

Training of Trainers - HortiNigeria



Conducted by the:



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1. Introduction

This document is a prospectus of the course developed by Wageningen Plant Research (WPR) on the sustainable production of vegetables. The course aims at assisting public and private stakeholders in Nigeria to improve their knowledge and skills to train and advice on protected cultivation of vegetables in the tropics. Developed in a blended learning approach combining both online and on-site assignments and training sessions and periods, the course lasts for 16 weeks. Although including a wide array of theoretical knowledge, the course is also giving the opportunity to trainees to relate this knowledge to the local conditions and to put this knowledge in practice with field visits.

2. Selection of trainees

The sector professionals targeted in the ToT of HortiNigeria, are staff of Public Extension Services, selected researchers, staff of NGO's, Nigerian staff of partner companies of the Dutch breeding companies, agro-dealers, private sector partners in horticulture, selected policy makers. The positions of these sector professionals in the sector are broad, nevertheless key in reaching out more farmers, in developing new research programs, educating the farmers and the agricultural sector professionals of "tomorrow" or even designing policies. WPR will also be sensitive to the gender of the professionals selected and try to integrate as many as women to balance the gender in its outreach. In this way, WPR's outreach through their capacity building will contribute to establish a solid knowledge basis in the horticultural sector and is expected to be increased indirectly as trained professionals will share with their peers.

The selection of trainees is a crucial step to ensure a good homogeneity of the trainees' group and for a smooth programme development. The selection is not only based on the motivation of the trainees but also on the digital literacy and the agreement of the trainees' managers for their participation. Below, are listed all the criteria:

1. Motivated
2. Committed
3. Should receive an approval from manager/immediate supervisor:
 - a. Manager willing to hold the trainee accountable for active participation during learning process
 - b. Trainee is given sufficient time next to his/her job for participating in the training
 - c. A letter of commitment is required from the applicant (see page 14)
4. "Digital literacy": at least used to handle online learning and communication apps on smartphone or computer. Trainees should already possess a smartphone/tablet/laptop and is most likely the one who is best able to handle the online technique of learning
5. Eager to share gained knowledge with others
6. Willing and able to spend 4-5 hours per week on online learning.

In addition to personal criteria, technical requirements are necessitated to be able to follow the training:

7. In possession of an android phone, tablet or laptop
8. Data requirement per week about 25 MB
9. WhatsApp and Zoom access.

3. Approach to blended learning

Blended learning is defined as an approach combining online and on-site learning methods. The idea behind the blended learning approach is to bring theoretical knowledge through online tools but also to allocate a consequent time for exchange with trainees, field activities and practical training.

Interaction between trainees and WPR trainers is considered key in the approach as, firstly, interaction between trainees increases their motivation and commitment as well as fosters peer-to-peer learning. Secondly, this contributes to build a network between sector professionals in the vegetable sector in Nigeria. Thirdly, interaction between trainees and WPR (Wageningen University and Research) trainers ensures the relevancy of the training as trainees can raise questions on issues faced in their daily work.

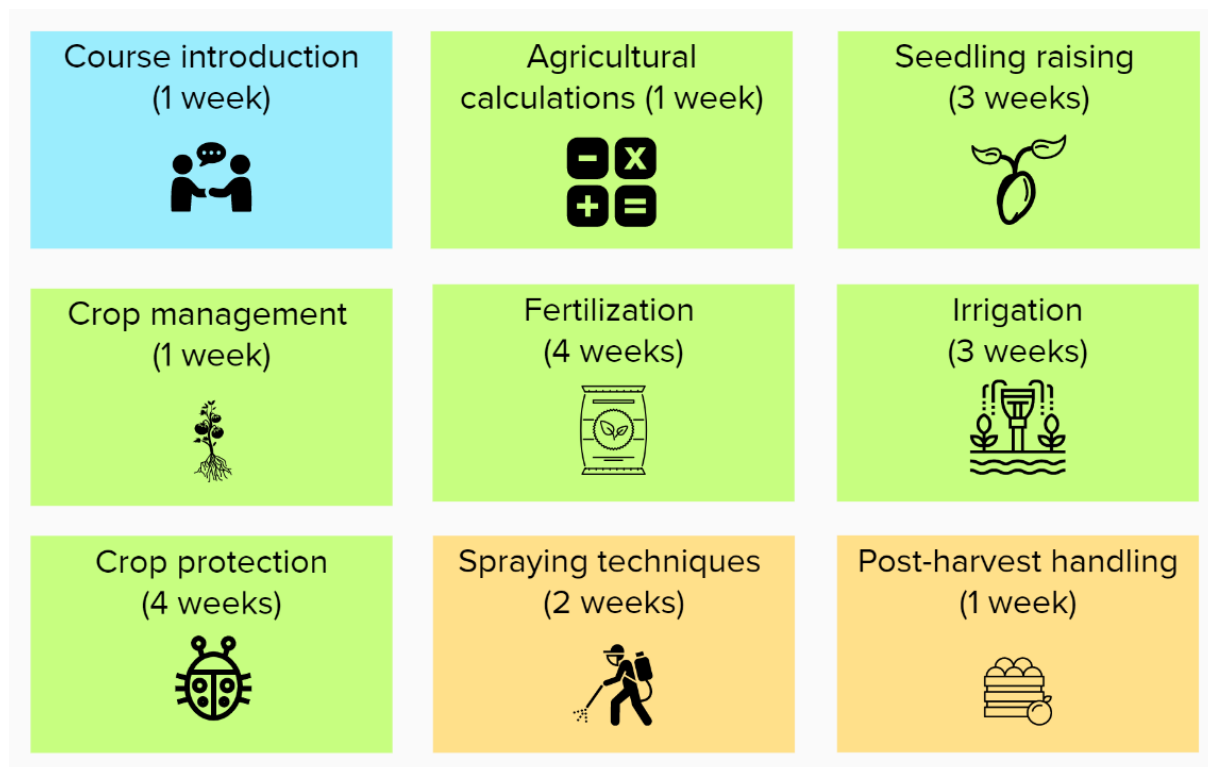
4. Training dates and programme

As stated in the introduction, the course aims at assisting public and private stakeholders in Nigeria to improve their knowledge and skills to train and advice on sustainable cultivation of vegetables in the tropics. Therefore, technical modules lasting between 2 and 4 weeks, will be made available one by one during the entire training course duration. The training is self-paced and presentations can be taken in any order. But trainees must meet some requirements (see 9. Certification) to be able to obtain the final certification.

The online learning programme will last for 17 weeks, starting on the 19th of January and ending on the 1st of June (these are tentative dates).

To assess the improvements in knowledge and skills of the trainees after learning periods, tests will be rolled out. In addition, an end assignment will be held on the last week of the training course on the 24th and 25th of May.

The graph below presents the details of the sustainable vegetable production training developed by WPR:



5. Internet bundle, devices and platforms used

As the training is done online, sometimes through video conferences and requires downloading heavy files, consequent internet bundle is required but will not be provided to the trainees by WPR. Trainees are responsible to organize and manage their own internet access. We encourage them to discuss this issue with their managers if they consider the costs for internet high.

Various online tools are used throughout the training programme. As mentioned in the criteria above, trainees are firstly asked to have access to WhatsApp and Zoom. On top of this, the main part of the course is hosted on a Learning Management System (LMS) called TalentLMS.

a. TalentLMS

TalentLMS is an online learning platform where can be found all the course materials: presentations supported with videos, online videos, articles, quizzes, tests, etc. This platform also gives the opportunity to trainees to exchange through a discussion chat, watch videos, submit assignments, take tests, etc. It is also used by WPR and the local coordinators to observe trainees' progress

b. WhatsApp

WhatsApp is used for communication between WPR, course coordinators and the trainers but also between trainees. For example, whenever materials are released online or in case of issues and troubleshooting on the online learning platform, the communication is done through WhatsApp.

c. Zoom

Zoom is used for online meetings. Usually, two Question-and-Answer sessions are organized per module. The mid-module session requires every trainee to connect personally while the last Q&A session is organized at a venue where all trainees gather.

6. Expectations from training instructors, local coordinators and trainees

As WPR cannot be in all locations providing help and support to all trainees, particularly in the times of restricted travelling, we work hand-in-hand with local coordinators and field trainers to ensure a good progress of the trainees, provide support when required, be the link between WPR and trainees and develop practical field activities. Below are described the roles and what exactly can be expected from WPR, local coordinators and trainees.

a. WPR

WPR will be accountable for the overall course organization and development. On top of that, WPR will be accountable for:

- The release of materials in due time;
- The organization of Question & Answer (Q&A) sessions (sharing date and time of Zoom meetings) together with the local coordinators;
- The organization of field training: training development, materials and other supporting tools;
- Checking the progress of trainees together with the local coordinators;
- Troubleshooting with the online learning platform when trainees are showing signs of difficulties;
- Certification.

b. Local coordinators

Local coordinators are also playing an important role in the training organization and are responsible for various tasks supporting WPR:

- Being in contact with trainees who are facing issues with their devices (but not for troubleshooting on TalentLMS) in order to look for a solution;
- The organization of field training: finding a location and overall organization of the training;
- Informing the trainers of issues that are present or simply notify them that all is well and on track based on communication with trainees and weekly reports from trainees' subgroups.

c. Trainees

When admitted in the course, trainees are asked to follow the following rules:

- Follow the course at the pace imposed;
- Join the Zoom meetings;
- Submit the assignments asked;
- Collect asked data from farmers;
- Take the tests in order to receive the certification (see chapter on certification for more information).

The training schedule is set in advance and we cannot wait for stragglers. The latter will not be able to receive their certification if they were not able to follow with the course pace and take the tests in time.

In case, it is observed that some trainees are not progressing at all, they might be dismissed from the programme.

Trainees will be divided in sub-groups of 5 and must report weekly the progress of each of the trainee to the local coordinator. A template will be provided to facilitate the communication.

d. Mutual respect

Everyone involved in the training is asked to be respectful with others. There will be no indulgence in case of non-respect of other trainees and people involved in the training. In the worst-case scenario, non-respectful people can be excluded of the programme.

7. Training methodology and organization

a. Methodology and group management

The course is a 16 weeks programme during which units have to be completed weekly. The course will start in February with a Zoom meeting between WPR and the trainees who may be invited to a venue. Every 2 weeks Zoom sessions will be held to discuss progress and for Q&A sessions.

The group will be supervised by a local course coordinator. The group of trainees will be linked through one WhatsApp conversation.

b. Monitoring progress

The idea is that each week the group coordinator enquires with the trainees if everyone is still onboard and has no issues (learning or technical issues). Then, the group coordinator then informs the trainers and overall coordinator of issues that are present or simply notify them that all is well and on track.

8. Course activities

The training programme is composed of various activities, for the main part online and but also on-site (see the table below). The online activities correspond to the presentations and other theoretical knowledge materials to which are also added the online meetings and tests. On-site activities gather the field visits as well as the various assignments that require field activities or farmer interviews and discussions.

Table 1. Summary of online and on-site activities during the

Online	On-site
Presentations with explanatory videos on online learning platform (TalentLMS)	Field visits
Videos (TalentLMS)	Field assignments
Quizzes and surveys (TalentLMS)	
Zoom meetings (Zoom)	
Online tests (TalentLMS)	

a. Online activities on TalentLMS

The TalentLMS platform offers a wide array of possibilities for knowledge transfer activities. Below are found various screenshots of materials that trainees will face throughout the programme.

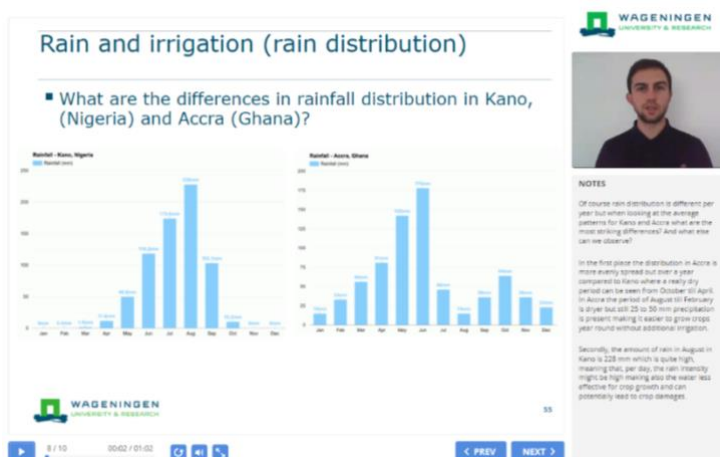


Figure 1. Slide with explanatory video of a module on irrigation

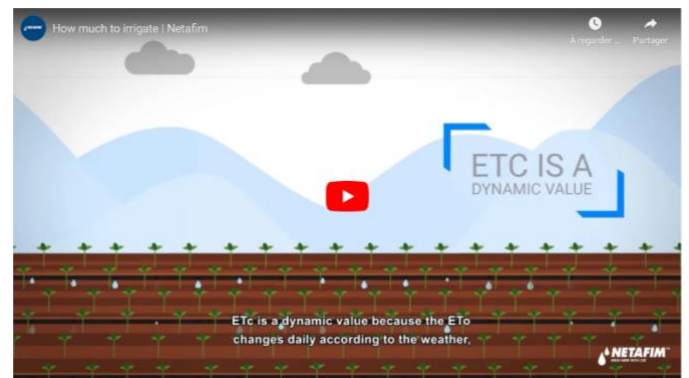


Figure 2. Online video integrated in a TalentLMS module

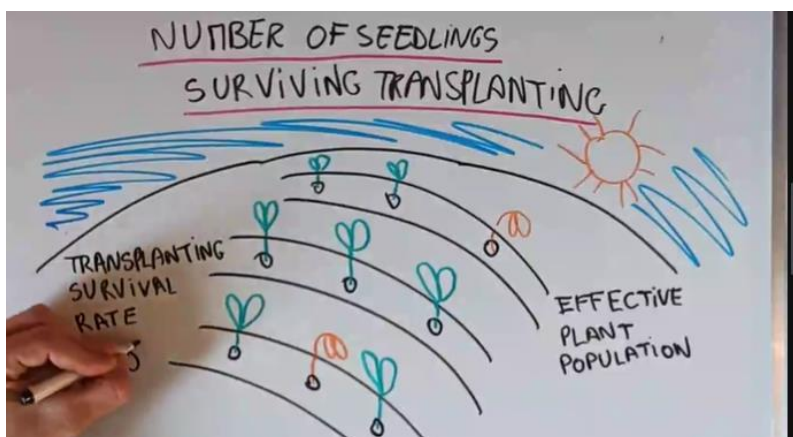


Figure 3. Slide with explanatory drawing video from a module on seedling raising

Number of seedlings surviving the transplanting stage

- The survival rate after transplanting is not indicated on seed packages but farmers, with experience, can estimate the seedling surviving the transplanting shock.

$\text{Number of seedlings surviving transplanting stage} = \text{Number of raised qualitative seedlings} \times \text{transplanting survival rate}$

Example: Number of raised qualitative seedlings = 9,700 seedlings

Transplanting survival rate = 84%

Number of seedlings surviving transplanting stage = 8,148 seedlings

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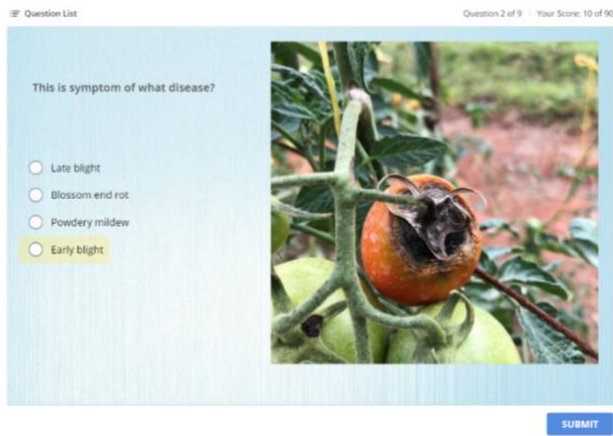


Figure 4. A quiz question integrated in a presentation on crop protection

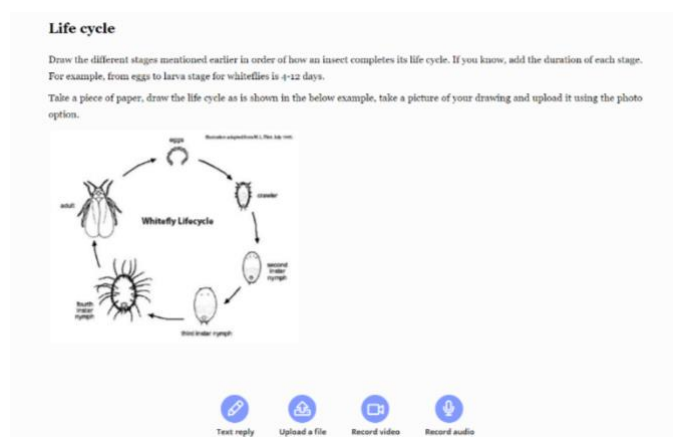


Figure 5. An assignment to put in practice trainees' knowledge

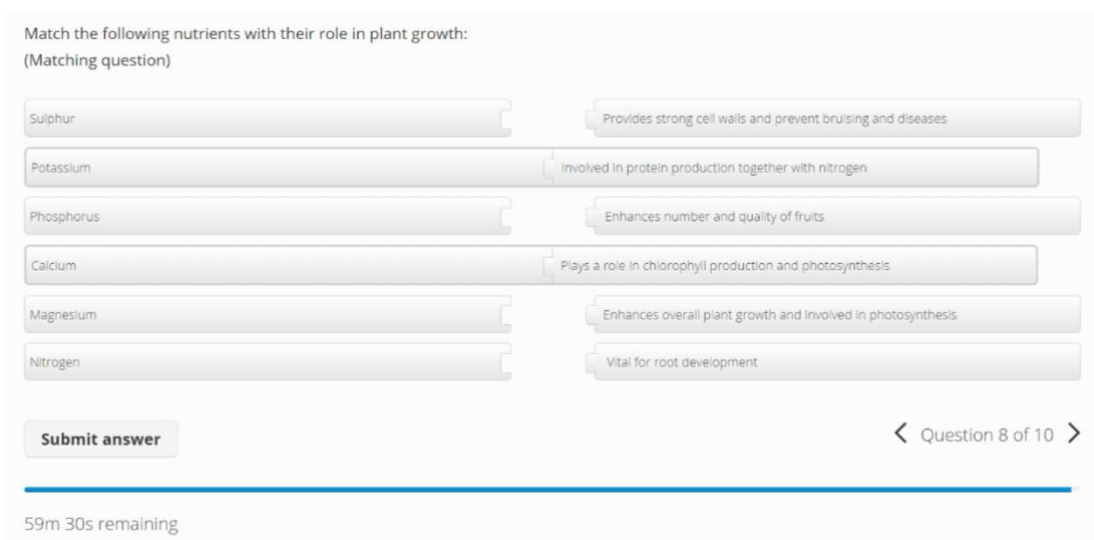


Figure 6. A final test question to assess trainees' knowledge to obtain a certificate

c. Questions and answers sessions

For each modules proposed in the course one or two questions and answers sessions will be organized. Experts from WPR will be answering the questions online. Trainees are asked to prepare questions in advance to make these sessions as interactive and interesting as possible.

d. Field visits

Field visits will be organized related to a particular topic. The objectives of these field visits are to link theory and practice and to put in practice the knowledge acquired. Trainees will be invited for a day to visit some plots. This will give them the opportunity to ask more questions and maintain a practical training method.

e. End assignment

A two-day end assignment will be organized at the end of the course. The objective of the training course is to become able to analyze a field and farmers' practices in order to provide recommendations to improve their farming practices. This end assignment will give the trainees an opportunity to truly exploit the knowledge on the field, to put it in practice and to simulate a situation they will face in the future. During this end assignment, trainees will visit farmers' fields analyze a number of agronomic practices. This analysis will lead to formulation of recommendations that they will have to present in front of the rest of the group of trainees.

9. Certification

The training is self-paced. But trainees must meet some requirements to be able to obtain the final certification. Three certificates can be delivered at the end of the training: the *Certificate of attendance*, the *Certificate of completion* and the *Certificate of excellence*. In Table 2 can be found the requirements for all certificates. No other certification will be delivered from the training, meaning that if a trainee is not meeting the minimum requirements of the *Certificate of attendance*, he or she will not receive any certification from WPR.

Table 2. Requirements for certification for the WPR vegetable course

	Certificate of attendance	Certificate of completion	Certificate of excellence
Progress on all agronomic modules	Reach at least 50% progress on all agronomic modules	Reach at least 75% progress on all agronomic modules	Complete at 100% all agronomic modules
Tests in agronomic modules		Pass 50% of the modules tests	Pass all modules tests
End assignment			Attend end assignment

10. Application

In order to apply for the course, please click on the link below and fill in the required information.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSejwEODGh_1i5sztkS9HVFfnXSk2IJJaM_EYpQuRMb8VI8RcmA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Annex 1: Training course programme

Date and time	Activity	Location
Week 0 - Technical check-in & Course opening		
Thursday 19 th January	Technical check-in	Hybrid: in class and online
Thursday 19 th January	Course opening - Welcome to the course & intro	Hybrid: in class and online
Weeks 1 and 2 - Introduction module and Module 1: Agricultural calculations		
Monday 23 rd January to Sunday 5 th February	Study training modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting started Agricultural calculations 	TalentLMS
Thursday 2 nd of February	Q&A Agricultural calculations	Hybrid: in class and online
Weeks 3, 4 and 5: Module 2: Seedling raising, land preparation and crop management		
Monday 6 th to Sunday 26 th February	Study training materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seedling raising Land preparation Crop management 	TalentLMS
Wednesday 22 nd February	Field visit – Seedling raising	In field
Thursday 23 rd February	Q&A Seedling raising, land preparation and crop management	Hybrid: in class and online
Weeks 6, 7, 8 and 9 - Module 3: Fertilization		
Monday 27 th February to Sunday 12 th March	Study training materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertilization weeks 1 and 2 	TalentLMS
Thursday 9 th March	Q&A weeks 1 and 2 Fertilization	Hybrid: in class and online
Monday 13 th to Sunday 26 th March	Study training materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertilization weeks 3 and 4 	TalentLMS
Wednesday 22 nd March	Field visit – Fertilization	In field
Thursday 23 rd March	Q&A weeks 3 and 4 Fertilization	Hybrid: in class and online
Weeks 10 and 11 - Module 4: Irrigation		
Monday 27 th March to Sunday 9 th April	Study training materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrigation 	TalentLMS
Thursday 6 th April	Q&A Irrigation	Hybrid: in class and online
Weeks 12, 13, 14 and 15 - Module 5: Crop protection and spraying techniques		
Monday 10 th April to Sunday 7 th May	Study training materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crop protection weeks 1, 2 	TalentLMS
Thursday 4 th May	Q&A weeks 1 and 2 Crop protection	Hybrid: in class and online
Monday 8 th to Sunday 14 th May	Study training materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crop protection week 3 	TalentLMS
Monday 15 th to Sunday 21 st May	Study training materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spraying techniques 	TalentLMS
Wednesday 17 th May	Field visit – Crop protection and spraying techniques	In field
Thursday 18 th May	Q&A weeks 3 and 4 Crop protection	Hybrid: in class and online
Week 16 – End assignment		
Monday 22 nd May to Sunday 28 th May	Finalize all modules	TalentLMS
Wednesday 24 th May	End assignment day 1	Hybrid: in field, in class

Thursday 25 th May	End assignment day 2	Hybrid: in field, in class
Week 17 - Closing		
Monday 29 th May	Closing course	TalentLMS
Thursday 1 st June	Closing ceremony	Hybrid: in field, in class

