



# The Lead Farmer Model

## FANSER's approach to selecting lead farmers



Figure 1: Lead Farmers and FANSER project staff in Katete. Photo by the FANSER



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## Section A

### Brief information on the project

The GIZ Agriculture and Food Security (Agri-food) Cluster is part of the special initiative “Transformation of Agri-food Systems” (SI TAFS) initiated by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to address the global challenges of hunger and malnutrition. The Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) project is part of this special initiative, focusing on tackling malnutrition during the critical first 1,000 days from conception until the age of two years, to end the cycle of stunting.

In Zambia, FANSER is integrated into the **Zambian Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) / 1,000 Most Critical Days Programme (MCDP) II**, led by the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). MCDP II is supported by various partners, including Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), USAID, the European Union (EU), and UNICEF. The primary goal of the FANSER project is to improve the nutritional status of individuals living in food-insecure households in Katete, Petauke, and Sinda districts in Eastern Province (since 2015), and Mwansabombwe, Mwense, and Kawambwa districts in Luapula Province (since 2020), particularly women of reproductive age and children under two years. This goal is pursued through five key areas of intervention:

1. Improving knowledge, attitude, and practice in nutrition.
2. Improving knowledge, attitude, and practice in hygiene.
3. Ensuring year-round availability of nutritionally rich food products.
4. Increasing economic access to nutritious food.
5. Strengthening nutrition governance at district, provincial, and national levels.

This document focuses on the model used to implement activities under key **area of intervention number three (3)**. Ensuring year-round availability of nutritionally rich food products.

### Introduction

The Lead Farmer Model, as implemented under the FANSER project, aligns with the guidelines of the Public Extension System established by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Overall supervision and coordination of the model are overseen by the District Agriculture Coordinator’s Office (DACO) within each district.

The Senior Agriculture Officer (SAO) is responsible for supervising and monitoring extension services at the district level. This role is supported by Block Extension Officers (BEOs), who assist in coordinating and monitoring extension activities at the community level.

At the grassroots level, Camp Extension Officers (CEOs) are tasked with coordinating and supervising Lead Farmers in the training of project beneficiaries and monitoring activities within the community.



This document provides an overview of the Lead Farmer Model implemented under the FANSER Project, highlighting its structure, key training activities, and collaboration between Lead Farmers and Nutrition Volunteers. It also outlines the selection criteria, identification process, and roles of Lead Farmers and Senior Lead Farmers.

### Illustration: Lead Farmer Model

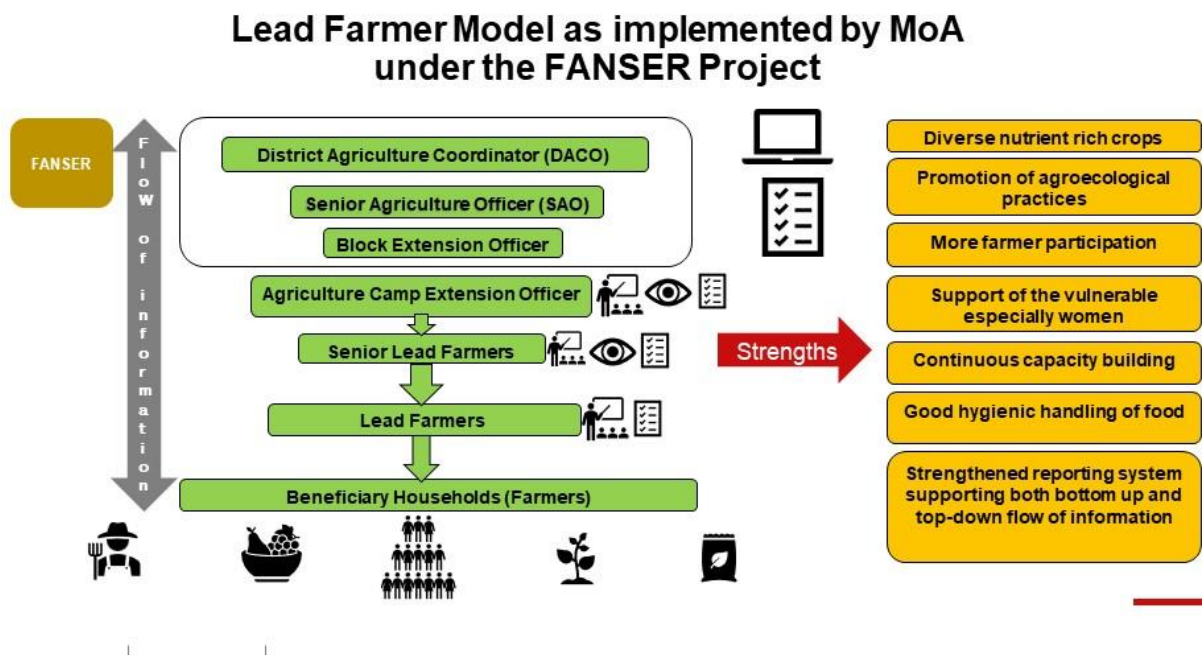


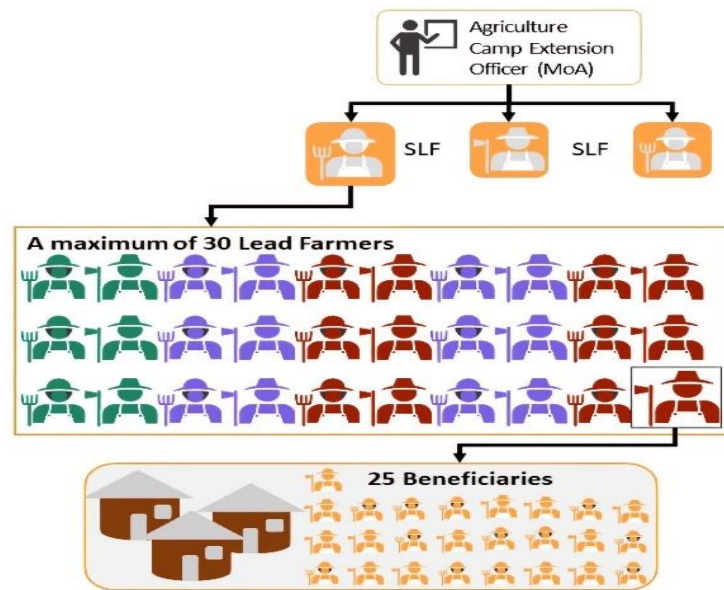
Figure 2: The Lead Farmer Model as implemented on the FANSER project and in line with the public (MoA) extension system.

### The Lead Farmer Model on the FANSER Project

The model as implemented on the FANSER project saw an introduction of a Senior Lead Farmer as an assistant to the Camp Extension Officer (CEO) in mobilizing, supervising and monitoring of the fellow Lead Farmers either at agricultural camp level or zonal level within the agricultural camp. The model follows the cascading structure as given below:



Figure 3: cascading structure of the Lead Farmer Model as implemented on the FANSER project



- One Senior Lead Farmer to supervise 30 Lead Farmers.
- One Lead farmer supervise about 25 project beneficiaries.
- Lead farmers are selected from within their communities and by the community members under the guidance and supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture (Agriculture Camp Officers). The selection activity itself is participatory in nature.
- A senior Lead Farmer is selected from amongst and by the selected Lead Farmers
- Gender consideration: the selection is done in such a manner that 50% get to be female and 50% male.

### Types of Trainings for Lead Farmers

After the Lead Farmers have been selected, they are subjected to several trainings to equip them with the relevant skills and knowledge for effective extension of the knowledge about the good agricultural practices in nutrition sensitive agriculture. The trainings include:

1. Communication and facilitation: the Lead Farmers are capacity built with skills in how to communicate and facilitate trainings to their fellow farmers effectively. This is done by use of the 'Agents of Agricultural Change' manual, a training guide developed by the project as guide for agricultural extension providers.
2. Gender Transformative Approaches in Agriculture: the Lead Farmers are also trained in gender issues for promotion of joint decision making at household level for farmers in their communities.
3. Production of organic fertilizers such as compost and Bokashi.
4. Production of natural remedies for pest and disease management in crop and vegetable production.
5. Ecological friendly production and management of nutrient-rich crops and vegetable: these trainings encompass nutrition benefits of crops, land preparation, weed management, pest and disease management, harvesting, and post-harvest management (food handling, processing, preservation, and storage.). The trainings



concentrate on crops promoted on the project as well as others, these include but not limited to:

1. Vegetables (backyard gardening and keyhole gardening)
2. Legumes (Cowpeas and Mbereshi beans)
3. Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP)
4. Vitamin A Orange Maize
5. Fruit production (Papaya production)
6. Cassava production (in Luapula)

### **Linkages Between Lead Farmers and Nutrition Volunteers (NVs)**

- The Lead Farmers are selected in the same communities where Nutrition Volunteers live. This is done to ensure the ease of coordination and good cohesion of project intermediaries for purposes of smooth implementation of project activities in the communities.
- Target the same project beneficiaries within the same communities.
- One Lead Farmer is normally paired to work with a maximum of 2 Nutrition Volunteers depending on size and population of the ward.
- In total, one Lead Farmer works with about 25 project beneficiary households.

## **Section B**

### **Selection criteria for Lead Farmers**

To be a Lead Farmer under the FANSER project, a community member should possess the following attributes:

1. Must be a resident of the community for at least one year and a person not likely to leave the community.
2. Early adopter of technology.



3. Must be a practicing farmer, managing at least two Lima (half a hectare) for crop cultivation.
4. Able to read and write in the local language.
5. Willingness to share information with others.
6. Hard working, dedicated, honesty and trustworthy in their dealings.
7. Willingness to travel to conduct trainings and other activities even in communities outside theirs.
8. Able to ride a bicycle.
9. A people person, easy to approach and socially acceptable.
10. Possess a spirit of volunteerism.
11. To promote gender equality, at least 50% of the Lead Farmers are supposed to be female and 50% male.
12. Future Lead Farmers (those selected after the initial selection) are selected from follower farmers/beneficiary households.

### **The Process Identification and Selection of Lead Farmers**

The process of identifying and subsequent selection of Lead Farmers is a critical process as it is the determinant of whether the farmer-to-farmer extension approach will be successful or not. It is for this reason that all involved in this activity exercise due diligence to ensure that the right people with the sought after attributes are selected as LFs.

In the process of selection of Lead Farmers, the Agriculture Camp Officer (CEO) is supposed to mobilise and conduct two meetings in each zone of their agricultural camp as follows:

- I. First meeting: Community awareness on the Lead Farmer selection process with community Leaders.
- II. Community meeting to select the Lead Farmers.

The Agriculture Camp Officer should introduce the purpose of the first meeting to the key community leaders and members, these may include:

1. Zone leaders
2. Traditional leaders
3. Religious leaders
4. Community members especially project beneficiaries including the Health Promoters (HPs) and Nutrition Volunteers (NVs).
5. Among others

The extension staff should ensure they play a critical role in mobilizing relevant community members to attend the sensitization meetings.

The main objective of the community meetings; especially the first community meeting is to ensure that all community members understand the concept of the lead farmer model before LFs are selected.

The date and time of each of the two community meetings on the selection of the LF selection should be established well in advanced of at least 5 days before the actual community meeting is held. This is to allow for good community mobilization by the community leaders.

The community leaders should be informed about who should be present at both the first and second community meetings i.e. community members (equal representation of male and



female), community leaders including and other relevant stakeholders within the area zones. Project beneficiaries must always be present at the meetings.

The Agriculture Camp Officer should ensure that the community meetings have equal representation of male and female community members, community leaders including village heads, religious leaders, youths, and other community members.

### **Meeting Agenda for the First Meeting – for Community Leaders:**

Given below is the flow of proceedings for the first meeting:

- a) Opening Prayer
- b) Welcoming Remarks by Chairperson
- c) Purpose of the community meeting:  
To select the Lead Farmers to enhance Food and Nutrition Security of the project beneficiaries such as women of reproductive age and households with children under 2 years of age.
- d) Brief about the FANSEER project (a broacher/flyer about the project is shared).
- e) Explain Steps for selection of the Lead Farmers (50 % Women and 50% men).
- f) Share and discuss information on the selection criteria and role of Lead Farmers.
- g) Set date for the second meeting (with community members to select LFs)
- h) Closing remarks by the zone/community leaders
- i) Closing Prayer

The facilitator should explain the selection criteria as given above before the actual selection of the LFs. At the end, equal numbers of males and females will be selected in case more than one LF is needed.

The facilitator should also explain and the role of LFs in the community to the community leaders. Given below are the roles of the (S)LFs.

### **The Role of a (Senior) Lead Farmer**

- a) Be a role model for Nutrition Sensitive Agricultural practices in relation to production, processing, preservation, storage, and consumption of diverse nutrient-rich foods.
- b) Organize/mobilize fellow farmers to attend project meetings and trainings in the community.
- c) To train others and lead in setting up demonstration plots for promoted crops and vegetables in their respective communities.
- d) Keep and report basic records such as the number of farmers trained, types of crops planted, challenges faced by project beneficiaries etc.
- e) To implement all new technologies introduced in line with promoted project interventions.
- f) To conduct farm visits to beneficiary farms/agricultural fields.
- g) To promote adoption of new and existing good agricultural practices through farmer trainings, field days and demonstration plots.
- h) To give feedback on problems faced during adoption of new and existing good agricultural practices through reports.





- i) To collaborate with the Health Promoters (HPs) and Nutrition Volunteers (NVs) within their communities and wards.
- j) To liaise with the Senior Lead Farmer and the Agriculture Camp Extension officers on the needs of the FANSER project beneficiaries.
- k) Support and uphold gender ideals including promotion of joint decision making at household level, starting with their own households.

To ensure proper management of expectations, the facilitator should also elaborate the role of community members on the project in relation to the nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Given below are some of the expected roles of the project beneficiaries and community members.

### **The role of project beneficiaries and community members**

- a) Attending meetings and trainings organised by LFs.
- b) Adoption of agricultural practices and technologies being promoted by the project.
- c) Communicating farming challenges to lead farmers in their communities.

### **Meeting Agenda for the Second Meeting – for Community Members**

- a) Opening Prayer
- b) Welcoming Remarks by Chairperson
- c) Purpose:  
To select the Lead Farmers to enhance Food and Nutrition Security of the project beneficiaries such as women of reproductive age and households with children under 2 years of age.
- d) Brief about the FANSER project (share a brief handout with agriculture camp officers on the project).
- e) Explain Steps for selection of the Lead Farmers (50 % Women and 50% men).
- f) Share information on the Selection criteria for the Lead Farmers.
- g) Comments from the Community members on the selected LFs
- h) Closing remarks by the Zone/Community leaders
- i) Closing Prayer

### **Promotion of Technologies**

The facilitator should explain that a LF will perform several Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Interventions to enhance crop diversification including:

- a) Soil & water conservation, organic fertilizer production and utilization, sustainable agriculture practices such as: inter-cropping, crop rotation, weed control and pest & disease control.
- b) Selection of LFs After explaining the LF approach, the selection process should be done by voting with emphasis on the qualities of a LF, roles, and responsibilities.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion the LF section process will follow the above-mentioned steps and processes. The LF approach should be explained in detail.



## Conduct of Senior Lead Farmers

Senior Lead Farmers encourage to ensure that their personal and professional conduct is in keeping with the following values and rules:

Code of Conduct:

Senior Lead Farmers and Lead Farmers alike are expected to:

1. Be role models and ensure that their behaviour does not bring the project or the organisation of GIZ into disrepute.
2. Be responsible for the use of information, assets and resources they are entrusted with e.g. riding the bicycles carefully and respecting traffic rules and other road users.
3. To take good care of the assets they receive from the project and use them only for project purposes.
4. Not to participate in or support any illegal activities that contravene human and cultural rights.
5. Not to work under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating substances such as drugs especially when carrying-out project activities.
6. Not to engage in behaviour that is likely to cause harm, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, including bullying, harassment, intimidation or exploitation of humanity.
7. To treat all people with respect and dignity, respecting each person's gender, race, religion, political conviction, age, disability, ethnicity, and or other personal characteristics.



8. Not to use the role of the (Senior) Lead Farmer for political benefits or any other such benefits that would be realised because of being a (Senior) Lead Farmer.
9. To behave responsibly and in ways that avoid creating unnecessary risk to the safety, health and welfare for their own and of others (including beneficiaries).
10. Not to request, solicit or accept any payment, gift, service or favour from others, whether for your own personal benefit or for another person which have been offered as a result of being associated with the GIZ project.
11. To report all problems and challenges to the Camp Extension Officer or other superiors from Ministry of Agriculture.



*Figure 4: Lead Farmers in Shinonde Agriculture Camp and FANSER project staff in Kawambwa. Photo by the FANSER project*

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