

PROMISING RESILIENCE PRACTICES



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION



Achieving quality farm produce for better market access in southern Somalia

Through enhanced governance structures at the cooperative level, the farmers are able to work collectively in accessing input and product markets thus reducing transaction costs. This is likely to increase the profit margins

Introduction

The Somalia conflict has affected the lives of millions of people, causing an increase of Internally Displaced Persons, loss of lives, recurring famine, dilapidation of infrastructure and prolonged instability. As the country struggles to restore governance, poverty remains acute and support for the development of livelihoods remains a priority.

Historically, the Somali economy has been dominated by pastoralism and crop production. By 2004, about 67 percent of the population lived in rural areas of which 55 percent was engaged in pastoralism and farming. Agro-pastoralism has been and remains the mainstay of the economy with livestock exports as main foreign exchange earner. Every rural family depends (partly or entirely) on livestock and farming for livelihood, income generation and food security.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the rural population particularly in south Somalia. However, agricultural production and productivity in Somalia suffers from a variety of problems ranging from widespread insecurity to harsh climate, lack of supportive food security standards, weak agricultural support services and lack of inputs. Lack of

access to markets (local and international) is equally a critical factor undermining smallholder farmers' ability to increase production and improve productivity. An intervention was implemented to increase production and quality of cereals while ensuring access to domestic and international markets for Somali farmers.



INTERVENTION AREA

Market access, trade and financial services



LOCATION

Afgoye and Awdege districts of Lower Shabelle region



STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

The project was funded by the European Union. The implementing partners were Ministry of Agriculture, World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



BENEFICIARIES

500 smallholder farmers belonging to ten cooperatives over four consecutive seasons (2 years)

Methodological approach

A participatory approach was used to implement this project. FAO and Ministry of Agriculture provided support to the farmers technically while WFP encouraged farmers to purchase the products with the introduction of international standards.

The following milestones were achieved:

- Training on good agricultural practices (GAP) and mechanisation;
- Farmers benefit from improved storage technologies and post-harvest management;
- High quality maize purchased from farmer cooperatives;
- Farmers benefit from rehabilitated small rural farmer infrastructure;
- Country food quality standards developed and supervised;
- Strengthened linkages to domestic and international markets.

Results

- Significant increase in production and productivity;
- Improved access to agricultural infrastructure and market;
- Increase in the income of the farmers' cooperatives;
- Strengthened knowledge and capacity of the beneficiary farmers and neighbourhood farmers;
- Created trust among stakeholders;
- Strengthened the collaboration and partnerships among Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), FAO, WFP and EU.

Constraints

- Insecurity resulted in some trainings being delayed. Despite the challenges, the project outputs were achieved through working with local partners, who have access to the project areas.
- Transportation of produce from farms to markets was disrupted partially following several non-state taxation check points in the villages. In addition to this, poor road networks are a major impediment to market access. Collective action can substantially reduce the risks and/or the transactions costs of the individual farmers.

Lessons learnt

- Through enhanced governance structures at the cooperative level, the farmers are able to work collectively in accessing input and product markets thus reducing transaction costs. This is likely to increase the profit margins.
- Farmers will sustainably improve the quality and quantity of their produce through an internal product quality

management system organised around the cooperative model, through enhancing farmers' skills and providing appropriate equipment.

Sustainability

Capacity development: Farmers and technical staff from the cooperatives were trained in production and storage of quality maize. The cooperatives' leaders were also trained in business and marketing skills investment, savings and leadership skills.

Gender equality: FAO ensured both men and women benefitted from the project by allowing members of both genders equal access to available opportunities. FAO supported the households with inputs and equipment and facilitated representation of women in the leadership structure of the cooperatives.

Environmental sustainability: The knowledge gained through the post-harvest management and GAP, through the training of trainers approach, use of recommended fertiliser content and selection of the right planting materials will contribute to environmental sustainability.

Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – In particular Right to Food and Decent Work: FAO supported beneficiaries with post-harvest equipment including posho-mills and tarpaulins. The equipment provides decent work and income sources that will ensure project beneficiaries have access to food.

Technological sustainability: The capacity of the cooperatives' members was enhanced through training in the use and maintenance of various equipment. The gained knowledge will continue to support the beneficiaries to utilise the new technology in production and storage of maize.

Economic sustainability: The majority of the project beneficiaries were organised into producer cooperative groups. The cooperatives provide farmers with platforms for collective processing and marketing of products. Collective economic endeavours have potential to endure longer and enjoy economies of scale and shared risks as opposed to individualised ventures.

Replicability and upscaling

The following factors should be considered when replicating and/or scaling up:

- MoA should closely follow up on access and utilisation of the distributed equipment to ensure gender equity and access by all farmers of the various cooperatives.
- Upscaling the business model needs development of a road map for possible scaling up to new areas and diversification in terms of adding market-lucrative commodities.

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