



SATNET electronic discussion no. 3

Development of a Selection Criteria for Participants of SATNET Asia Training

1 April – 14 April 2013

Executive Summary

The discussion forum agreed that the selection criteria proposed for consideration which screens candidates based on appropriateness for the target group, language skills, gender balance, expectation of continued association with the parent organization, and motivation, was suitable for the purpose of SATNET training. A simple point system wherein each candidate is evaluated based on his/her profile and awarded points against each criteria was incorporated which addressed the recommendation of assigning relative weights to the different criteria. This point system also provides a relative advantage to women candidates to promote gender balance in the group of trainees, Specific questions meant to be answered by the candidates or their nominating organizations were incorporated in order to provide a basis for assessing motivation level and to give priority to candidates who are expected to return back to their organizations to apply the training. Moreover, the design of the selection criteria contains a section on 'Additional Comments/ Criteria' wherein training supervisors can further elaborate on any of the criteria or even specify additional criteria applicable to specific situations. As per need, this section can be utilized to add a criteria for locational/ geographical balance amongst the trainees as was recommended by some members of the discussion forum.

Background

Activity 4.1 of Work Package (WP) 4 of the SATNET Asia project envisages organization of workshops and training courses on Research for Development (R4D) technical topics. This activity includes in-country workshops on specific R4D topics and trade facilitation measures as well as residential training courses. One of the components of Activity 4.1 is development of criteria for selection of the participants for the workshops and training courses. The criteria can serve as a useful tool for planning the workshops, ensuring the training is well targeted and relevant for the recipients, and that impact is maximized. This criteria is intended for use by SATNET partners and associates who organize workshops and training courses under the project and who need to screen the pool of potential participants or applicants for identifying the most appropriate ones.

SATNET electronic discussion no. 3 was aimed at facilitating the development of the selection criteria. The focus was particularly on development of a generic criteria, in the form of a series of questions, which is useful to plan the workshops. It was also important that the criteria be broad and flexible enough to enable further adaptation as per the needs of specific partners, associates, participant categories, and training contexts.

To initiate discussions on development of the selection criteria, a preliminary draft was proposed at the start of the discussion. This draft was deliberated upon and subsequently revised to reflect the suggestions received. The revised draft was again circulated for consideration. Overall, the draft criteria included the below components:

- (a) **Target Group** (qualifications and professional experience)
- (b) **Language skills** (proficiency in language of instruction)

- (c) **Gender balance** among the participants group
- (d) Expectation of **continued association with the parent organization** after the training in order to apply the learning.
- (e) **Motivation** of the candidate to participate in and apply the training

The forum participants discussed the following:

- Do the criteria cover the most relevant considerations for evaluating the suitability of potential training participants?
- Are any important criteria missing?
- Are there criteria included that are of minor importance or for which information would be very difficult to collect?

General comments

There was agreement that the proposed set of criteria were appropriate for selection of participants for SATNET training. A number of suggestions for enhancing the criteria were received as described below.

Do the criteria cover the most relevant considerations for evaluating the suitability of potential training participants?

The forum agreed that the proposed criteria indeed covered the key considerations for evaluating the suitability of potential participants. Among the suggestions for improvement, it was recommended that all the criteria need not be equally weighted and that each criteria should be assigned a relative weight. It was also suggested that motivation of candidates be assessed by asking them to submit a brief paragraph describing their motivation to join the training and explaining how they foresee utilizing the training (eg. for their own knowledge development or for the community).

Are any important criteria missing?

It was noted that locational/geographical balance amongst the participants is important to reflect in the selection criteria because many innovations are taking place in remote areas driven by the devoted efforts and commitment of local people. It is necessary to provide learning opportunities and exposure to them as well. Moreover, locational balance amongst the participants can enable the knowledge and skills gained from the training to be better disseminated. It was also expressed that encouragement should be provided to those who have not been exposed to similar training opportunities before.

Are there criteria included that are of minor importance or for which information would be very difficult to collect?

A number of comments were received with regard to the criteria on 'continued association with the parent organization'. The initial formulation of the criteria was: *'Is each participant expected to remain with his/her organization for at least 1 year after the training in order to apply the learning?'* It was recognized, however, that the tenure of a participant in an organization was difficult to predict or control, and that in the current form, this criteria was difficult to apply or monitor. A view was also expressed that the trainee may have opportunities to apply the learning wherever he/she may be.

It was suggested that instead of seeking a commitment from the candidate to remain with his/her organization for a year after the training, the nominating organization may simply be requested to provide a letter confirming that the trainee will return to the same organization after completion of the training.

Revised Selection Criteria

Based on the comments and suggestions received, a revised selection criteria was developed and reviewed by the forum participants. It is enclosed as **Annex I** for reference. All the suggestions received could not be incorporated since some were too situation-specific and not suitable for the purpose of a generic or universal criteria.

Below is an overview of how some of the suggestions were addressed in the revised version and related discussions that took place:

- (1) *Assigning weights to each criteria*: This was incorporated in the revised criteria through the mechanism of a simple point system wherein each candidate would be evaluated based on his/her profile and awarded points against each criteria.
- (2) *Assessing motivation*: The motivation of a candidate is proposed to be assessed through his/her response to the question '*Please describe why do you want to participate in this training and how do you plan to apply it afterwards*'.
- (3) *Continued association with the parent organization*: To assess the candidate against this criteria, the nominating organization will be asked '*Is the candidate expected to return back to his/her parent organization after the training in order to apply the learning*'.
- (4) *Locational/geographical balance*: The revised criteria contains a section on 'Additional Comments/ Criteria' wherein training supervisors (i.e. individuals leading the organization of the workshops or training courses) are free to further explain/ elaborate on any of the criteria to better capture their intent, or even specify additional criteria applicable to specific situations. If required, the aspect of locational/geographic balance may be reflected here.
- (5) *Gender Balance*: The revised criteria aims to provide a relative advantage to women candidates through the point system (1 point for women candidates, 0 for men candidates). A concern was expressed regarding the possibility of an excessively high percentage of women participants. To check against such an outcome, one option could be to use the 'Additional Comments/Criteria' section. For instance, in case the target percentage of women participants for a particular training is 50%, it may be specified here that once this level has been reached, the remaining seats should be assigned to men candidates.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SATNET ASIA TRAINING

Background:

Activity 4.1 of Work Package (WP) 4 of the SATNET Asia project envisages organization of workshops and training courses on Research for Development (R4D) technical topics. This activity includes in-country workshops on specific R4D topics and trade facilitation measures as well as residential training courses. Although the initial plan was to organize workshops and training sessions based on suggested sustainable agriculture technologies emerging from WP 2, given the ongoing work of WP 2, the approach at this point is to collaborate with partners and associates to leverage the workshops and training courses they intend to organize in 2013 and 2014, and enhance/expand on them through SATNET support to deliver added value. This approach will also allow SATNET to align with the existing training and capacity building expertise and needs of the partners and associates. Training on key technologies identified by WP2 will be considered in 2014.

Selection Criteria for Participants:

The SATNET Asia project targets various agents along domestic and regional value chains who play a role as change agents and innovators, amongst them farmer organizations, traders, the private sector, the public sector and policymakers. One of the components of Activity 4.1 is development of criteria for selection of the participants for the workshops and training courses. The criteria can serve as a useful tool for ensuring the training is well targeted and relevant for the recipients, and that impact is maximized.

Generic criteria, in the form of a series of questions, are a useful tool to plan training and workshops. They should be broad and flexible enough to enable further adaptation as per the needs of specific partners, associates, participant categories, and training contexts.

Based on consultations with SATNET participants through the LinkedIn platform in April 2013, a selection criteria was arrived at as described below. This criteria is intended for use by SATNET partners and associates who organize workshops and training courses under the project and who need to screen the pool of potential participants or applicants for identifying the most appropriate ones.

Criteria:

The criteria are set in two parts – Eligibility criteria and Selection criteria.

‘Language Skills’ is an Eligibility criteria (unless interpretation services are being provided at the training). Any candidate who does not meet this criteria would be rejected and not evaluated further.

As the next step, training supervisors will assess the profile of each eligible candidate against the Selection criteria based on the information provided by him/her in the training application form (which should be designed appropriately to obtain the necessary information). They will award a score to the candidate for each selection criteria, as well as a total score. All the candidates will then be ranked according to their total score, and the highest ranking candidates will be selected for the training in accordance with the number of seats available.

Eligibility Criteria

| No. | Criteria | Response / Next step |
|------------|--|--|
| 1 | <p>Language Skills: Does the participant have the necessary language proficiency in XXXX (language of instruction) to participate in and contribute to the training?</p> <p>To be assessed by including the following question in the training application form: <i>Do you have proficiency in XXXX language? (Yes/No)</i></p> <p>(Note: In case interpretation into the relevant language is arranged at the training, this criteria may be excluded from the evaluation of the candidate)</p> | <p>Yes = Candidate may be evaluated further as per the Selection criteria</p> <p>No = Candidate ineligible for further consideration</p> |

Selection criteria*

| No. | Criteria | Response / Score |
|-----|--|---|
| 2 | Target Group: Are the qualifications and professional experience of the candidate well aligned to the objectives of the training? | Good = 2 Average = 1 Poor = 0 |
| 3 | Gender Balance: Is the gender of the candidate female or male? | Female = 1 Male = 0 |
| 4 | Continued Association with Parent Organization: Is the candidate expected to return back to his/her parent organization after the training in order to apply the learning? To be assessed by including the following question in the training application form: <i>Will you be returning back to the same organization after completion of the training in order to apply the learning? (Yes/No)</i> | Yes = 1 No = 0 |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 5 | <p>Motivation: Does the candidate demonstrate a high degree of motivation to attain and utilize the training?</p> <p>To be assessed by evaluating response to the following question in the training application form:</p> <p><i>In less than 100 words, please describe why do you want to participate in this training and how do you plan to apply it afterwards.</i></p> | <p>Good = 2</p> <p>Average = 1</p> <p>Poor = 0</p> |
| | | Total Score = |

** Training supervisors may specify new criteria based on their requirements which may be added to the above table. For instance, representation from a remote or provincial area may be specified as a selection criteria and assigned a score.*

| |
|--|
| <p>Additional Comments/Criteria:</p> <p>(Space for training supervisors to add comments or elaborate to better capture the intent of the above-criteria.)</p> |
|--|

(Note: In order to gather the necessary information about the candidates to apply the above criteria, a sample training application form (in this case a Nomination Form) is also enclosed as **Annex II**. This may be utilized or customized further if required depending upon the needs of specific workshops or training courses)

SAMPLE TRAINING APPLICATION FORM

SATNET Workshop on

XXXX
 (XXXX, XXXX, 2013)

SECTION A: TO BE FILLED IN BY THE NOMINATOR

(Please type or print)

| | | | |
|--|---------|--------|------|
| 1. Name of the Nominator | Mr./Ms. | | |
| | First | Middle | Last |
| 2. Functional Title | | | |
| 3. Organization | | | |
| 4. If selected, will the nominee below return to his/her organization after the training to apply the learning? (Yes/No) | | | |
| 5. Signature of Nominator | | | |

SECTION B: TO BE FILLED IN BY THE NOMINEE

(Please type or print)

| | | | |
|--|---------|-----------------|------|
| 1. Name of the Nominee | Mr./Ms. | | |
| | First | Middle | Last |
| 2. Citizenship | | | |
| 3. Date of Birth (DD/MM/YY) | | 4. Gender (M/F) | |
| 5. Functional Title | | | |
| 6. Organization | | | |
| 7. Brief Description of Current Responsibilities | | | |
| 8. Complete Mailing Address | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| 9. Telephone, Fax and Email | Tel: | | Mobile: | |
| | Fax: | | Email (work): Email (other): | |
| 10. Educational Qualifications | | | | |
| 11. Relevant prior experience in the area of the training (XXXX) (approx 100 words) | | | | |
| 12. Do you have adequate proficiency in English language to participate in the training? | (Yes/No) | If Yes, please indicate any specific qualifications (eg. score in standardized tests like TOEFL or IELTS, completion of university education in English etc.) | | |
| 13. Motivation Statement: In approx. 100 words, please describe why do you want to participate in this training and how do you plan to apply it afterwards. | | | | |
| 14. Passport Details <i>*Please attach a copy of your passport</i> | Passport No: | | | |
| | Valid Until: | | Type of Passport: (Official/ Regular) | |
| 15. Departure City (For travel arrangement of outstation candidates) | | | | |
| 16. Dietary Requirements if any | [] Vegetarian [] No Beef [] No Pork [] Others, please specify: | | | |
| 17. Signature of Nominee | | | | |

Please send back the completed Nomination Form along with a copy of the nominee's passport to xxxx@xxxx.