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Innovative platforms as a sustainable mechanism for pro-poor value chain upgrading to enhance water productivity and improve livelihoods in the Volta Basin

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Session: Volta Basin x Learning to Innovate x Benefit sharing mechanism, resilience



DIALOGUE AND PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENTS WITH TARGET COMMUNITIES

Key Message

1) Facilitating dialogue among value chain actors leads to better co-ordination for win-win solutions and social learning for innovation; 2) Understanding and respecting roles and commitments is fundamental for the success of innovation platforms for value chain development and natural resources management for crops, livestock and households.

Summary

1. Challenge for farmers: Smallholder farmers have been organized in cooperatives and/or producers groups and are supported by the government, services providers and donor agencies. However, most of these organizations hitherto have focused on building basic technical organizational and business capacities; one limitation has been the inadequate linkages with other actors in the value chains and natural resources management, which inhibits the realization of the income generating potential from their enterprises. This is an area that calls for urgent investments in : i) development of bankable business plan; ii) entrepreneurial skills; iii) bulk input and output marketing techniques; iv) knowledge and skills to improve crops and livestock production; v) multi stakeholder network management

2. Setting up an iterative learning and development process: The above mentioned challenge could be addressed for testing potential options to address the technical, institutional and organizational constraints and, engage in interactive and reflective learning processes through systematic monitoring. The learning process integrates training and implementing activities and actions in a continuous loop of learning, application and reflection. During February to June, the project initiated the process of action learning through the following steps: 1. Dialogue and participatory assessments with target communities; 2. Harmonizing our comprehension of the VCA approach through a 3 day workshop as in Ghana and Burkina Faso (March and May); 3. Conducting the Value chain analysis (VCA) during May-June; 4. Sharing the VCA conclusions with INERA, an other key chain actors (stakeholders and public & private service providers in June); 5. Contracting a local capacity building organization to mobilize and facilitate the IP in the communities in June.

3. Establishing the first IP in four communities including 8 villages. These IPs have: i) chosen potential crop and livestock VCs to upgrade, ii) analyzed constraints, challenges and opportunities for each VC, iii) proposed a broad plan of activities to implement in each VC, iv) decided the modalities of plan implementation and functioning of IP.

4. Next steps

The next step is to set up and implement a monitoring framework to assess progress of plan implementation and identify capacity needs of the platforms and actors involved.