

Call for Papers

Innovations in Value Chain Practice Towards Enhanced Market Access: Experiences, Lessons and Best Practices

Kampala, 20th – 21st May 2009

Over the past years, the economic environment has changed substantially in developing countries including those of Eastern and Southern Africa. There is increased international demand for non-traditional commodities, and more opportunities for smallholder farmers to access markets. However, with it have come impeding minimum conditions for accessing these markets. While access to markets remains an important medium for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), several factors including low levels of investment in agriculture, poor infrastructure, as well as limited access to technological innovation, Business Development Services (BDS), and market information, still inhibit smallholder farmers full access to markets.

The International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), and SNV Netherlands Development Organisation aim at unlocking these limitations through various programmes. SNV and IFAD, through the "Support Capacity for Enhanced Market Access (SCAPEMA)" seek to enable the rural poor to overcome poverty through knowledge sharing and enhanced learning. The overall goal of this programme is to increase returns to the rural poor through more equitable and efficient linkages with the markets. The interventions therefore seek to improve the effectiveness and facilitate market linkage initiatives through

- systematically generating and making knowledge available;
- strengthening local and regional partnerships and networking; and
- identifying policy issues for pro-poor marketing and trade at the regional/national level, hence leveraging support for policy dialogue in broad partnerships with other stakeholders.

Implementation of various "access to market" programmes has generated many lessons and best practices. However, these lessons and best practices have not been widely shared. There is thus a growing consensus on the need for and the value of bringing in and sharing experiences and lessons, as a means of enhancing understanding. Sharing knowledge will support improvements in quality, effectiveness and overall impact of interventions.

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, Uganda together with the International Fund for Agricultural development (IFAD) through the Strengthening Support Capacity for Enhanced Market Access and Knowledge program (SCAPEMA) are organising a Market Access Knowledge Sharing conference. The main objective of the conference is to share experiences, lessons and best practices from stakeholders engaged in promoting access to markets for small scale farmers from value chains including oil seed, apiculture, horticulture and dairy. Participants will include programme managers/implementers, service providers, value chain actors, farmer organisations, academicians and researchers within Uganda.

SNV and IFAD are calling for papers from the general public to be presented in the conference. Papers should demonstrate practical experience, clearly identifying contribution and improvement, to stakeholders and exhibit potential usefulness for knowledge enhancement among others. The papers should clearly provide step by step process of the implementation process expounding upon the lessons and best practices.

Papers will be evaluated based on a clearly defined framework. Themes for discussion are limited to;

- a. **Service Delivery:** Focus on appropriate service delivery models and their impact on production and productivity. Papers should illustrate with clear examples how different service delivery

models have been implemented, the impact of lessons/best practices on production and productivity and hence the returns to the farmers. The theme should cover services such as extension, input supplies, business development, finance and research.

Topics of interest include:

- *Optimal models for delivery of services in the spectrum from pure public to pure private, their financial viability, commercialisation, and flexibility to innovation.*
 - *The impact of research for increased market access for small holder farmers.*
 - *The impact of technological innovation and adoption to increased market access for small holder farmers and processors.*
 - *Innovative financial products (existing or potential) for value chains including oil seeds, apiculture, horticulture and dairy.*
- b. **Effective Market Positioning:** Focus on experiences of how markets impact on company strategies for enhancing profitability. Examples should cover issues, such as
- *Market segmentation, targeting and company positioning*
 - *Marketing strategies such as bulking and market coordination in response to market demand, the impact of market demand on standards, quality as a basis for premium pricing, effective branding, effective financing mechanisms for bulking etc;*
 - *Barriers to entry in various segments of the market;*
 - *Use of up to date and accessible market information in stimulating production and marketing.*
- c. **Competitiveness and Enabling Environment:** A supportive business environment is crucial for the competitiveness and profitability of enterprises. Examples should show how, the following issues have enhanced the business environment:
- *Strengthening the policy and legal framework (investment code, macro-economic framework);*
 - *Strengthening the policy and legal framework especially with regards to the oilseed, apiculture, Dairy and horticulture sub-sectors and specifically (seed availability and quality, innovation and technological adoption and market coordination in relation to bulking). A paper may cover one or more of the issues in brackets;*
 - *The value of a supportive institutional and regulatory framework (UNBS, ERA, MAAIF, NEMA, etc);*
 - *Supportive services such as infrastructure and transport services, financial services, adequacy of technical manpower, judiciary, etc;*
 - *Vertical integration as a sustainability strategy.*

Submitted papers and abstracts will be evaluated by a selected committee focusing on originality, replicability, scalability, relevance, and completeness. Papers should clearly identify contribution to desired market access, impact, expected results and the link with the broader economy in regard to increasing productivity, income and employment. Clearly specify the theme and sub-theme for the abstract and paper.

Papers and abstracts should be submitted electronically in PDF to uganda@snvworld.org. Deadline for submission is 20th April, 2009.

Potential presenters will be invited to a pre-submission conference on March 26th, 2009 at 10.00 a.m. at the SNV Country Office, Plot 36 Luthuli Rise, Bugolobi.

Approved papers will be presented in innovative ways by the authors. Conference papers will be availed to conference participants.