



A rapid market assessment of commodity enterprises in the Ethiopian highlands: Africa RISING participatory research toolkit

Introduction

In 2013, the Africa RISING project in Ethiopia initiated a series of participatory assessments to diagnose and characterize the farming systems and communities where the project is working. This brief explains how the project used a value chain approach to gather and analyze information on different enterprises in the districts where the project sites are located.

Two components of the value chain analysis were used: value chain mapping and rapid market assessments. The value chain mapping identified the set of actors involved in the enterprises while the rapid market assessments provided more information about the individual actors and the enterprises they are involved in.

Objectives

The main objective of the value chain analyses was to identify core processes in the value chain, the actors and their interactions, flow of goods and knowledge throughout the value chain, geographic flow of products, and linkages and interactions with service providers. Following the value chain mapping exercise, rapid market assessments sought to gather detailed information about the enterprises (product supplies, buyers, prices as well as challenges and opportunities) in the value chains in the Africa RISING districts of the Ethiopian highlands. Ultimately, best bet interventions were generated based on the results of the value chain analyses.

Using this approach

An initial set of potential enterprises to map and analyze was derived from earlier Participatory Community Assessments (PCAs). Enterprises included were those that were equally preferred by men, women and youth, had a commercial orientation or importance and were known across the four sites for ease of scalability and cross site learning.

Three crop and three livestock enterprises were identified and mapped: wheat, faba beans, potato, dairy, large ruminants (oxen/beef) and small ruminants (sheep).

After identifying the actors, rapid market assessments at district level were conducted to acquire detailed information on product quantities, prices, sources and buyers as well as opportunities and constraints faced by the enterprises.

The value chain mapping exercise generated a sampling frame from which the enterprises were selected for detailed analyses. Questionnaires were developed and pre-tested in each project site by the project teams. After data collection, the results were discussed and validated by project teams from all the sites before the data was finally used in the survey report.

Findings from using this approach

Some of the major findings are:

- The key livestock enterprises included dairy agribusinesses involving collectors and processors, dairy cafés, district traders and hotels and restaurants. Large and small ruminant enterprises involved butchery restaurants, district and large scale traders. Livestock input service providers include abattoirs and veterinary clinics. Livestock feed enterprises involve feed processors, feed shops, feed trading and feed by-product suppliers (millers).
- The key wheat, faba bean and potato enterprises involved commodity traders, product processors, seed producers and seed suppliers, and crop input suppliers of fertilizers, chemicals and farm implements.
- Private businesses, cooperatives and unions as well as government institutions are involved in the enterprises in varying levels.
- The enterprises are available across all the districts and serve kebeles beyond the specific study sites. They provide potential to scale out the interventions as well as absorbing outputs from the intervention sites.
- These enterprises contribute to the livelihoods of the populations through their commercial potential.

Key interventions identified to address challenges identified in the value chain analyses are:

Livestock enterprise interventions

- Promote dairy cafe value chains as a new business model in 3 of the 4 project sites.
- Promote large and small ruminant fattening for specialized markets.
- Improve mass insemination with the help of hormones, to improve performance.
- Develop chopping and feed mixing services at community level (perhaps by youth groups).
- Introduce improved churners to process sour milk, reducing labour requirements per unit of product as well as improving extraction efficiency

Crop based interventions

- Promote seed businesses to supply potato seeds in each of the 4 sites.
- Improve the capacities of existing agribusinesses (cooperatives and other farmer based institutions and groups) to better link to end markets.
- Promote commercial extension services by investing in row planting equipment.

All the interventions should be combined with production and input/service interventions.

Strengths and limitations

The value chain approach provide for a holistic approach in the way we support farmers' livelihood. This helps to enrich and focus the technologies being promoted while linking them to livelihood objectives. The approach also recognizes tradeoffs between setting boundaries for technology interventions and the flexibility required in the value chains (thus, we took the district as a point of reference rather than the kebele). Some difficulties arose because we limited ourselves to products identified by the community assessment studies. Some of these products are geographically determined and exclude other products within the same value chain in that district. A good example is the dairy value chain which emphasizes butter in communities far from consumption centers and fluid milk in communities near consumption centres.

These challenges are not due to the tool itself, rather they are the result of the scope and focus of the of the Africa RISING program. The tool is adaptable to many situations and enterprises.

This brief was produced by the Africa RISING project in Ethiopia. It summarizes some experiences with the different participatory diagnostic/characterization tools used in the project.

Participatory tools and approaches described in this series include:

- Rapid telephone surveys
- SLATE
- Rapid market assessment
- Participatory community assessment
- Participatory community analysis
- Agro-ecological knowledge toolkit



The Africa Research In Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-for-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads an associated project on monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.

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