FARMER'S PRIDE INTERNATIONAL

Milestone 1

Strategy and Cluster Foundations

Turn a shared farming idea into a practical, accountable plan



Illustrative learning scene. Image credits are on the references page.

PRACTICAL STUDY MANUAL

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HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Learn, practise, record, improve

Use this practical manual alongside your enrolled lessons and tutor instructions. It supports the milestone theme; it does not replace the complete Academy curriculum.

Work through one lesson at a time. Complete the activity using your own enterprise or the clearly labelled teaching example. Keep dated notes and discuss uncertain technical decisions with a suitable local adviser.

By the end, you should be able to:

- Describe a farm enterprise and its customer clearly.

- Map the people, resources and services needed by a cluster.

- Agree transparent group rules and a small first pilot.

- Prepare evidence for an achievable 90-day action plan.

The self-check is for practice. Your programme's official assessment and certificate requirements remain separate from these exercises.

LESSON 1 OF 6

Start with a specific customer

A crop is not yet a business model. Start with a person or business that has a defined need. Write down the product, intended use, quality requirement, delivery place and payment expectation. A buyer conversation is useful evidence; it becomes a commitment only when the parties agree the terms.

For a Moringa enterprise, distinguish fresh leaves, dried leaves, powder and seed products. These have different handling needs and customers. Do not assume that one buyer's grade, moisture requirement or preferred variety applies to another buyer. Record unanswered questions before buying inputs.

Try it in practice

Interview one potential customer. Ask what they buy, how they judge quality, how much they could consider, when they need it and how payment works. Record the date and distinguish an enquiry from an order.

LESSON 2 OF 6

Map the complete production system

Draw the journey from inputs to payment: seed or seedlings, land preparation, production, harvesting, handling, processing, storage, transport, delivery and collection of payment. Beside each stage, record who is responsible and what can go wrong.

An Agriculture-Based Cluster coordinates producers and services around an enterprise. Sharing a nursery, transport or drying space may help, but only if capacity, ownership, maintenance and costs are agreed. A shared asset is not automatically free or available whenever a farmer needs it. Look for the weakest link before expanding production.

Try it in practice

Draw the value chain on one page. Mark each stage as available, limited or missing. Choose one bottleneck that the group can address within the next month.

LESSON 3 OF 6

Agree useful group rules

Write simple membership and decision rules before money or produce is pooled. Cover joining and leaving, member contributions, voting, banking authority, procurement, conflict resolution and access to records. Separate the person who approves a payment from the person who reconciles the cash record when the team is large enough.

Agree how produce is weighed, quality is assessed and rejected material is handled. Explain every deduction in the settlement statement. Members should be able to check their own delivery and payment records. Include women, younger members and people who need accessible meeting formats in practical decision making.

Try it in practice

Draft five operating rules and test them against a disagreement: a member disputes a quality deduction. Who reviews the evidence, and how quickly must the group respond?

LESSON 4 OF 6

Check resources before promising scale

List the resources the first production cycle actually needs. Include lawful access to land, suitable water, labour, tools, skills, input suppliers, safe storage, transport and working capital. Record the evidence for each resource, such as an agreement, test result or supplier quotation.

A proposal, registration, expression of interest and signed agreement are different statuses. Keep them separate in presentations and funding discussions. A large job target or area target does not prove feasibility. Work backwards from a realistic first batch, checking whether people, equipment and cash are available at the right time.

Try it in practice

Create a resource register with four columns: resource, evidence, owner and next action. Put an actual date beside every missing item.

LESSON 5 OF 6

Design a learning pilot

A pilot should answer a decision, not merely create activity. Choose a manageable area or batch and specify what you will measure. Examples include saleable yield, labour hours, rejected quantity, water use, drying losses and payment delays. Record conditions so that the result can be interpreted later.

Use the same measurement method throughout the pilot. Compare results with the original assumption and explain differences. Stop or change the plan if a critical condition fails. A small documented result is more useful than a large claim with no records.

Try it in practice

Write a pilot question, a measurable indicator, a recording method and the decision you will make after the result. Name the person who will keep the record.

LESSON 6 OF 6

Turn the plan into action

Choose a short list of actions that can be completed in 90 days. Each action needs an owner, deadline, required resource and evidence of completion. Review progress in brief regular meetings. Mark an action complete only when the promised evidence exists.

Keep a risk register alongside the action plan. For each risk, note a warning sign, a prevention measure and a fallback. For example, if the only buyer delays a trial order, the group may reduce the next planting rather than assume the original demand still exists. Update the plan when evidence changes.

Try it in practice

Choose three actions for the next two weeks. Add a weekly review date and a rule for escalating delays.

WORKED EXAMPLE - ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

A cooperative transport decision

A hypothetical group has 12 growers. Each grower can supply 15 kg of saleable leaves for a trial, giving 180 kg in total. A transporter quotes USD 90 for the trip. The buyer's specification and trial date still require written confirmation.

1. Transport cost per kilogram = 90 / 180 = USD 0.50.

2. If only 120 kg is accepted for transport, the same trip costs 90 / 120 = USD 0.75 per kg.

3. The coordinator confirms the specification and collection date before booking transport.

4. Each grower receives a delivery record. Actual accepted quantities and deductions are recorded separately.

What to take into your own plan

The transport quote is not the full cost of supplying the order. Add harvesting, handling, packaging, rejection and payment timing before deciding whether the trial is viable.

PRINT AND COMPLETE - WORKSHEET 1

Your cluster planning canvas

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Customer and product

2. Buyer requirements already confirmed

3. Members and service partners

4. Resources available now

PRINT AND COMPLETE - WORKSHEET 2

Your cluster planning canvas

Name: _____ Date: _____

5. Resources still missing

6. Pilot question and measures

7. Group decisions and payment rules

8. Three actions, owners and dates

YOUR NEXT 30 DAYS

Turn learning into a small, useful result

Week 1 - establish the starting point

Complete the worksheet using dated observations and records. Mark facts, estimates and unanswered questions separately.

Week 2 - test one improvement

Choose one feasible action from the lessons. Name an owner, a completion date and the evidence you will collect.

Week 3 - check the result

Compare the result with your starting assumption. Record what changed, what did not and what else may have influenced the outcome.

Week 4 - share and decide

Discuss the evidence with your team. Keep, change or stop the action and record the next step.

Keep an evidence folder: completed worksheets, dated records, relevant photographs, calculations and a short reflection. Use permission before recording or sharing another person's information.

SELF-CHECK

Test your understanding

1. Does buyer interest mean a signed order?

2. Why identify the weakest stage in a value chain?

3. What makes an action plan accountable?

4. Why start with a pilot?

5. What should a member payment record show?

Write your own answer before reading the next page. Use the lesson activities to explain how you would apply the idea in a real enterprise.

SELF-CHECK ANSWERS

Compare and improve your reasoning

1. Does buyer interest mean a signed order?

No. Record interest separately from agreed quantity, specification, price, timing and payment terms.

2. Why identify the weakest stage in a value chain?

A bottleneck in handling, finance or delivery can prevent the whole enterprise from fulfilling its promise.

3. What makes an action plan accountable?

Named owners, dates, required resources and evidence of completion.

4. Why start with a pilot?

To test important assumptions at a manageable scale before making larger commitments.

5. What should a member payment record show?

Delivered and accepted quantities, agreed price, explained deductions, amount due and payment date.

SOURCES AND IMAGE CREDITS

Continue learning from reliable references

These references support the concepts used in the manual. Follow local requirements, product-specific guidance and the instructions of the relevant laboratory, authority or qualified adviser when applying technical practices.

FAO: Farmer field school approach

Open reference: www.fao.org

FAO: Farm Business School manual

Open reference: www.fao.org

Image credit

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