



# FARMER-CENTERED GOAL SETTING

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

## Summary

This guide will help you to use the farmer-centered goal setting ‘questionnaire’ tool one-on-one with farmers. There are many ways to modify this tool, but the overall goal is to help farmers set SMART goals and reflect on their season as a whole through various activities and the questionnaire.

**The need:** The purpose of the goal setting tool is to help farmers determine why they are in the New Roots Program (or any program), and reflect on what they want to achieve. This questionnaire also helps service providers design a service plan that is participatory, inclusive, and specific to the needs of each client.

**ISED SOLUTIONS**  
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



This project was supported by Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grant no. 2015-70017-22886 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

# Who made this guide?

Collaboration and Testing

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** This teaching resource was developed by Timothy Olorunfemi and Aley Kent of the International Rescue Committee's New Roots program, in partnership with the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED Solutions). Refugee farmer training programs across the country provided feedback on this lesson, which is now integrated throughout the guide. From 2015 to 2017, ISED partnered with twelve refugee farmer training programs through a USDA BFRDP educational enhancement grant, to support the design and testing of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To learn more about this project, or to access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee farmer training programs, see the [New American Resource Library at https://nesfp.org/new-american-resources](https://nesfp.org/new-american-resources). For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, please see the ['Refugee Farmer Teaching Handbook'](#). While these resources were designed with refugee audiences in mind, they can be adapted and used in any farmer training or incubator setting.

**WHAT TESTERS SAY:** "The structure of the goal setting guide and the self-assessment are really helpful in guiding the conversation. We also really like the idea of using the cards as visual cues and to do it as an activity. We like the way the self-assessment is broken out into beginning, intermediate and advanced. The reflective dialog questions are really helpful too - different ways to get the conversation going."

*-Global Greens, Lutheran Services in Iowa*

This process for assessment and goal setting is so unique to each program. But this kit gives many great activities/resources that its easily adapted or provides a great starting point to developing your own process and associated materials.

*-The Refugee Response, Cleveland Ohio*

# Table of Contents

Adaptable except where noted.

## 3 IS THIS RESOURCE RIGHT FOR YOU

- Audience
- Resources needed

## 6 SETTING UP AND BACKGROUND/ 20 MINUTES

### Staff work

- Staff will set up the session and gather relevant materials. Farmer and staff will fill in as much background info on the farmers that they have access to.

## 9. WHERE DO I WANT TO GO / 20 MINUTES

### Card Sort

- Discuss and review the eight skill areas to define yearly priorities

## 10 ASSETS AND LIABILITY / 20 MINUTES

### Brainstorm

- This activity helps farmers define the resources available to them and their business. It is based on their experience and understanding, but staff can prompt them to think about new types of resources (see examples in the sections below).

## 11 GOAL SETTING / 30 MINUTES

### Write Goals

- Set goals for three priority areas

### VARIATION:

Depending on farmer's familiarity with classroom norms etc. you could share some overall objectives and agenda for the training. You can tailor it to be as vague as specific as you want, but if you think farmers will appreciate it you can say when they will be learning, when they will be doing activities, etc.

# Audience and Objectives

Adaptable except where noted.

**WHO:** Refugee farmers

**OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the session, farmers will be able to:

- Name three goals for the upcoming season.
- Reflect on the skills necessary to become a successful farmer.
- Understand how the program can assist them in achieving their goals.
- Determine why they are in the program and what they want to achieve.

**LANGUAGE / LITERACY:** Non-to literate, developing to fluent.

Interpreter needed for any farmer that is not fluent in English. Literate farmers can fill in the forms more independently.

**FARMING EXPERIENCE:** Second year + farmers

At least one growing / selling season with the program required  
Would have to be adapted for farmers who have not started and are looking to use this as a planning tool

**PREREQUISITES:** Skills and Experience

How to set a SMART goal  
How to prioritize skill areas  
How to come up with a goal

**REGION / CLIMATE:** Adaptable

**SELLING STRUCTURE:** Land-based farmer training program

With infrastructure provided by staff/farm manager. Geared towards farms/ programs that aggregate and distribute and can set common standards for farmers.

**SEASON:** Pre-season, once yearly.

Done to prepare for the coming season



# Resources needed

Adaptable except where noted.

**TIME: 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES (OR LESS TIME, DEPENDING)**

10 min prep + 20 min card sort+ 20 min assets/liabilities + 30 min goal setting).  
Might stretch to 90 if conducting with a small group instead of one-on-one.

**STAFF / INTERPRETERS : One staff member, and one interpreter**

If you are doing this as a group activity, more staff and interpreters may be required.

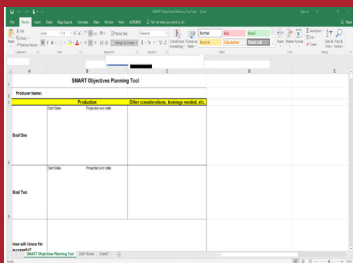
**LOCATION: Classroom.**

**SUPPLIES: For the session**

One Farm Skills Assessment Web  
One deck of Competency Cards  
A copy of the finalized plan/document  
Pens  
Additional writing paper  
Two chairs

Optional:

Farmer competency self-assessment tool



FINALIZED PLAN



COMPETENCY CARDS



FARM SKILLS ASSESSMENT WEB



QUESTIONNAIRE



**VARIATION:**

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain variations and adaptations that serve varying programs and farmers. They are suggestions and reflections from other programs based on how they made this workshop work for them.

**TEACHING TIP:**

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain teaching tips to help you better facilitate farmer learning. Most come from other programs who have tested and reflected on using this lesson.

**ICONS:** You will find the icons below throughout this guidebook. They are there so you are prepared for the activity and can get an idea of what it will bring at a glance.



SIGNS/CARDS



PPT



WORKSHEET



DISCUSSION



VOCABULARY



INDOOR



OUTDOOR



TALKING POINTS

# Set up and Background

# 1

Set up and start your session with everything you will need

**TIME:** 10 minutes

**OVERVIEW:**

- This is the set-up plan for use in a 1:1 setting, or in a small group (2-5 ppl) of farmers, if language and trust enable a comfortable group dynamic.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- All materials printed and ready to go (card sort, matrix, questionnaire, final doc.)

**VOCABULARY**

- Income
- Expenses

**STEP 1: SET-UP AND GATHER MATERIALS**

- a. Many of the questions require that farmers reflect on the season, and some require somewhat specific answers. It is helpful to gather all the data and information you have on that farmer so you can help them answer questions about their season, their records, etc.
  - Have card sort ready (one per farmer)
  - Have matrix printed ready to fill in (Have farmer version ready if using that)
  - If farmer has previously used the 'Participatory Benchmarking Tool' have that ready to review.
  - Any financial records that you have related to that farmer

**STEP 2: QUESTIONNAIRE OPTIONS**

- a. Plan for interpreter or no interpreter:
  - Generally, farmers with advancing and fluent oral English levels, and semi-to literate literacy levels, will not need an interpreter. Ask the farmer what they prefer, or determine whether an interpreter is needed based on farmer need, interpreter availability, your experience with that farmer, etc.
  - Determine all necessary vocabulary words: share them ahead of time with an interpreter, or plan to explicitly teach them to farmers.
  - Semi-literate farmers: You fill in the 'fillable questionnaire' as farmers look on. Using this guide for your own information only. This guide is text heavy, but the questionnaire is more accessible to farmers.

- Literate farmers: They fill in the form and the matrix hard-copy (or on the computer if they are able).
- Pre- and non-literate farmers: Discuss the questions with farmers, show them you are taking notes, and fill in the matrix separately. Only show farmers the completed web.

**TEACHING TIP:**

Since this asks for specific numbers and personal information from farmers, make sure to select an interpreter that the farmer is comfortable sharing this information with.

**STEP 3: STAFF FILLS-IN INFORMATION**



- a. Fill in information farmer can provide easily (name, etc.).
- b. Refer to files or previous workshops, etc. to answer questions about business and insurance, if needed.
- c. Reference other workshops or activities on recordkeeping to help determine other numbers.
  - For example, approximate income per year and expenses. Show how you would divide by 12 or by selling months to determine average monthly values.





# WHERE AM I NOW?

DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE EIGHT SKILL AREAS TO DEFINE YEARLY PRIORITIES

2

**TIME:** 60 minutes

## OVERVIEW:

In this activity, farmers assess where they are now using the Competency Cards.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Competency Cards for card sort activity
- Skills web
- (if farmers have been using the participatory bench-marking tool, they can pull that out here)

## OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

*By the end of this activity, participants can:*

- Identify their areas of strength and areas they need to work on.
- Reflect on the skills necessary to become a successful farmer.

### STEP 1: INTRODUCE THE SKILL AREAS:



- a. Introduce the competency areas using the card sort cards, and talk about each of them to ensure understanding:
  1. Farm Infrastructure Management
  2. Crop Production
  3. Harvest, Post-Harvest Handling and Food Safety
  4. Marketing
  5. Record-keeping
  6. Business Planning
  7. Language and Numeracy
  8. Personal Life Skills

### STEP 2: CARD SORT

- a. Give the farmer the deck of Competency Cards and invite him or her to prioritize them according to their needs



Ask: “What types of things do you most want or need to learn this year? Which ones are less important to work on?”

b. After the farmer finishes this activity, have a discussion. Prompts

- “What led to your choices?”
- “How did you decide on the order?”
- “How are some of these connected to one another?”
- “What are the most important skills or abilities you need to work on in the [higher priority] areas?” (Use this as an opportunity to bring up other related skills that may not have made the top 3).
- “Are there areas you left out that also need attention? Would you switch the order?” / “Anything else?”

# Assets and Liability

3

Brainstorm to help farmers reflect on their assets and liabilities

**TIME:** 20 minutes

## OVERVIEW:

- This activity helps farmers define the resources available to them and their business. It is based on their experience and understanding, but staff can prompt them to think about new types of resources (see examples in the sections below).

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- SMART goals questionnaire

## OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the activity, participants can:

- Understand how the program can assist them in achieving their goals.

## VOCABULARY

- Liability
- Asset

## STEP 1: INTRODUCE TOPIC:

- a. Ask the farmer to list opportunities/assets, and then threats/challenges. Double check to make sure the farmer feels their list is complete.

### TEACHING TIP:



Use modeling as a strategy, and visual prompts to get farmers going. Have a pre-made list of possible opportunities / assets and threats / challenges for farmers to draw from. Use pictures as prompts to start the list.

- b. Opportunities/Assets:
  - “What people, tools, equipment, vehicles, land, things, or funds are available to you to support you growing and selling food?”
  - “Do you own or lease these things? That is, how much control over these things do you have?”
- c. Barriers/Liabilities:
  - “What other responsibilities, people, time/distance, skills or knowledge stand in your way of growing or selling food?” (Explain that you’ll be discuss what to DO about this in a minute)

## STEP 2: REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE



- a. Lead a reflective dialogue using the following sample questions. You don't have to ask all of them, but start with a facts/surface level question and move to depth/analysis.
- "What do you notice about these lists?"
  - "What words or things catch your attention?"
  - "Where do you feel confident about having something to build on?"
  - "Where are you worried or anxious?"
  - "Who are the decision-makers in your life?"
  - (Who might help make the decisions some of the time or who has veto power?)
  - "Where are you worried or anxious?"
  - "Who are the decision-makers in your life?" (Who might help make the decisions some of the time or who has veto power?)
  - "What ideas or insights do you have based on the skills assessment web or inventory?"
  - "What does this tell you about where you might need to focus your energy this year?"
  - "What does this tell you about where you might need to focus your energy this year?"



# GOAL SETTING

SET GOALS FOR PRIORITY AREAS

4

**TIME:** 30 minutes to discuss 3 priority skill areas

## OVERVIEW:

- The farmer and facilitator will discuss the eight skill areas and establish a three goal areas. Record information on the fill in sheet and / or insert it into the excel matrix.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- SMART goals questionnaire

## OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

- By the end of this activity, participants can:

## VOCABULARY

- Goal (or SMART goal, see note)

## STEP 1: MAKE A PLAN FOR DEVELOPING EACH SKILL AREA PRIORITIZED DURING THE CARD SORT:



a. For each of the top 3 skills prioritized during the card sort activity, establish a goal and key actions using suggested prompts that are written into the document itself. These will prompt you to:

- Write three main challenges the farmer faces in improving this skill set
- Establish a target of what success or improvement looks like
- List key actions to achieve the success or improvement, using examples of “one thing” a farmer could try this year
- Write this plan into the Farmer SMART Goals Matrix or other type of log