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## INTRO TO THIS PLAYBOOK

### DEFINE THE VISION

-12 to -9  
months

### DESIGN THE PROGRAMME

-9 to -6  
months

### READY THE RESOURCES

-6 to -3  
months

## BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE FRONT-LINE CADRE

### RECRUIT THE RIGHT TEAM

### TRAIN & COACH

### PLAN CAREER PATH

### INCENTIVISE FOR EFFECTIVENESS

CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

SUPPORT THE FRONTLINE CADRE JOURNEY



# INTRO TO THIS PLAYBOOK



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## WHY THIS PLAYBOOK?

India will have half the water it needs by 2030. Hindustan Unilever Foundation's mission is to save more and use less water with a focus on optimising usage in agriculture.

Learnings from HUF's successful programmes across can be re-applied by other organisations for a faster scale across India. When working with farmers, one critical success factor is creating a **scaled, capable local front-line cadre within the villages**.

This playbook contains best practice learnings from one such programme in East UP – Project SWERA

## WHO IS IT FOR?

This playbook is for implementing NGO partners who need to ready the ground resources for farmer focussed programmes

## WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT'S NOT

It contains key principles on how to recruit, develop & retain a capable front-line cadre who can handhold and guide farmers to embed farming practices that successfully increase incomes and reduce water usage.

It is not an all-purpose agricultural guide or a 'one size fits all' playbook. While using this, varying contexts must be kept in mind.

## HOW TO USE IT?

The playbook has two distinct stages & 7 key steps. There is a main step by step navigation guide and accompanying materials – AVs, documents, manuals.

You should review and adapt or modify as needed, based on local needs & context.

While comprehensive in scope, you may need to create additional resources based on your unique needs

## CONTACT US

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Created by O X F O R D





## WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

1. A clear understanding of the specific context and challenges of each region helps to define a relevant vision & design right outcomes
2. It is important to also define at the outset the key success criteria that will ensure the program can sustain even after the implementation agency has moved on

# DEFINE THE VISION

## OBJECTIVE:

To develop an inspiring vision that is understood easily & is motivating for all stakeholders to ensure program success

## KEY STEPS:

### Define a clear vision & inspiring purpose

Understand local challenges

Translate into solution opportunities

Find right words & language for communication



Link:  
[CRP Profile & 5year plan](#)

### Define short-term & long-term outcomes

Translate vision into yearly & stage-wise goals, outcomes and metrics

Define simple metrics to measure progress



Link:  
[CRP Profile & 5year plan](#)  
[CRP Profile & Recommendations](#)  
[Program SWERA Process Improvements](#)



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## WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

1. To build a capable village front-line cadre, first, the implementing agency needs to set up a core team, with well-defined roles and accountabilities. They need to plan the programme design aimed at creating expertise, capability & infrastructure at the local level
2. The implementation team needs to keep in mind that mindsets & behaviours must change so the work can carry on 4-5 yrs out with empowered & capable village teams & farmers

# DESIGN THE PROGRAMME

## OBJECTIVE:

To develop a robust program design & put in place the right infrastructure based on a thorough understanding of the context

## KEY STEPS:

### Understand the context thoroughly

Socio-economic-cultural context of the villagers

Similarities, variances within the district

Barriers, enablers at each level - village panchayat, government officials

Historical issues, challenges faced

### Select & train the right team

Understand KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes) needed to succeed based on SWERA

Assess own team capability based on context and need

Decide span of control – initial & ongoing

Put in place the right team of core members & new recruits

Define clear roles, responsibilities

Equip team with the right technical capabilities & coach on key soft skills to lead the program

### Map the enablers for each stage

Understand enablers & resources needed for a high-quality program plan based on SWERA

Assess readiness – identify gaps, opportunities

Assess & identify immediate & long-term resource needs



Link: [The Context](#)



Link:  
[CRP Documents](#)



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# READY THE RESOURCES

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

1. Implementing team members should ideally have a good knowledge of the geography and credibility within the communities. This significantly improves quality of planning, success & speed of outcomes
2. Focussing on soft skills & values is a pre-requisite for success

## OBJECTIVE:

To develop or modify resources for each stage of the program based on need assessment

## KEY STEPS:

### Recruitment and Training

Ready recruitment & training materials to create a capable front-line village cadre.

Review existing materials & modify if needed based on the specific, local context



Link: [Annexures 1A,1C, 1F, 1G](#)  
[Backend support to CRPs](#)

### Multi-stakeholder out-reach

On board all relevant stakeholders to ensure support & sustainability of the program

Target local community with communication plan to shift mindsets & ensure active support for the front-line cadre

List govt programs that intersect with the programme & put in place communication plan and content for government officials at block and district level

Seek & make partnerships for long-term employment opportunities for front-line cadre



Link: [Leading without Authority](#)

### Technology & Communications

Create simple, efficient technology & communication tools for the smooth, effective and safe working of the program

Put in place tools for easy connectivity, grievance handling, field safety



Link: [Working Together](#)

### Soft infrastructure

**Safety & wellbeing** –To ensure safe & confident front-line

Do a process audit – review materials and mechanisms in place  
Fill gaps and upgrade as needed

**Values & culture** - a trustful & empowering culture that encourages experimentation & continuous learning:

Do a culture audit

Make training plan for interventions as needed



Link: [Managing Stress & Building Resilience](#)



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## WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

1. A front-line cadre comprising women village experts is at the heart of the program's success. Women have the motivation to work tirelessly for their villages & sustain the program in the long term
2. It is important to design the recruitment program keeping in mind that the woman's family members become supportive & act as enablers

## OBJECTIVE:

To recruit the right front-line cadre, maximise retention, minimise regrettable attrition

## KEY STEPS:

### Build the atmosphere

Broadcast the hiring drive in the communities  
Engage with families – address concerns, answer questions  
Identify & engage stakeholders



Link: [Community Immersion Plan](#)  
[Community Immersion Report](#)

### Plan & run the selection process

Recruitment day - Written exam & Group Discussion  
Personal Interview  
Selection  
Community Immersion



Link: [Questionnaire](#)

# RECRUIT THE TEAM



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# TRAIN & COACH

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

1. Training & coaching is not a one-off but a continuous process with learning for both the front-line cadre and supervising team
2. It's important to induct each & every front-line cadre first-hand to ensure that the foundational knowledge & training is strong

## OBJECTIVE:

To equip the front-line cadre with training & resources to achieve defined outcomes

## KEY STEPS:

### Arrange & communicate logistics for the training program

Plan and share schedule, venue, logistics

Arrange transport & stay for women & family members as needed



Link: [Annexure 2A](#)

### Shadowing experts

Assign experts to each front-line cadre

Get started in the field

### Classroom training

Vision, goals, metrics

Technical & technology

Soft skills – e.g. Persistence, patience, courage

Objection handling, building networks, relationships

Reporting, documentation

Safety, well-being protocols

Role of KAK (Krishi Aajeevika Kendra), Demo plots, MKS (Mahila Kisan Sangathan)

Role of government schemes for farmers & how to avail them

Access to training materials



Link: [Field Team Training](#)  
[Block Team Training](#)

### Field training

Technical skills

How to set up demonstration plots

Use of videos to communicate progress and show proof of principle to farmers

Meet & greet with government officials, farmers, important stakeholders



Link: [MKS Concept & Framework](#)  
[Training Module for CRP](#)

### Continuous check in & refreshers

Communicate check in protocols

Online, offline updates

Twice a year – season training (Kharif, Rabi)



Link: [Check in & Refreshers](#)



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## WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

1. Front-line cadre annual earnings range from 50-70k Rs. Their pride and motivation in being able to contribute to the family income grows as they progress. The family members too actively start growing their support
2. Incentives should drive effectiveness over targets. Ideally, front-line cadres should be able to define their own growth journeys

## OBJECTIVE:

To ensure the front-line cadre understand their key deliverables & linkage to incentives and are motivated by it.

## KEY STEPS:

### Educate teams on the incentive structure

KPI linked incentive structure

How to communicate, assess, administer

Learnings on incentives structure – plan vs actual



Links: [Incentive Structure](#)

### Ensure motivation of the teams

Daily, monthly check in protocols & tools

Examples of action taken/ course correction made



Links: [CRP Workload Assessment](#)

# INCENTIVISE FOR EFFECTIVENESS



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# PLAN CAREER PATH

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

1. The front-line cadre have the capability to take on more responsibility and move from being village experts to business entrepreneurs.
2. Behaviour change in farming techniques takes at least 6 seasons. Therefore, it is important to have a long-term perspective on the program and front-line cadre careers

## OBJECTIVE:

To ensure the front-line cadre sees a motivating career path for growth

## KEY STEPS:

### Map lessons in journey from 'CRP to entrepreneurship'

Understand career development journey from SWERA

Conduct work-load analysis of front-line cadre

Analyse their capabilities, interests & availability of opportunities



Link: [CRP documents](#)

### Build capacity

Actively train cadre for taking on more responsibilities

Train for other external, upcoming opportunities



Link: [Krishi Ajeevika Kendra](#)

### Create and tap networks

To absorb cadre into suitable roles, build pathways:

Promotions within

Government roles

Entrepreneurship



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We would like to  
**acknowledge  
our partners**



For their very **generous and invaluable contribution** of learnings and experiences in developing this Playbook

Our appeal to  
**all our  
partners**



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**To treat this as an evolving document** which we can keep improving with your continuous learning and inputs

Please feel free to share these liberally so we can make the Playbook even stronger and scale up faster our ambition to make farming communities in India water resilient