from the sources currently used? Please rate the quality (excellent, good, acceptable, poor) and describe the reasons for this rating.**
* *Participants should explain why they give a specific rating based on their own criteria/understanding of seed quality. If they do not understand the question, facilitators may prompt by giving examples (does the seed germinate, is it well selected and clean, does it have any mold or disease?).*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Seed source (insert from current seed map)** | **Main types of seed obtained (list all that apply)\*** | **Rating of seed quality\*\***  | **Explanation of quality rating/description of quality** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

\*Codes for types of seed: L=local varieties, M=modern/improved varieties, QDS=quality declared, C=certified seed. You may also record the names of the main varieties obtained from each source.

\*\*Codes for quality: 1=excellent, 2=good, 3=acceptable, 4=poor

1. **What challenges do farmers face, if any, to produce and/or store good quality seed of THIS CROP? Please explain/give examples.**
	* *Skip this question if farmers do not produce their own seed of this crop or if already covered sufficiently in Q7.*

Challenges in producing or storing good quality seed (household level):

1. **Is the seed of THIS CROP available in sufficient quantities from these seed sources at planting time? Please explain why/why not.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Seed source (insert from current seed map)** | **Rating of availability at planting time\*** | **Explanation of rating, comments about quantities of seed available** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

\*Codes: 1=rarely available in sufficient quantity, 2=sometimes available in sufficient quantity, 3=always available in sufficient quantity

1. **How do farmers acquire seed of THIS CROP from the current seed sources (cash, loan, gift, exchange, barter, etc.)?**  **If purchased, what was the price in the most recent planting season?**
	* *In addition to the transactions suggested below, note any social or cultural practices used to acquire seed from each source*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Seed source (insert from seed map)** | **Type of transaction(s)\***  | **Practices used to acquire seed (describe)** | **Price per unit -most recent season (specify units)** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

\*Codes: 1=Cash, 2=loan, 3=gift, 4=exchange of seed, 5=barter (for other goods/services), 6=other (specify).

1. **Are there certain farmers or social groups who have difficulty accessing seeds (cannot afford or cannot obtain) from any of the above seed sources?**
	* Which farmers/social groups? From which sources?
	* Why is it difficult for them to access seeds from these sources?
	* What strategies do they use to access seed?

Groups who have difficulty accessing seed (describe in detail):

## Varietal diversity and suitability

*Here you will use the 4-cell analysis to discuss the varieties of the key crop and their suitability. The more varieties there are the more time the exercise will take. If there is a very large number of varieties for this crop, you may choose to do this in a separate session.*

**Step 1. Develop a list of varieties of THIS CROP**:

**BEFORE the FGD**:

* *Prepare a list of the varieties of THIS CROP that are cultivated in the community, as well as any that used to be grown. To do this: consult a few key informants (farmers, extensions workers), do a transect walk and/or consult recent studies if available*
* *If possible, obtain samples of each variety or write the name of each variety on a card (one variety per card).*

**During the FGD:**

* *Review the list of varieties (using the samples or cards) with the participants and add any missing varieties. Make new cards/samples for the added varieties.*

**Step 2. Conduct 4 cell analysis**:

* *Draw two lines on the ground or on a large piece of paper to create four cells, as shown below. Label each square as shown below. Make a 5th cell for any varieties that are no longer cultivated. You can use symbols to represent large/small areas and many/few households (see examples in the annex).*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Large area

Many households | 1. Large area

Few households |
| 1. Small area

Many households | 1. Small area

Few households |

**Explain the 4-cells and define criteria for large/small areas and many/few households**

* *Explain that the top cells are for varieties that are grown in large areas, while the bottom ones are for those that farmers generally grow only in small areas (small plots, borders, gardens). The cells on the left are for varieties that are grown by many households in the community, and on the right are those that are grown only by a few households.*
* *Encourage participants to discuss these concepts and develop consensus on what is considered to be many or few households and large or small areas for this crop.*
* *Record the criteria agreed upon.*

**Ask the participants now to classify the varieties into one of the 4 squares.**

* *Start with the first variety (using the sample or card) and ask participants to identify which cell it belongs to (how many households grow this variety? Do they usually grow it on a large area or small area?). Place the card or sample in the corresponding cell. Continue until all the varieties are placed.*
* *When farmers disagree on where a variety belongs, ask them to compare it to other varieties already placed on the graph (is it grown on larger or smaller areas than variety X?). If participants do not know where to place it (i.e., none of them are familiar with the variety), then place it in a separate group.*
* *Take a photo of the final 4-cell diagram*

**Discuss results for each variety**:

* *When all varieties have been placed, discuss the details of the varieties. Start with the one cell and discuss the details of each variety in that cell one by one. Ask participants to explain:*
	+ *Why has this variety been placed here? (i.e., if the top-left cell, why do many households grow this variety on large areas?)*
	+ *Where did this variety come from? When was it introduced? (Estimate approximate year)*
	+ *How is it used? What are the positive traits of this variety? The negative ones?*
	+ *If the variety is not grown in the area anymore, why not? If some farmers wanted to grow this variety, where can it be found?*

*Record information about the varieties in the Table below.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variety name**  | **4-cell result** | **Source/ Origin**  | **Last year grown (if no longer available)** | **Positive traits** | **Negative traits** | **Other comments /experiences with the variety** |
| 1. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| etc. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Step 3: Discuss overall satisfaction with varieties**

*Once all varieties have been discussed, ask participants to assess their overall satisfaction with the varieties that are currently available:*

* *How satisfied are you with the varieties of this crop currently available in your area?*
* *Is there a need for other kinds of varieties than the ones you have today? If yes, what kinds of varieties/traits?*

Notes on overall satisfaction: