

RSS STEP 4

IMPLEMENTATION AND DOCUMENTATION



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THE RSS FIELD GUIDES

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RSS Step 4: Implementation and Documentation

RSS Step 4 covers the implementation of the action plan developed and approved at Step 3, including collection and documentation of information related to activities being implemented. The main activities are to:

1. Prepare instructions, tools and materials for the implementation team
2. Confirm indicators for monitoring
3. Collect information and feedback on progress of activities
4. Record and document implementation

The implementation and documentation phase applies equally to both pillars of the RSS framework.

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1. Preparation

In Step 3 you agreed on an action plan to mitigate risks and deliver support to meet smallholders' needs. This plan sets out who you will work with to implement the RSS and where you will delegate responsibility for certain activities, either within your organisation or to external parties. However, you remain responsible for ensuring that what is planned actually happens.

Scale issues

If RSS is being developed for a supply base that includes several processing units or first aggregation points, you will probably need a further round of planning to translate the overall action plan into a series of sub-plans for each processing unit.

1.1. Planning and coordination

You are responsible for accurate planning and coordination of all activities. In Step 3 (Developing an Action Plan), you agreed on the type of measures and activities, who will implement them and within what timeframe. Depending on the complexity, number of people involved and scale of the activity, it may be necessary to elaborate on your action plan. As part of your planning for implementation, you need to ensure that:

- Everyone involved in the implementation of activities knows what is expected and by when. You must provide the people to whom you delegate responsibilities with all relevant information for the activities they will implement. This may vary from general awareness raising information and training materials to self-verification checklists for farmers.
- Your target farmer group(s) are informed well in advance about planned activities (see Hints and Tips).

A note about "you"

Throughout the RSS field guides we refer to 'you'. In reality 'you' is the lead person, who is responsible for making this particular step of the RSS framework happen. This may be someone who works directly within the Implementing Entity ('your organisation'), or someone who is hired in or is working on behalf of your organisation. Although responsibility for implementing parts of RSS may be delegated, the overall responsibility to make RSS happen remains with the lead person.

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- Activities and resources are combined across the two RSS pillars where appropriate.
- RSS is aligned, wherever possible, with existing processes, procedures and training events. Think about these within as well as outside your organisation. For example, interactions with farmers on quality control of products, collection of farmer products, farm visits etc.
- The location of training events enables you to reach all target farmers while minimising logistical costs and challenges. Depending on the size of your supply base, you may need to organise an activity across multiple locations.
- Clear procedures and instructions are developed for documenting activities on delegated responsibilities. These instructions should specify what and when you would like people to report back to you.

It is important that you oversee and stay informed about all RSS related activities to make sure you can revise and correct activities where needed.

Scale issues

If RSS is being developed for a supply base that includes several processing units or first aggregation points, you will probably need a further round of planning to translate the overall action plan into a series of sub-plans for each processing unit.



Hints and tips

Informing farmers

To implement the RSS successfully, it is essential that the farmers you aim to engage are willing and motivated to participate. Allow for enough time and resources to explain to farmers:

- The reason why activities are being organised or measures introduced
- The benefit for them of participating
- Any preparation or commitment you expect from them before they participate.

If you have a large smallholder supply base, you can use lead farmers, cooperatives, local organisations or other existing lines of communication to reach out to as many farmers as possible.

1.2 Prepare materials and tools to support implementation

As well as ensuring that those involved in implementing activities have clear information, it is also important to ensure they have the materials to fulfil the action plan. Plan ahead for each activity, to identify what is needed to successfully achieve the expected result (as defined in

your action plan). Consider the following:

- What (training) materials and tools are already available, within your organisation or with key stakeholders, that can be used or easily adapted?
- What new and additional materials and tools are required and who can help to develop or acquire them? This might include, for example, safety equipment, training materials, planting materials or financial products.
- Allow ample time to prepare for and collect materials and tools.

monitor progress at activity level, and at the level of expected results that can be achieved through one or a series of activities.

In your action plan you may have defined detailed indicators already for both levels. Before launching into implementation you should verify these indicators and where appropriate refine these in consultation with relevant stakeholders.



Hints and tips

Indicators for monitoring activities and results

Your action plan should include indicators to monitor progress at activity level and determine whether you have achieved your expected result.

At **activity level** you will need indicators that relate to inputs delivered and immediate changes in knowledge, skills and understanding that these inputs are expected to deliver. For example, indicators at activity level include:

- Training materials produced
- Number of farmers attending training
- Protection equipment provided
- Number of posters on focal species of High Conservation Values available and distributed
- Plans and systems agreed and



Hints and tips

Checklist

To support your planning, develop a simple checklist that includes the items listed under 1.1 and 1.2, as well as any additional items relevant to your situation. Later you can use the checklist to plan individual activities.

1.3 Verify your indicators

Monitoring progress on implementation of your action plan is important. This requires clearly defined indicators. In developing your action plan you already considered What, When and in What form you intend to collect information on progress, and Who will be responsible for doing so. Your action plan will indicate how you

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‘signed-off’ for implementation by farmer associations

At **result level**, you should select indicators that allow for easy comparison between the data you collected for your baseline situation (RSS steps 1 and 2) and your desired end result. Your indicators should seek to capture the changes in ability and capacity of farmers to manage risk and improve production practices as a result of implemented activities. Examples of indicators at result level include:

- Evidence of change in farmers’ practices in the field
- Evidence of (new) farmer knowledge from end of training tests and feedback forms
- Evidence that farmers operate as a group, e.g. lead farmers acting or ordering on behalf of a larger group
- Records of farmer accidents and ill health
- (Improved) access to and utilisation of extension services
- Evidence that the agreed plans and systems are being implemented i.e. that they are operational

Note: Monitoring and evaluation of impacts (relating back to the original objectives of your organisation as defined in Step 1) is covered as part of Step 5. The indicators above are for monitoring progress on activities and results only.

In addition to selecting and verifying the indicators, for each indicator set out clearly:

How?

What methods do you plan to use to collect the information on change? These might include questionnaires, on site visits and surveys, farmer self-assessment, document reviews, workshops and interviews.

What form?

In what format would you like to receive information and data collected? In writing or verbally, in electronic format or on paper? To promote consistency you might consider developing specific forms or protocols for mobile communication devices.

Who?

Who has the responsibility to monitor? It is important you allocate this responsibility to someone whom you trust and who is also respected and trusted by the farmer community, so people are willing to share data. For example, this can be a lead farmer or leader of a cooperative. Also check if other institutions in the area can be involved in data collection.

How often?

Agree on the frequency at which you will collect and share information. This will differ depending on the indicator being measured. For example, monitoring yield improvement can be done frequently during harvest, whilst monitoring progress related to solving land rights issues might only be monitored annually.

1.4 Finalising the detailed action plan

To prepare and finalise your detailed action plan, combine all the elements for planning, coordination and development of materials, and monitoring indicators outlined in Sections 1.1–1.3. Develop a detailed schedule, showing who is responsible for implementation, monitoring and documentation of activities.

If you defined additional activities as part of the preparation phase for implementation, these details should be added to the action plan developed in Step 3. You can do this by either adapting the action plan you developed in Step 3, or by developing a new format, for example using the template included in Annex 1.

2. Tracking and documenting progress

You are responsible for ensuring that information on the implementation and monitoring of activities and results are adequately documented. Recording activities and results is an essential element of the RSS framework. It helps you to communicate and be transparent on progress made in engaging with your smallholder supply base.

To find out whether activities have been completed as planned and if expected results have been achieved, frequent observation, based on records, reports and field visits will be needed.

As far as possible, align your systems for tracking progress on RSS risk mitigation and support activities with those that your organisation already has in place, such as farmer record books used to monitor smallholders' production and quality.

Tracking progress on activities and results will help you to:

- Ensure activities that are delegated to others are being implemented
- Check that activities and results are being delivered within allocated resources and budget
- Keep adequate records of activities, results and progress
- Clearly set out the frequency for updating records and where they will be kept
- Agree what information will be made publicly available

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- Identify who is responsible for communicating about progress and distributing public information (if any).

Your documentation system should keep you up to date on the current situation and progress, and will allow you to identify any issues or problems that may arise during implementation.

Annex 2 provides a template for documenting progress on activities and results.

2.1 Variances from plan and corrective actions

By tracking activities and monitoring results against the indicators defined in your action plan, you will be able to identify whether delivery is on schedule, to scale and producing the expected results. Where significant variations from the plan are evident, decide – in consultation with farmers and other stakeholders as appropriate – what corrective or supplementary actions may be required.

If progress on activities or delivery of expected results differs significantly from what you anticipated, consider an early review of your action plan.

RSS Step 5 provides guidance for carrying out a review.

Annex 1 – Format for monitoring plan

Hierarchy	Indicators	Sources of data	Methods of data collection	Who collects	Frequency of collection
Activities implemented					
Expected results					

Annex 2 –Template for documenting implementation of activities¹

Progress report on activities to mitigate risks and deliver support to smallholders – Reporting period: from _____ to _____					
Support activity As described in your action plan	What has been done Briefly describe what has been done, who did it, and who participated	Target delivery: schedule and indicator As described in your action plan	Delivery against target: quantity & quality of activity Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivered on schedule/delay in delivery delivered to planned scale/ expanded scale/reduced scale 	Explanation for any variance from plan	Planned actions to address variance
Activity x					
Activity y					
Activity z					

¹ Note: activities to deliver support to smallholders and activities to mitigate risks may be combined in some cases. However, it is recommended to document the relevant activities, results and indicators separately.

Monitoring progress on delivery of results – Reporting period: from _____ to _____				
Expected end result of support	Target delivery: schedule and indicator	Target quantity and quality of change	Delivery against target: quantity & quality of expected change	Implications for any variance from expected results
Expected end result of risk mitigation As described in your action plan	As described in your action plan	As per indicator(s) of change in behaviour/ practice as described in your action plan	Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change meets expectation • Change exceeds expectation • Change falls short of expectation 	Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variance within tolerable limits • Amendments to action plan required • Immediate review of action plan required
Support result/gap addressed 1				
Support result/gap addressed 2				
Mitigated risk 1				
Mitigated risk 2				