

Module One: Introduction

This instructor's guide outlines the content, worksheets, activities, and scenarios that should be used to teach this section. Refer to this document for additional comments about each module as well as the overall objectives.

Slide: 1

Time: 15+ minutes,
depending on group size and
if an ice-breaker is used



Instructions:

Please have this slide showing as people enter the meeting room.

When you start your meeting, take the time upfront to do introductions so that you and others in the room can learn a bit more about the people that are part of the regional team. You might want to consider doing an ice-breaker (see the options outlined below) if there are people attending the meeting who may not know one another very well. Even if they are acquainted with one another, it might be good to start with a fun activity so that people can comfortable and engaged from the very outset of the meeting.

Script:

One Option: "I would like each of you to introduce yourself. Please tell us your name, the organization you represent (if pertinent) and why you decided to be part of the region team. Then, tell us what you hope the SET project will achieve for your region?"

Second Option: "I would to ask you to work in pairs and then if you could, spend the next 5-10 minutes interviewing each other. Here are your instructions. First, ask the individual his/her name and how long they've been living in this area. Next, ask them to reveal one thing about their background or interests that few people on the regional team would know about (for example, the person may been a star athlete in high school, may be an avid musician, or may love to do carpentry, things that few people in the meeting might know about this individual). Finally, ask them what they hope the SET program will do in terms of the work of the regional team."

[NOTE: When the interviews are over, ask each person to introduce his/her partner that he/she interviewed and ask them to share the key facts they've collected about the person.]

Third Option: Select your own ice-breaker that you feel would be a good way to get the group to feel comfortable with each other. Remember, even though the regional team may have been working together for some time, a good ice-breaker can still provide a fun way to start the SET program and to get everyone feeling at ease.

Slide: 2

Time: 1 Minute

Sponsors & Partners

- SET is sponsored by USDA Rural Development and the Regional Rural Development Centers.

- Key partners involved in the development of SET educational materials include:
 - Extension and research faculty from a variety of land-grant universities in the U.S.
 - The National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA
 - The Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce



Instructions:

You want to take a moment to acknowledge the key role that USDA RD and the Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) have played in supporting the development of the SET program. You will also want to identify some of the key partners that USDA RD and RRDCS have worked with during the development of the SET training materials.

Script:

“The Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program is sponsored by USDA Rural Development (USDA RD), in partnership with the Regional Rural Development Centers. In particular, USDA RD provided financial support for this important initiative while the RRDCs organized the team of land-grant university-based Extension and research faculty who worked on the development of the SET training modules and the generation of the data products.

Also, we want to express our appreciation to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (or NIFA), the component of USDA that works hand-in-hand with the RRDCs and the land-grant university system across the U.S.

Finally, we want to offer our thanks to the Economic Development Administration for granting us permission to use selected portions of its *Know Your Region* training products.”

Slide: 3

Time: 1 Minute

The Training Resources Development Team

Bo Beaulieu, P.I. Southern Rural Development Center	Jim Goodwin Western Rural Development Center
Alan Barefield Mississippi State University	Sharon Gulick University of Missouri
Marion Bentley Utah State University	Neil Linscheid University of Minnesota
Alison Davis University of Kentucky	Michael Wilcox University of Tennessee
Mary Emery Iowa State University	Rachel Welborn Southern Rural Development Center



Special thanks to Suzette Agans & David Sears, USDA RD

Instructions:

Please make quick note of the fact that the SET materials are the result of the hard work of a talented team of Extension faculty drawn from nine land-grant universities, including two university-based Regional Rural Development Centers. These individuals worked for several months to produce the various resources contained in the SET program.

Script:

“I want to take a minute to acknowledge the team of Extension educators and RRDC staff members who have given of their time and talents to the development of the SET program. Nine land-grant universities – including two of the Regional Rural Development Centers – played key roles in the development and refinement of the various products that are part of this important initiative. The Southern Rural Development Center located at Mississippi State University provided overall coordination for the SET project.

We also want to express our sincere thanks to Suzette Agans and David Sears with USDA RD, Washington, DC. They’ve been strong advocates for the SET program and have worked side-by-side with the SET training resources development team to make this initiative a reality.”

Slide: 4

Time: 15 Minutes

Pre-Training Assessment

- Please take a few minutes to complete the brief questionnaire
- Why? To determine your views about the content and value of the SET training program



Instructions:

In order to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the SET program, it's crucial that individuals participating in the SET program be encouraged to complete a pre-assessment survey. By completing the questionnaire, we'll be able to determine shifts that may have occurred in the knowledge and skill levels of participants as a result of the SET effort. We'll also be able to assess whether SET has provided valuable insights to the regional teams in their quest to formulate and pursue appropriate regional economic development activities. While individuals are encouraged to complete the questionnaire, a person may refuse to complete the survey which is something he/she has a right to do.

Script:

"To help us gauge the effectiveness of the SET program, particularly in terms of the knowledge you've gained or the contributions that the project has made in guiding and strengthening the work of your regional team, we are asking you to complete a brief survey. The information being gathered in this pre-assessment will provide the critical baseline data we need to evaluate the effectiveness of the SET program over the next several weeks.

Please know that the information you provide will be confidential and will be accessible only to members of the USDA RD and RRDC staff who are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the SET program. We have assigned each of you a unique number on the survey form in order to determine who has completed their survey. So, there's no need to write your name on the survey document."

Additional Comments:

Once participants have completed the pre-assessment, collect the documents and mail them to: Bo Beaulieu, Southern Rural Development Center, Box 9656, Mississippi State, MS 39762-9656.

Slide: 5

Time: 2 Minutes



Instructions:

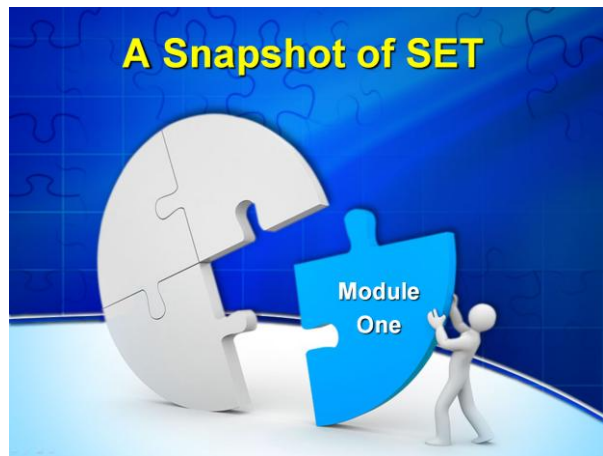
Use this slide as a transition from the pre-meeting activities to the introduction to the SET program.

Script:

"Now that we have completed some of our important housekeeping activities, let's now move into a discussion of the SET program."

Slide: 6

Time: 2 Minutes



Instructions:

Module One provides a nice synopsis of the Stronger Economies Together (SET) program. Use the script below to help introduce SET to the regional team members taking part in this meeting.

Script:

“Our first module in the SET program is designed to give you a roadmap of what SET is all about. Let’s turn to the next slide to get some idea of the important topics that we’ll be covering in this session.”

Additional Comments:

Have a copy of their application so you can refer to the goals set out in their application.

Slide: 7

Time: 2 Minutes

Outline of Module One

- What is SET?
- What it Offers to a Regional Team
- Who's Who? State Partners and Trainers
- Preview of the Training Program
- What's Ahead in the Next Module



Instructions:

Briefly review each of the items outlined on the slide.

Script:

“Here’s what we have in store in Module One. First of all, we’re going to share with you what SET is all about and indicate some of the key benefits that we feel it will offer to your regional team.

Next, we want to share with you the names of the individuals who are playing an important part in making SET a reality in your state.

Then, we want to spend a few minutes sharing with you some of the important topics that we’ll be covering in each of the nine modules. Finally, at the end of our session, we’ll give you a brief reminder of what we’ll be covering in Module Two.”

Slide: 8

Time: 2 Minutes

What is SET?

- An exciting new initiative that encourages communities and counties – primarily in rural areas – to work together as a regional team to develop and implement an economic development plan that make sense for their region
- A program that helps regions discover and build on their comparative economic advantages.



Instructions:

Discuss what SET is all about, highlighting the two important points noted in this slide.

Script:

“Many of you are well aware that communities are facing some major challenges when it comes to creating or expanding local job opportunities, especially if these places have populations that are not very large or have economic activities that are pretty limited in scope. Although these places are working hard to attract firms to their communities, the reality is that only a small handful of firms are looking to relocate or expand to new localities. Unfortunately, communities and counties that you are oftentimes competing for such businesses are located in close proximity to one another. In these economic challenging times, does it not make more sense for these neighboring counties (parishes) or communities to work together?”

SET is designed to help encourage counties (parishes) and communities that located contiguous to one another to join hands and begin carving out a sound regional economic development plan – one that builds on the region’s economic assets and strengths. Keep in mind that we are not urging communities and/or counties (parishes) to come together just for the sake of coming together. Rather, we want communities and counties (parishes) to collaborate for the purpose of finding the distinct comparative advantages they have as a region – economic activities that can position their region to effectively compete in multi-state, national and/or international markets. Over the course of the SET program, you’ll have the opportunity to delve more deeply into information that will help you determine what your region’s comparative advantages might be.”

Slide: 9

Time: 3 Minutes

What SET Offers to a Regional Team

- Training and guidance
- Data tailored to your region
- Valuable planning tools
- Technical assistance from project partners
- Peer-to-peer connections with other regional groups involved in the SET pilot program across the U.S.

Instructions:

Share with the group some of the important benefits associated with their involvement in the SET program.

Script:

“There are a number of valuable benefits that we believe you’ll receive as a result of your involvement in the SET program.

First of all, you’ll have the opportunity to take part in the SET training and be offered support from the state training team that we’ve assembled to guide your team’s work over the course of the next several weeks.

In addition, we’ll be providing you with key data that will be tailored to your region – information that will help you better assess the strengths and needs of your region.

Third, we’re going to share with you a variety of planning tools that we believe will add value and strength to your team’s regional plans and activities.

Moreover, throughout the SET program, you will be able to tap the technical assistance capabilities of the various partners who are part of the SET program in the state – including the state USDA RD office, the Cooperative Extension Service, and other key agencies that have partnered with us on this initiative.

Finally, one of the most exciting aspects of the SET program is that you’re going to be offered the opportunity to participate in conference calls with peers located in other states and regions that are part of the SET program. The conference calls will provide a forum for the regional teams to share ideas, to seek advice on ways to overcome the barriers your team may be facing, and to learn about exciting efforts being launched in other regions that your team may wish to consider adopting in your own region. There’s nothing more valuable than having the chance to network with other regions across the U.S. about the opportunities and challenges associated with the development and implementation of regional economic development plans.”

Slide: 10

Time: 2 Minutes



Instructions:

Note the eight states that have been selected to be part of the SET pilot effort.

Script:

“As shown on the U.S. map, there are eight states that been selected to be part of the SET pilot program: Arizona, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Two regions are taking part in the SET program in six of the pilot states, while Louisiana and West Virginia are each working with five regions. All told, 22 regional teams are part of this important pilot effort.”

Additional Comments:

In case participants are interested, USDA RD opted to invite two states in each of the four USDA RD/RRDC regions to be part of the SET pilot effort (NOTE: both the USDA RD and RRDCs share common geographies in terms of the states that are located in each of the four regions).

The regional affiliations of the SET pilot states are as follows:

- Northeast Region: Pennsylvania and West Virginia
- North Central Region: Missouri and Ohio
- Southern Region: Kentucky and Louisiana
- Western Region: Arizona and New Mexico

Slide: 11

Time: 3 Minutes

Who's Who? State Partners and Trainers

- State Partner Team: Representatives from key agencies who are coordinating the SET program in the state
- State Training Team: Group responsible for delivering the SET training program to your regional team



Instructions:

There are two state groups that we want the regional team to know a bit more about. This slide describes these two groups.

Script:

“There are two teams that we’d like for you to become familiar with. The *State Partner Team* is made up of representatives of agencies and institutions that are overseeing and guiding the SET program in your state. The USDA RD office in the state and the land-grant university’s Cooperative Extension Service are two major anchors of this partner team.

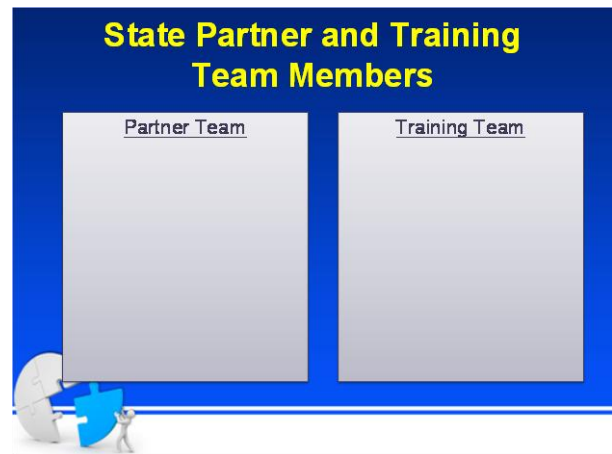
The *State Training Team* is composed of individuals taking the lead role in the delivery of the SET program to your regional team. These are people that you are going to get to know real well over the course of the SET project.”

Additional Comments:

If members of the State Training Team are in attendance, take the time to re-introduce them to the regional group.

Slide: 12

Time: 2 Minutes



Instructions:

Please add the names and affiliations of the people who are part of the State Partner Team and the State Training Team in the appropriate box on this slide. Please note that some people may be listed under each of the teams. For example, there's a good chance that an Extension educator and USDA RD representative (from the state RD office) will be serving on both the State Partner Team and the State Training Team.

Script:

"For your information, here are the names and affiliations of the individuals who are serving on the State Partner Team and the State Training Team."

Slide: 13

Time: 5 Minutes

Preview of the Training Program

- Nine modules are included in the SET training program
- Regional team members are provided the following resources:
 - The SET workbook
 - Copies of PowerPoint slides accompanying each module
 - Copies of regional data for use by your team



Instructions:

Highlight what's on this slide. It describes how SET is organized and the resources that will be provided to the regional team.

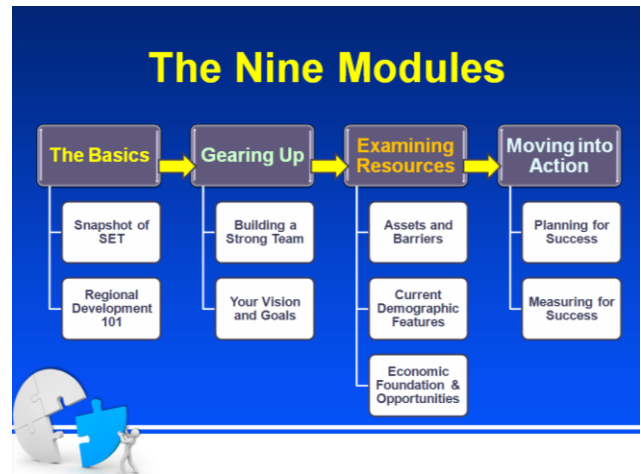
Script:

“The entire SET program is composed of nine modules. As a member of the regional team, you are going to be supplied with a variety of resources to help guide your work. For example, during the course of the SET program, you'll be given worksheets and planning tools that will become part of your SET workbook. Furthermore, you will be provided with a hard copy of the PowerPoint slides that accompany each of the nine modules. We'll make sure you have adequate space to jot down notes that you might want to include on the PowerPoint documents. Lastly, copies of the regional data analyses we produce will be shared with you. These will include information on the population, education, and labor force characteristics of your region, as well as in-depth data information on the economic clusters that may exist or that might be emerging in your region.

As a heads up, you'll be asked to complete a variety of activities during the course of our meetings. It's going to be important for everyone in the group to take part in these activities and to do the important groundwork that you'll be assigned to complete between your face-to-face SET meetings.”

Slide: 14

Time: 7 Minutes



Instructions:

This slide provides a visual overview of the four major phases of the SET program and the modules that are associated with each of these four sections.

Script:

“Here is a nice visual of the nine SET modules that are part of the SET program and the four key headings under which these modules align. The first section deals with the BASICS and it’s made up two modules – one that introduces you to the SET program (something that we doing right now) and a second that defines and highlights some of the key elements of local and regional economic development.

The second section focuses on GEARING UP and it’s intended to offer guidance on some of the important attributes of a strong regional team. Even if your regional team in already in place, it’s a good idea to review this module so that you can determine if additional people might need to be added to your team. This section also focuses on your team’s regional vision and goals. It guides you through a series of steps that results in the development of a solid vision statement and a set of sound regional goals. If your team has its vision and goals already completed, we still encourage you to work through Module Four. By so doing, you’ll have the opportunity to double check whether revisions in your vision statement and/or regional goals might be warranted.

The third phase of SET is focused on EXAMINING RESOURCES. The three modules in this section showcase the many tools and resources that your team will be urged to employ as it builds and implements its regional plan. These resources will help you uncover the region’s comparative economic advantages and the diversity of people and organizational assets present in the region.

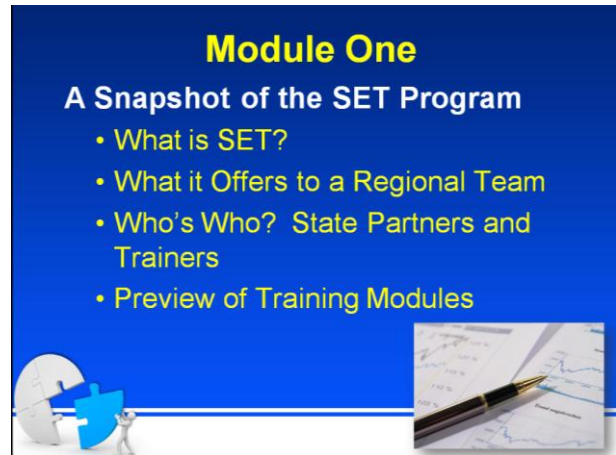
The final section of SET focuses on MOVING INTO ACTION. The two modules associated with this last phase of SET are designed to offer you a detailed roadmap on how to get important projects off the ground and how to gather the type of information needed to document the impacts of your team’s regional work.”

Additional Comments:

We urge you to resist efforts by the regional team to bypass some of the modules. There's a good possibility that the team will discover some useful information in each of the modules, even if a module happens to address a topic they feel they've already addressed. For example the modules on "building a strong regional team" and "developing a regional vision and goals" may be ones that the team will encourage you to skip over. But, we believe that they will be exposed to new and valuable information by working through all of the modules.

Slide: 15

Time: 2 Minutes



Instructions:

This slide showcases the module you are currently sharing with the group, so there is no need to spend much time on this slide. Just note what topics are being covered in Module One.

Script:

“Module One is the one that I’m reviewing with you right now, so there’s no need for me to spend any time on this slide, other than to ask you to quickly review the topics that we are exploring in our meeting today.”

Slide: 16

Time: 2 Minutes



Module Two
Regional Development 101

- It's a Changing World: Some Major Trends
- Implications of These Trends
- Local and Regional Economic Development
 - Defining key terms
 - Three waves of economic development
 - Economic development approaches
- A Look at Regional Development
- What Should Your Region Do?

The slide features a blue background with yellow text. At the bottom left, there is an illustration of a person placing a blue puzzle piece into a larger structure. At the bottom right, there is a circular inset image of a man in a suit holding a globe.

Instructions:


Briefly touch on the major bullets contained on Module Two slide.

Script:

“Let me share with you the highlights of what we’ll be examining in Module Two. We’re going to begin by focusing on some of the big trends taking place at the global and national levels – trends that are likely to have important impacts on the economic development strategies you are proposing for your region. Then we want to zero in on the economic development efforts currently being undertaken in your region or its communities. We’re going to ask you to determine which of the three waves of economic development the current efforts are most closely align with. Then, we are going to focus on your team’s regional plans/ideas and see if they are in synch with the some of the new principles and strategies being proposed by regional economists.”

Slide: 17

Time: 2 Minutes

A blue presentation slide with yellow text. The title is "Module Three" in a large, bold font. Below it is the subtitle "Building a Strong Regional Team". A bulleted list follows: "Determine Elements of a Sound Team", "Develop a Call to Action", "Invite Broad Participation", "Create a Succession Plan", and "Explore Habits of Highly Effective Regional Leadership Teams". There are two images: a small 3D figure pushing a blue puzzle piece into a larger grey one, and a close-up of a golden chain link.

Module Three

Building a Strong Regional Team

- Determine Elements of a Sound Team
- Develop a Call to Action
- Invite Broad Participation
- Create a Succession Plan
- Explore Habits of Highly Effective Regional Leadership Teams

Instructions:

Briefly touch on the bullets outlined on this slide.

Script:

“Module Three focuses on the importance of organizing a strong team to be part of your regional group. This includes an effort to establish a team that reflects the socioeconomic diversity of the region. We’ll also offer some ideas on how to keep your group active and vibrant so that you’ll have the ‘person power’ in place over an extended period of time to carry out your team’s important regional work.”

Slide: 18

Time: 2 Minutes



Module Four

Your Regional Vision & Goals

- What's This Thing Called "Vision"?
- Features of a Strong Regional Vision Statement
- Developing a Vision Statement for Your Region
- Now . . . Focusing on Regional Goals

Instructions:

Briefly touch on each of the bullets on this slide.

Script:

"We're going to discuss the importance of vision and goals as part of Module Four. We'll focus on the key ingredients associated with a strong vision statement, and work on the development or refinement of your team's major regional goals."

Slide: 19

Time: 2 Minutes

A blue rectangular graphic with a white border. At the top, the text "Module Five" is written in yellow. Below it, "Exploring Regional Assets & Barriers" is written in white. A bulleted list follows in yellow text. At the bottom left, there is a small 3D illustration of a person pushing a blue puzzle piece into a larger white puzzle piece. At the bottom right, there is a circular inset image of a wooden door handle.

Module Five

Exploring Regional Assets & Barriers

- Examining Asset-based Regional Development
- Discovering Assets that Exist Locally
- Pinpointing Barriers to Achieving Regional Goals
- Reviewing and Adjusting Regional Goals as Needed

Instructions:

Highlight what the module on assets and barriers will address.

Script:

“In Module Five, we going to move into a discussion of asset-based community economic development, taking a careful look at the specific people and groups in the region that might be tapped to help your team achieve its regional goals. At the same time, we’re going to ask you to take an honest look at the people and groups that might serve as key barriers, and thus, that may interfere with your team’s ability to realize some of the goals it’s laid out for the region.

Armed with a better understanding of both the assets and barriers, we’re going to then encourage you to take another look at your goals to see what major changes or fine-tuning may be needed in these goals.”

Slide: 20

Time: 2 Minutes



Instructions:

Indicate what Module Six will be addressing.

Script:

“It’s in Module Six that we’re going to start to dig into some important data on your region. We’re going to start by examining some of the major demographic trends at both the national and regional levels. By so doing, we are going to be able to see how your region stacks up relative to other parts of the nation. We’ll explore the characteristics of the population, such as the age race and ethnic make-up of the region. Furthermore, we’ll take a look at the important features of your region’s labor force, including its level of education. Finally, we’re going to help you assess what these trends mean for your region and how they might impact the goals your team has set out for the region.”

Slide: 21

Time: 2 Minutes

The slide has a blue background. At the top, the title 'Module Seven' is written in yellow. Below it, the subtitle 'The Region's Economic Foundation and Development Opportunities' is written in white. A bulleted list follows, with each item in yellow. At the bottom left, there is a 3D illustration of a person placing a blue puzzle piece into a larger white puzzle. At the bottom right, there is a 3D illustration of a yellow calculator with a red ribbon tied around it.

Module Seven

The Region's Economic Foundation and Development Opportunities

- The Economic Base of the Region -- Current Economic Drivers
- Understanding Regional Comparative Advantages
- Determining your Regional Advantages
- Exploring Value-Added Strategies

Instruction:

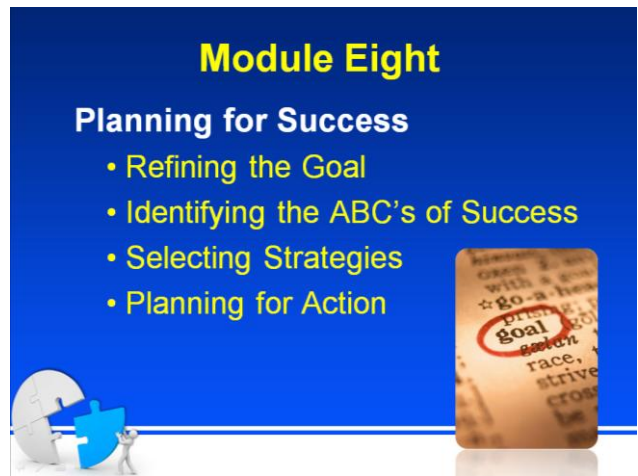
Share the key points that are presented in this slide on Module Seven.

Script:

“Data on your region’s economy is the central focus of Module Seven. We’re going to provide you with important information on the key economic drivers of your region’s economy. Next, we’ll share with you results of the cluster analysis that we done on your region and guide you through a review of these results. We will also spend time helping you figure out what clusters may be evident or emerging in your region. Beyond the examination of the information generated from the regional cluster analysis, we’re going to explore with you some of the value-added economic activities that might make sense for your region.”

Slide: 22

Time: 2 Minutes



Module Eight

Planning for Success

- Refining the Goal
- Identifying the ABC's of Success
- Selecting Strategies
- Planning for Action

The slide features a blue background with yellow text. At the bottom left, there is a small 3D illustration of a person pushing a large blue puzzle piece into place. At the bottom right, there is a small image of a document with the word 'goal' circled in red. The document also contains other words like 'race', 'strive', and 'cross'.

Instructions:


Touch base on the key bullets associated with Module Eight.

Script:

“No project is complete without a good plan in place, one that will increase your chances for success. Module Eight will provide a detailed blueprint on how to develop and implement a solid action plan. By the time the Module Eight session is completed, you’re going to have a well developed roadmap of your goals, the core strategies associated with each of these goals, the specific activities to be undertaken and by whom, and a description of the key outcomes that your group is seeking to achieve on a short, intermediate and long-term basis in the region.”

Slide: 23

Time: 2 Minutes

The slide has a blue background. At the top right, there is a circular inset image of a yellow measuring cylinder. Below the title, there is a list of five bullet points. At the bottom left, there is a small 3D illustration of a person pushing a blue puzzle piece into a larger grey puzzle piece.

Module Nine

Measuring for Success

- Exploring the Value of Measuring
- Deciding What to Measure
- Using Measures to Promote Success
- Tracking Appropriate Measures
- Creating a Regional Plan for Measuring Success

Instructions:

Highlight the key points contained on this slide on Module Nine.

Script:

“Our final module builds on the important work that you’ll be carrying out in Module Eight. What this module will do is offer your team a way to measure and evaluate the step-by-step activities your team has undertaken as part of its regional work, and provide you with a way to introduce needed changes along the way. We’ll also show you how to document the outcomes of your efforts, information that will be vital to your ability to produce sound accountability and impact information that can be shared with key leaders, organizations, and local residents.”

Slide: 24

Time: 5 Minutes

Final Reflections

- What are the takeaways from this module?
- What needs to be done to prepare for the next SET meeting?
- Other issues to clarify or discuss at this point?



Instructions:

Take a few minutes at the end of the module to ask individuals what they felt with the major takeaways. What did they find most valuable and what remains a bit unclear to them? Take the time to clarify these items, as appropriate.

Script:

“I’d like to ask you to reflect on the information that I have shared with you in Module One. What did you find most useful? What key takeaways do you have at this point? Are there topics that I have shared with you in this module that you’d like me to clarify at this point? What specific activities do we need to get done prior to our next SET meeting? Are there any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share with the group or with me?”

Slide: 25

Time: 4 Minutes



What's Ahead in Module Two

- Major global trends & implications
- Three waves of economic development
- Economic development approaches
- Regional development – a new game plan
- Options for your region?

The slide features a blue background with a yellow title. On the left, there is an image of a person standing on a ladder, looking through binoculars against a blue sky with clouds. Below the ladder, there are several interlocking puzzle pieces in white and blue.

Instructions:

Remind the team of the major topics that will be addressed in Module Two.

Script:

“Let me quickly review what is coming up in Module Two. The title of our second module is ‘Regional Development 101.’ It’s designed to offer you a valuable overview of local and regional economic development approaches in the context of major global trends. We look forward to seeing you next time.”

Additional Comments:

If you’ve decided to present Module Two in the same meeting as Module One, then modify the script above. It may be a good idea at this point to give the group a 10-15 minutes break so that you can get the materials you need for Module Two ready to start presenting right after the break is completed.