

World Agriculture Forum

Topic: Agricultural Education and Training

Working Group - Terms of Reference

Introduction

Agricultural education and training are essential to prepare farmers, students, and professionals to address the evolving challenges in agriculture, from climate adaptation to sustainable production. In light of an aging farmer population, it is crucial to inspire and equip a new generation to continue this vital work, adopting advanced, sustainable farming methods. This Working Group will focus on synthesizing existing research and best practices to develop training and educational frameworks that promote science-based, accessible, and forward-looking learning in agriculture.

Objectives

The primary objective of this Working Group is to design and advocate for educational and training strategies that build practical skills in agriculture, focusing especially on engaging younger generations. By synthesizing available information, the group will provide evidence-based recommendations that support policy, enhance agricultural systems, and attract new talent to agriculture through technology, entrepreneurship, and sustainable practices.

Key Focus Areas

- 1. Engaging and Empowering the Next Generation of Farmers**
 - **Encouraging Agri-Entrepreneurship:** Co-develop programs that demonstrate how agriculture can be a valuable and profitable career, training on business and management skills.
 - **Mentorship and Apprenticeships:** Connect young farmers with experienced mentors to learn both traditional practices and new technologies, blending old knowledge with modern skills.
 - **Succession Planning for Family Farms:** Help young family members take over farms with the skills needed to modernize and sustain them for the future.
- 2. Building Digital and Technological Skills**
 - **Training in Digital Tools:** Facilitate hands-on training in data analysis, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning, and IoT (Internet of Things - the concept

of connecting various devices to share data and interact with each other) to help young farmers make better decisions and improve productivity.

- **Access to Technology for Small-scale Farmers:** Ensure smallholder and new farmers have access to digital tools, promoting innovation and equality in farming.
- **Smart Farming Practices:** Encourage young farmers to use digital tools such as global positioning systems (GPS), sensors, and automated systems for efficient and sustainable farming.

3. **Updating Agricultural Curricula**

- **Modern Curriculum Development:** Propose programs that include sustainable practices and climate resilience to prepare students for tomorrow's challenges.
- **Core Skills for Modern Agriculture:** Focus on skills in digital agriculture, resource management, and sustainability to address real needs in agriculture.
- **Partnering with educational establishments:** Work with universities and vocational schools to include practical subjects like soil health, pest and disease management, and agroecology.

4. **Financial and Business Management Skills**

- **Financial Literacy:** Ensure farmers are knowledgeable about budgeting, investment, and credit access to build financially stable operations.
- **Understanding Market and Risk:** Assure training for farmers on markets, subsidies, and risk management to help them make smart business decisions.
- **Sustainable Business Models:** Develop options for profitable, environmentally-friendly practices to create responsible and successful production.

5. **Promoting Sustainable Practices Through Hands-On Learning**

- **Field Training and Workshops:** Encourage practical training in organic (and reduced input) production, conservation tillage, and other sustainable methods.
- **Partnering with Local Organizations:** Support creation of training programs suited to specific regions and communities.
- **Real-World Experience on Farms:** Partner with working farms to give young farmers hands-on experience, linking classroom learning to real-world practices.

6. **Policy Support and Institutional Backing**

- **Supporting Agricultural Education Policies:** Develop policy briefs that support practical, modern education and training for sustainable farming.
- **Funding for Training Programs:** Encourage governments, philanthropic organizations and other potential donors to fund training programs that focus on youth and skill-building.
- **Including Agriculture in Rural Development:** Advocate for agricultural education and training as part of rural development plans to strengthen agricultural communities.

Structure and Organization

The **Agricultural Education and Training Working Group** will select a Chair for the Working Group. The WAF Secretariat will provide support to coordinate activities, organize events, and ensure effective dissemination of insights. Findings and recommendations will be presented at WAF's annual summit and other relevant forums to drive policy influence and enhance educational standards in agriculture.

Outputs and Responsibilities

These topics form a broad, interdisciplinary yet interconnected framework for the Working Group to develop actionable insights and recommendations on training and education for the next generation of farmers and to adapt to changing technologies and climate conditions.

Members of the World Agriculture Forum Council will be invited to join the Working Group with other relevant experts. The Working Group will identify a Chair to lead the Working Group and a member of the World Agriculture Forum Secretariat will assist with coordination, planning meetings, peer reviews, publication of the various outputs and dissemination through high level events, interviews etc. Working Groups may also be called upon to assist with the preparation of specific fundraising proposals in line with their thematic focus. Each Working Group will provide reports to the World Agriculture Forum twice a year and will lead a stream of events at the annual World Agriculture Forum Summit.
