



Guidance for Creating Mini-Training Videos During COVID-19

This guidance was written by [Trees for the Future](#) (TREES) due to increased restrictions on gatherings and social exchanges due to COVID-19. TREES has begun developing short technical training videos that can be shared with Lead Farmers through WhatsApp. This document outlines the steps of this process and best practices for filming.

The [SCALE Award](#) has revised and made publicly available this version for wider distribution and use by organizations during COVID-19. *[version 24 April 2020 - to be updated as needed]*

Video Protocol

1. **Who should be in the video?** Choose one or more of your best trainers/extension agents to develop these short videos to share with farmers so they are able to continue with their production. The person/people selected to be in the videos should have **a mastery of the technical material, speak loudly and clearly, and be comfortable in front of the camera.**
2. **Video language:** The video should be in the appropriate local language for the farmers.
3. **Video length:** The videos should be very short (approximately 2-3 minutes long) so that they can be transmitted by WhatsApp. If there is a topic that needs more time, break the content into smaller segments across multiple videos.
4. **Content:**
 - a. At the beginning of each video, provide a brief outline of the main points that will be covered in the video.
 - b. For each video, make sure that you clearly mention each of the most important points. One sentence for each bullet point will be sufficient.
 - c. Before filming, plan what you will say and practice demonstrating. The more you plan and practice, the more efficient the recording will be.
 - d. Speak in short, simple sentences and demonstrate what you are saying at the same time or directly after saying it. Think “Say it, see it.” If you talk about it, then the viewer needs to see it.
 - e. Demonstrate the techniques correctly. For example, if you are filling tree sacks, make sure you demonstrate that activity accurately, with soil up to the right level, etc. Do not say “imagine this is the case...”, without demonstrating correctly.
 - f. If there are any potential challenges that you know from experience that farmers may struggle with, make sure to add that in the video demonstration.
 - g. At the end of each video, provide a few quiz questions so the farmer can gauge whether they have understood the information. For example, “What goes into the soil mixture? Can you tell me how to mix and how to fill your tree sacks?”



5. Production:

- a. Each video should be captured simply, on a cell phone, using the practices described in the box below.
- b. Ideally, two people (*always at least 6 feet apart, unless members of the same household*) will be involved in the production of a video so that one person is filming and the other is in front of the camera. If only one person is available, create a "selfie" video.
- c. Try to film the video a few times to have the best version you can share.

6. Video storage

- a. Label and number each video with the topic and subtopic name, so that it is clear what each video demonstrates, and so that people can easily choose which they want to watch or review (for example: *Homegarden Training Video 1: Choosing a Garden Site*).
- b. Discuss with your communications team where best to file and store the videos.

Good practices for shooting videos

- **Lighting:** It is best to have light shining on the person being filmed, not behind that person. Film when the sun is lower in the sky, either morning or evening (the middle of the day is too bright). The best time might be around 5 pm with a "golden" light.
- **Position:** When filming a subject, make sure to include their whole torso in the frame. There should be space above their head. If they move their hands a lot while they talk, make sure that their hands are in the frame so everyone can see what is demonstrated.
- **Shoot video in "landscape" mode**, not "vertical" mode, in case people view the video on a computer screen or TV later.
- **Use a tripod or other way to keep the phone stable while filming:** In order to reduce the amount of movement and distractions in the video, place the phone on something immovable (e.g. the back of a chair, a rock, a table) so that it does not shake as you film.
- **Eye Contact:** Because the technician is training farmers through the video, the technician should look directly at the camera so that the farmer feels as though they are talking to them.
- **Volume:** speak loudly enough so your instructions can be heard above other background noise. Do not speak when turned away from the camera and turn your back to the camera as little as possible.
- **Preparation:** Have all materials and props ready so that no time is wasted in reaching for them or demonstrating. You want to be as efficient as possible in the video.
- **Practice, practice, practice!** The more you practice what will be said and demonstrated before filming, the smoother it will be and the less time you will use.
- **If you have to do a "selfie video":** make sure the phone is placed somewhere stable (e.g. on a tripod, or propped on a table) so it does not fall. Take a draft video to test the sound and your location in the video, to make sure you are in the frame and are loud enough.

7. Alternatives to videos

- a. You may choose to record only audio files for some of the instructions, so that audio files alone can be shared. This may be helpful for older farmers who may have difficulty seeing images on a screen or for people with smaller data packages who may not be able to download videos. You can also send audio along with a short video, to provide more detailed instructions or information.
- b. You can also share photos or text along with the video to reinforce messages, show diagrams, or detail steps in a process.

Dissemination Protocol

8. Sharing the video

- a. Create clear protocol for how the videos will be disseminated to frontline staff, extension agents, and/or Lead Farmers. Note: Each organization's chain of communication will vary based on its program structure and protocols, and who has smartphones.
 - i. *Example 1 (hypothetical):*
 1. Agriculture Managers send via the video via WhatsApp to Agriculture Officers. Agriculture Officers send the video via WhatsApp to Extension Agents/Technicians/Field Facilitators. Extension Agents send to or show the videos to Lead Farmers and other farmers who have WhatsApp. For those without WhatsApp, show videos during small group trainings or one-to-one technical support (social distancing requirements permitting).
 - ii. *Example 2 (Trees for the Future):*
 1. Country Trainers will send videos to Lead Technicians. Lead Technicians will send to their assistant technicians as well as Lead Farmers. Lead farmers will share with all farmers in their group who have WhatsApp.
- b. Prior to sending the first video, send a text & audio message letting extension agents know that they will be receiving videos.
 - i. For example:
 1. *We will be sending sets of videos to you over the coming weeks.*
 - a. *The first set will explain how to set up your nursery*
 - b. *The second set will explain how to prep and plant seeds*
 - c. *The third set will explain how to care for and maintain their nursery*
 2. *After watching the videos, we will send a few "quiz" questions for you to answer and respond to.*
 3. *We are here to answer any questions you have.*

9. Information to share along with the video

- a. Along with the video, send accompanying messages using text and using audio (for those who may be less literate) explaining the following:
 - i. **[Message 1 - Introductory message]:** The title of the video, a brief introduction to the topic, and note that you are about to send a few "quiz" questions for them to answer after watching the video.

- ii. **[Message 2 - “Quiz” questions]:** Share a few “quiz” questions based on the video content, such as: What components do you mix in soil for tree sacks? What are 3 things you need to take into consideration when choosing a nursery site?
- iii. **[Message 3 - Next steps]:** Explain the following:
 1. By when the extension agent or Lead Farmer should have watched the video (give a date or time frame “within one week”)
 2. After watching and understanding the video, the agent or Lead Farmer should reply using text or audio with answers to the “quiz” questions (e.g. “Send me a message using text or audio with the answer to the “quiz” questions, after you have watched the video”)
 3. By when the farmer is expected to have completed this activity on their farm/garden
 4. How and when they can communicate with you.

10. Grouping videos

- a. Rather than sending one video at a time, it might make sense to group videos together based on the techniques covered and time until the farmer is supposed to take action.
- b. Allow time (e.g. 5-7 days) between sending videos, so farmers have time to put techniques into practice before moving to the next set of information.
- c. Video group example from Trees for the Future
 - i. *First video grouping*
 1. *Choosing a nursery site*
 2. *Where/hen to get seeds and materials*
 3. *Mixing soil and filling tree sacks*
 4. *Digging trench to establish beds for trees sacks (trenching, leveling the bottom, add neem leaves and/or wood ash)*
 5. *Stacking trees sacks in beds in a row of 10*
 6. *Water every day till a week*
 - ii. *Second video grouping*
 1. *Seed pretreatment*
 2. *Seeding in tree sacks*
 - iii. *Third grouping*
 1. *Watering and weeding*
 2. *Thinning or transplanting*
 3. *Bareroot nurseries*

11. After sharing the video, messages and quiz questions

- a. Record when you send messages (date, topic, to whom) using M&E system or other method agreed upon by the team
- b. Record when you receive messages/quiz answers back
- c. If any quiz responses are incorrect, respond with a text or phone call with the correct answers to make sure concepts are understood well
- d. Remain available for any questions

- e. Encourage extension agent/Lead Farmer to share photos back of established gardens, nursery, etc. for additional feedback
- f. Check in frequently (e.g. once/week) with calls or messages, especially if you have not received a response
- g. Each 5-7 days (or other agreed upon timeline) send the next set of videos with instructions.

12. Adapt the process as needed

- a. After the first set of videos has been shared, check in with Lead Farmer to see how the system is working.
- b. Change the information shared, sharing method or other details as needed based on feedback.
- c. Additional data collection options:
 - i. Text farmers to rate the video transfer method (e.g. “from 1-5 how would you rate the training video experience”)
 - ii. Select a subset of technicians to record the quiz rates and responses to gauge the efficacy of videos as a training information transfer model

Example Process from Trees for the Future

- Head Trainer or Country Director will send a heads up message to all lead technicians that they are doing a new training video initiative, and they should anticipate receiving messages with videos and text in the next week. Once they receive the videos, they should send these videos and messages on to their assistant technicians and all Lead Farmers.
- Lead technicians send videos, instructions and quiz questions to farmers.
 - Lead technicians group videos together into sets rather than sending one at a time. You do this by going into the video files and selecting all those you want to send and then selecting “send through WhatsApp.”
- Lead technicians record when they send messages/videos out to leader farmers using TaroWorks.
 - Message should say: We are sending 3 sets of video over the coming weeks.
 - The first set will explain how to set up your nursery
 - The second set will explain how to prepare and plant seeds
 - The third set will explain how to care for and maintain their nursery
- Farmer watches video (within 1 week) and sends a message back to the technician with answer to quiz questions (e.g. What is the ratio of sand/manure? Did you sift? Did you push the bottom corner of the tree sack? Why? How did you arrange your sacks? How long do you water before seeding? How many seeds per sack?)
- If farmers are incorrect with any answers, Technicians respond to them either with text or call with correct answers to make sure they understand well and are doing it correctly.
- Farmer establishes nursery on their farm and sends a photo of their established nursery to the technician



- The Technician is available for any questions the farmer may have, and checks in once a week with each farmer on progress, especially if they have not heard from the farmer.
- Technician records when they receive messages back from farmer using TaroWorks or other method
- After 5-7 days, Technician sends out the next step of videos with instructions.
- If a Technician's Lead Farmers have all completed the first steps before 5 days, they may send out the second set of videos at that point, early.

Contact

If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Trees for the Future Training Unit: training@trees.org.

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