



## **Module 1: Introduction to the New Extensionist**

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### **Summary**

#### **Module Overview**

Changes in context over the past decades have affected the way extension and advisory services (EAS) are organised and managed. These changes can be better understood by looking at the wider agricultural innovation system of which EAS is a key component. Extension services are shifting their focus and as an extension agent you are now required to strengthen your professional training with a range of knowledge and skills that support interaction with diverse actors, and to share information and knowledge. Advisory services that were dominated by public extension services are now growing more varied to include private actors such as agrodealers, agribusiness services, financial services and NGOs (international and local) in addition to producer organisations and cooperatives. As an extension agent, you therefore need to understand this increasingly complex landscape, and build capacities to better serve rural producers, especially the smallholder farmers.

This module will introduce you to the evolving changes in agriculture and associated challenges for EAS. GFRAS has elaborated the envisaged role of the “new extensionist” and has identified the capacities required at the individual level.

#### **Module Learning objectives**

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain the reasons behind the need for EAS to develop better capacities, as elaborated in the GFRAS New Extensionist document.
2. Describe the capacities needed at different levels of EAS, and particularly elaborate the practical implications for field-level extension agents.

#### **Module Performance outcomes**

Upon completing this module, you will:

1. Be able to explain why and how your role as an extension agent has changed.
2. Become clearer about the additional knowledge and skills (or competencies) that will help improve your advisory services in the changed landscape.

#### **Units**

##### **Unit I: Rationale for the New Extensionist**

- Describe the changes taking place in rural farming/livelihoods and their implications for extension.
- Understand the concept of agricultural innovation systems and extension’s position in it.
- Differentiate between the various kinds of EAS providers and their roles.

##### **Unit II: Going More Deeply into the New Extensionist Capacities**

- Describe the principles promoted by GFRAS and how they affect EAS capacity development.
- Explain how new roles and capacities are needed at different levels within the EAS.
- List the 12 core competencies required by the New Extensionist, and for each explain their purpose and practical implications.