



# RUSERVE

## A Systemic Approach for Facilitating Rural and Extension Services Reform



### Facilitating the Interaction between 3 Elements of the Service System

#### Organising the Demand

Without a well-defined and articulated demand for quality services a service system remains vulnerable and dependent on the 'goodwill' of service providers. An 'organised demand side' are emancipated communities who can control the quality and hold service providers accountable while taking responsibility for their own development.

#### Responding to Demand

Service providers in a pluralistic setup need to be well organised in order to provide quality services for different clients in an inclusive manner. Their competence, organisational capabilities and the interfacing of different providers to match the service needs / demands are key aspects.

#### Supporting the Response

At the heart of a well-functioning service system are policies, legislation and management structures which enable the effective provision of services. Reforms and capacity development through facilitation of change are core elements to foster the service system at this level.



# PICOTEAM

Institute for People, Innovation and Change in Organisations

facilitation, coaching, consulting for change

## RuServe

A systemic approach for facilitating rural and extension services reform

Services in rural areas, in particular for agriculture, have undergone dramatic changes. Until recently, the state provided most of the rural services. This "monopoly" of the state has been questioned and the type and quality of services has changed over time. The response to these challenges necessitates a renewal of rural and agricultural service systems at all levels.

RuServe provides a conceptual framework approaching three levels of the service delivery framework:

- a) self organisation and representation of clients,
- b) decentralised management of services, and
- c) policy development (enabling environment).

Isolated measures to address problems at different levels have shown limited effectiveness. Changing the rules through new policies without capacity development has had limited results. Change has to be addressed systemically at different levels. Ultimately RuServe is not about improving the single components of the rural service system, but to make the system work as a system. The 13 'Cornerstones' of RuServe aims at supporting development planners, managers, advisors, consultants, change facilitators and donors by providing:

- a common framework for the design, planning, monitoring and evaluation of interventions towards demand-driven, pluralistic, efficient and accessible rural services;
- options for building platforms of stakeholders who work together on common strategies to 'play together' towards improving the overall service system;
- access to the consolidated experience of practitioners from different professional and institutional backgrounds for systematic identification of bottlenecks and strategic entry points for interventions,
- a framework for learning and knowledge management within and across programmes, sectors and countries.

The approach is based on successful initiatives, methods and tools which have been utilised in a variety of different contexts by various organisations.

PICOTEAM offers quality services around the following the following core components of RuServe:

**1. Institutional arrangements for coordinated and quality services:** Changes in the institutional setup of rural service provision in the context of decentralisation and pluralistic service provision, demand for new institutional arrangements, integration and coordination as well as quality management of services.

**2. Integrated and coordinated development planning:** Development planning in the context of decentralisation and active citizen participation faces big challenges in terms of integration of bottom up and top down. New processes are being tested and developed and need to be adapted to different contexts.

**3. Organisation and articulation of demand by rural organisations:** In most countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the degree of self-organisation, representation and emancipation of rural populations is weak. Organising the demand at local levels goes beyond the boundaries of mere articulation of people's needs. It aims at empowering people to organise themselves, negotiate, control and coordinate services and take responsibility for their own development.

**4. Competence development of service providers:** Besides "traditional" extension services, new demands arise for competencies with respect to the facilitation of social learning processes, economic and market support, around environmental issues, related to community organisation, dealing with effects of HIV/AIDS and regarding water services. Service providers need to adjust their competencies and keep up with these changing demands.

**5. Competencies for adaptive management in local government organisations:** Government officials at the local level, who previously fulfilled rather administrative functions in a well-known organisational environment, are now asked to manage complex processes. A whole new dimension of competences are required and need to be developed by local government to perform their functions.