

Introduction

- Commercial transformation of agricultural policy in Ethiopia strongly needs market-oriented extension services and value chain expansion as a basis for its overall agricultural development strategy.
- Market-oriented extension service is an expanded version of the production-oriented extension service that promotes not only production and productivity, but also facilitates marketing services to smallholder farmers and their enterprises to help improve their incomes.
- The LIVES project facilitates market linkages between different value chain actors and with national and regional partners to ensure smallholder market-orientation and market participation.

Approaches

- Based on available market opportunities, a number of market linkages (both formal—written agreements, and informal— based on trust and understanding) are facilitated for smallholder producers.
- These linkages are referred to as backward linkages with input suppliers/ service providers or forward linkages with marketing/ processing businesses. These businesses could be privately or publically owned, informal groups, cooperatives/unions or associations.
- To accelerate the linkage process among different actors (potential actors), LIVES support smallholders in a number of ways: offering technical assistance (training, coaching and mentoring), organizing learning activities (platform meetings, field visits, study tours), organizing promotional events (school milk days, farmer fairs, fattened cattle shows), and providing market information.



Lessons learned

- Proper and effective market-linkage facilitates the flow of products and services with value chain actors and ensures the development of long-term business relationships.
- The facilitation of market linkages, coupled with other interventions, make smallholder producers more aware of market opportunities, helping them make reasonable returns on their investments.