

Concise Guidelines for Drafting a 'Good Practice Note' in the context of Pro-Poor Livestock Development

-Version One-

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1) Background

SA PPLPP developed “Guidelines for Identifying and Documenting Good Practices (GPs) for Pro-Poor Livestock development”¹, which have been in use since October 2007. In May 2008, a first Learning Event (LE) was organised bringing together all the Good Practice owners² and champions³ so far identified in the field of smallholder poultry development. On the basis of the draft GP notes, a range of exercises were conducted in order to arrive at lessons learnt and interpret these towards implications for policy making, institutional changes and development of programmes.

One major obstacle has been the variable quality of the GP notes. The LE provided however indications on missing information concerning a range of GPs, while also suggesting on how to improve the guideline.

Participants also expressed an urge to be given a prescribed format for a GP note. A clear cut format has however the danger of people following it too strictly and being more focused on the headings given in the format than in being creative in writing down all the ins and outs of the GP at stake.

The purpose of this additional guideline is to fill this perceived gap; to assist the one in charge of drafting a GP note to ensure that he/she covers all the basic information of the GP so that the GP note can be used for a range of purposes; namely to:

- i. facilitate sharing and comparing experiences;
- ii. derive policy, programme and institutional lessons from the GP.

2) Introduction

A good practice asserts that the method, process or activity that has been adopted is more effective at delivering a particular outcome. It can also be defined as the more efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task or set of tasks, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large number of people.

Understanding good practices means therefore understanding what works (and what does not work), how, why and in what conditions.

Within the context of the SA PPLPP a **GP should contribute to strengthen the livelihoods of the livestock dependent poor wo/men** or, to say it differently, **the GP should contribute to the empowerment, improvement of capabilities and facilitate the organisation of poor fe/male livestock keepers.**

It should therefore be recognised that a certain practice, which is ‘Good’ in the context of livestock sector development, is not necessarily ‘Good’ from a pro-poor livestock development point of view.

In the above mentioned “Guidelines to Identifying and Documenting Good Practices for Pro-Poor Livestock Development”, it is shortly explained that normally a Good Practice has three pronounced aspects as presented in figure 1 below.

Aspect One ‘Technology’ refers to the technology option of the GP; it can relate to preventive animal health (e.g. vaccination), feeding (e.g. tree leaves), manure management (e.g. composting technique), etc.

Aspect Two ‘Delivery Mechanism’ refers to how the delivery, the dissemination of the technology is happening, which in most cases involves more than one actor. It is about the services needed to deliver and the ways these are organised.

Aspect Three ‘Suitability’ refers to whether what is delivered is suitable to the context, to the given circumstances. For instance, a costly input technology is not suitable for situations where returns to sales of livestock products are limited.



Figure 1. Three aspects of Good Practice

3) Drafting the GP note

While the three aspects are used to formulate the Good Practice, parameters⁴ have been identified to assess whether the (potential) Good Practice is actually a GP.

The initial stage of describing the GP and filtering it against the set parameters implies that a lot of information has been collected. How now to present all the information collected in a systematic and organised manner in a GP Note? The SA PPLPP ‘Guidelines for Identifying and Documenting Good Practices for Pro-poor Livestock Development’ provides a rather open format⁵ for drafting a GP note. However, many GP owners and champions find it difficult to work with such an open format. Therefore, what follows presents more details on what should be covered in a GP note.

It is explained below that five distinguished sets of information are to be covered in order to draft a comprehensive GP Note namely:

1. Basic information on the Good Practice
2. The ‘innovation’ in the Good Practice
3. The practice of the Good Practice
4. The origin of the Good Practice
5. Lessons

1. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE GOOD PRACTICE	
It summarises some basic information about the GP, with a focus on its impact on the poor. The objective is to promptly show the reader that the GP has a remarkable positive impact on the livelihoods of the poor; that it is therefore a practice out of which one can draw important lessons for future policies and programmes.	
GP Code & Title	Code is fixed and given by SA PPLPP team. The title should be attractive and relevant, which shall catch the attention of the readers to go through it.
Year started	When did it start?
Location	Country / State / District / Division / Village
Context	Brief description of the context: e.g. rural / urban; population; poverty level; agro-ecological zone; common farming & livelihood system; main economic activities; infrastructure; etc.
Communities reached (descriptive)	Brief description of the communities involved: e.g. farmers / landless; male / female; ultra poor / poor / not so poor; underprivileged / privileged community; average number and type of livestock kept; gender dynamics, etc.
Estimated number of households involved (quantify)	Villages; groups (Self Help Groups; primary cooperatives, etc.); Households; fe/male farmers; etc.
Qualitative indicators (descriptive)	Impact of GP on the livelihoods of the poor: e.g. more nutrition; empowerment; more income; better capabilities; improved social status; reduced vulnerability; improved risk management, etc.
Quantitative indicators (quantify)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative indicators of success of GP: e.g. data on level of income; food intake; sales; etc. - Benchmarks, such as poverty line; situation before; comparison with other villages, are necessary to substantiate evidence. - Although quantitative indicators are often difficult to gather and sometimes inaccurate, they are essential if the GP is to be widely appreciated, especially by program developers and policy makers.

2. THE INNOVATION IN THE GOOD PRACTICE	
It should describe the Good Practice identified and what the innovation is / what the innovative element is.	
Aspect One 'Technology' Aspect Two 'Delivery Mechanism' Aspect Three 'Suitability'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When describing the GP, assure yourself that all three aspects are covered. - Of each GP, one or more of these aspects have an 'innovative' element, i.e. they differ from the usual technology / delivery mechanism: it is this innovation that makes the practice good and pro-poor! - The 'innovative' element of the GP should be identified and an explanation given of why this element is innovative with respect to the usual / conventional / previous way of doing business. - Identifying the innovative element in the GP may be challenging and requires careful analysis. - Note, however, that it is from this innovative element that one could start deriving lessons for prospective policies and programmes.

3. THE PRACTICE (usual pattern of action) OF THE 'GOOD PRACTICE'	
It is about explaining <u>how the good practice works in practice</u> . This implies looking at the actors involved and their roles, including the roles of the public and the private sector and the civil society.	
Actors	<p>Who are the actors involved in the GP? E.g. input suppliers; farmers; traders; financial institutions; state governments; village leaders; cooperatives; extension agents, local government, etc.</p> <p>N.B. a project/scheme/program/plan is not an actor but the one currently executing it is.</p>
Relationships between actors	<p>How the actors interact among each others? Two types of relationships should be looked at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Within organizations (e.g. within a cooperative; within central government, extension agents; etc.); ii. Between different organisations / actors (e.g. cooperative and animal health service providers; farmers and extension agents; group and bank; community and forestry department –lease for management for common land-; etc.). <p>The analysis should look at flows of goods, services and money, which is critical to understand whether the GP is financially self-sustainable or whether some subsidies are necessary for the GP to 'function' (e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Do (f/m) farmers buy animal drugs at market price? ▸ Do (f/m) farmers pay para-vets only for the services they

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	<p>provide and are given vaccines/drugs for free? > Who pays the extension agent?</p> <p>Flow diagrams are a powerful tool to simply represent relationships within an organization and among different actors. A sample diagram is drawn below for ease of reference.</p> <div data-bbox="555 459 1340 1288" data-label="Diagram"> <pre> graph TD GOV[GOVERNMENT] -- "PROVIDES VACCINES AT SUBSIDISED PRICE" --> NGO[NGO] PHARM[PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY] -- "SELLS ANIMAL DRUGS AT MARKET PRICE" --> NGO NGO -- "DISTRIBUTES VACCINES/DRUGS + START-UP EQUIPMENT + REGULAR TRAINING FOR FREE" --> PW["'POULTRY WORKERS'"] PW -- "PROVIDE SERVICES + SELL DRUGS AND VACCINES AT DOORSTEP" --> FARM[FARMERS] PW --- PW_NOTE["} MAINLY POOR WOMEN"] FARM --- FARM_NOTE["} MAINLY POOR FARMERS"] </pre> </div>
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<p>Focusing on GP innovation</p>	<p>A deeper analysis on the innovation promoted by the GP is recommended. There would be small value added, for instance, in describing in detail the buyer-seller transaction between the pharmaceutical company and the NGO in the above diagram; some interesting lessons could be instead derived, say, from looking in detail at the training given to poultry workers by the NGO and at the way they provide services at farmers' doorstep.</p>
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4. THE ORIGIN OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

The previous sections lead to describing the GP from a static point of view, looking at its impact on the poor and at how it works in practice. Policy, programme and institutional lessons, however, could also be drawn by looking at the process which stands behind the origin of the GP.

<p>Actors and their roles: before / after GP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A simple before/after review of the actors involved in the GP and of their roles is the simplest starting point to appreciate the origin of the practice. - Typically, a 'newcomer' initiated the GP or either some old actor began to play a new / different role with respect to its
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4. THE ORIGIN OF THE GOOD PRACTICE	
	<p>previous one (e.g. was the GP initiated by the government, by an NGO or by the f/m farmers themselves? Did extension agents start providing also marketing services to farmers; etc?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A description of the key characteristics of the GP initiator is useful to start understanding the origin of the GP (Is the initiator a well-established large or small NGO? Is the promoter the local government or a large corporate firm? Etc.)
Analysis and costs of start-up phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next is to understand what the promoter did to initiate the GP. An understanding of the information that was needed to initiate the GP, including an assessment of the costs to collect that information, as well as about the start-up costs, could provide some useful policy and programme indications. - Was some preliminary analysis of market opportunities carried out? Did an NGO promote the establishment of self-help-groups? Did the government provide a grant to some of the GP actors? Were grants or loans at preferential rates accorded to farmers in the start-up phase? Which were the initial set-backs suffered? Etc. - Or, did it evolve completely differently! For instance, as a result of participative mode of working with communities, did some f/m farmers start experimenting and step by step a Good Practice evolved? - An appreciation of the information needed and the costs incurred to initiate the GP as well as the roles the various actors played in the start-up phase are crucial to assess where and how there could be opportunities to apply some of the possible lessons drawn from the GP.

5. LESSONS	
Finally, one should attempt to derive some lessons from the identified Good Practice	
Practice	<p>Whereas the GPs are by construction location-specific and have few chances of being successfully replicated without adjusting for local conditions, some of their <u>underlying principles could have widespread validity.</u></p> <p>For instance,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one GP can show that focusing on local breeds can have a positive impact on the livelihoods of the poor; - one GP can illustrate that poor farmers are willing / able to pay the full cost of veterinary drugs and services; - one GP can show that extension agents provide better services to Cooperative members if they are given a share in the Cooperative;

5. LESSONS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one GP could show that veterinarians and para-vets can form profitable associations when their respective roles and relationships are legally defined; - one GP can provide evidence that strengthening commons (grazing, forest, waste land) pays back when investments are made in building village institutions / community organisation, etc. <p>Deriving such lessons out of the GPs is not easy, and requires iterative analysis and review of the GP, including some good understanding of the prevailing policy framework.</p> <p>It is sometimes easier for an outsider than an insider to derive lessons due to the distance he/she has towards the GP.</p>
Process	<p>Some other lessons could be drawn by looking at the process from which the Good Practice originated / which made the Good Practice to evolve. The <u>process</u> is often the crucial, but difficult to grasp / difficult to capture part because it often refers to how people are related to each other / behave, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are public grants needed? - Do farmers need significant training? - Are Self-Help Groups to be formed? <p>Yet, a public grant can result in two different situations. In one it has been successfully applied and led to development, in the other it led to failure. What has been different in terms of processes when comparing the two?</p> <p>As far as possible, an effort should be made to understand what is the (potential) role of the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to promote the development / scale-out / expansion of some of the lessons derived from the analysis of the GPs, - should it improve certain roles, - can it withdraw certain roles, - has the enabling environment as created by Govt. be sufficient, etc.
Conclusions	KEEP short and precise.

4) Final Remarks

Although the final GP note is important, it should always be kept in our minds that the entire undertaking should be a learning process; the better the learning, the better the GP champions can function.

Do not struggle in your own. Always consult the relevant country teams⁶ of SA PPLPP and/or the coordination team.

Be prepared that drafting a GP note easily implies going through a range of draft versions before arriving at a final one.

Success.

1 Document 002, SA PPLPP, October 2007. 'Guidelines for Identifying and Documenting Good practices for Pro-Poor Livestock Development'.

2 A **GP owner** is a person/group of individuals/institution which plays a crucial role in the GP. Thus, a GP owner understands all the ins and outs of the GP.

3 In the process of identifying, capturing and documenting a GP, normally others (non GP owners) are getting involved; to help in the filtering process, to draft the GP note, etc. These persons develop an understanding of the GP including why it is pro-poor oriented; as a result they are in principle equipped to contribute to influence policies and can thus function as 'champions'. Therefore, a **GP champion** is an individual (in some cases it can also be a team) who understands a certain GP thoroughly and in this regard can function as a champion.

4 From 'potential GP' to GP

A filter process has to be there to assess whether the potential GP is actually a GP relevant for the pro-poor livestock context. A first set of parameters developed is as follows:

1 Successful adoption / Replicability / Up scalability

It includes acceptability in terms of :

- Socially acceptable / relevant,
- Technically suitable / appropriate,
- Gender needs considered,
- Policies and politics,
- Recognising / respecting traditional, local knowledge and socio cultural values.

2 Sustainable benefits:

- Economically viable, -cost effective- -less input, more output-; -low costs proven intervention-
- Environmental friendly

3 Sustainable –relevance for future generations taken into account-

- Practice can continue on its own
- It meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4 Strengthen livelihoods:

- Employment opportunity
- Beneficial at large
- Providing food security / Nutritional security
- Empowerment (of especially women)
- Mitigating effects of climate change / adaptability to climate change / coping mechanism

5 Community empowerment in terms of

- Organising themselves and able to express, work on their rights, etc. towards developing a joint voice,
- No (gender, caste, class) discrimination
- Influence local Governments
- Ability to take lead in own development

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GP Note (approx. 20 pages) format

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- 1. Attractive title:** It was suggested that the GP note should have an attractive and relevant title which shall catch the attention of readers to go through it.
 - 2. Catchy introductory paragraph:** It will highlight how the present case is a good practice in defined terms and parameters.
 - 3. What practice we are talking about:** It shall detail out an overview of the practice, owner of the practice, its functional areas, geographical locations, socio-economic profile of the community concerned etc.
 - 4. What has made it GP and pro poor:** This section will have an outline of the GP activities, processes and methodologies which have been conceived, operationalised and monitored over a period of time and have been found conspicuous, innovative and effective and have impacted on a larger scale, the lives and livelihoods of the poor people, through livestock rearing. It will also mention what exact criteria, the methodologies and deliverables the GP owners have adopted in ensuring the participation of the poorest among the community as beneficiaries.
 - 5. Why has it worked:** This section will include the circumstances, policy environments, community values, financial inputs, geographical locations, community's setting and its role, adaptability and willingness on the part of beneficiary and role of women in its acceptability which has helped it in making it a good practice.
 - 6. How can it be replicated:** Being a good practice, it implies that it has to be replicated in majority of areas, barring in some cases. The GP in this case should also include what could be the constraints in its adoption.
 - 7. Conclusion:** The document will systematically conclude through measuring all the above aspects that it is a good practice and a suitable case to be shared with other practitioners.

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Our Motto

*“development of healthy environments in which
healthy animals are reared by healthy people”*

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