



Multi-stakeholder platforms for smallholder pig value chain development in Uganda

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Pig production is a major source of livelihoods for more than 1.1 million households in Uganda. For many farmers, the pig is a living bank because it can easily be sold for cash to meet domestic financial needs, such as school fees, and provides financial capital required to grow crops. Despite having the highest annual per capita consumption of pork in East Africa at 3.4 kg, growth of the pig value chain is limited by various production, marketing, policy and institutional constraints.

Between 2011 and 2016, the European Commission–International Fund for Agricultural Development-funded ‘smallholder pig value chain development’ (SPVCD) project, and the follow-on Irish-Aid-funded project ‘More Pork by and for the Poor’, have worked with producers, consumers and other sector actors to transform the pig value chain. One key challenge identified early on was the low ranking accorded to the sector in the priorities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF). This is mainly due to a lack of evidence on the sector’s importance.

Between 2011 and 2014, the CGIAR Livestock and Fish Research Program organized a series of national consultative stakeholder meetings. At the meetings, sector stakeholders highlighted the need for multi-actor networks or platforms to foster interaction and dialogue across the

private and public sector divide, and leverage a collective voice and investment to address identified constraints. In 2014, it was decided that addressing this lack of policy influence required the establishment of alliances in the form of pig multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs).

The platforms have sought to foster and support collective participation of value chain stakeholders learning and acting together to address value chain challenges, including gaining visibility and voice. They have been also an important avenue for scaling out best-bet interventions being piloted to address identified gaps in the Uganda pig value chain (see box for key bottlenecks identified). This brief provides an overview of the experiences and lessons learned to date.

Structure and governance

One national and three regional multi-stakeholder platforms—covering the eastern, central and greater Masaka regions—were initiated in 2014. Two additional regional platforms (northern and western) were established in 2015. To ensure proper facilitation of the MSPs, ILRI signed an agreement with the Netherlands Development Organisation, SNV, to lead facilitation of the MSPs, based on their past experience facilitating similar platforms.

Key constraints identified by pig value chain actors

- Diseases (including African swine fever)
- Insufficient and low quality feeds
- Genetic decline of the pig population
- Limited access to quality extension services
- Unfair prices for pigs
- Loosely organized pig value chain actors
- Limited access to financial services
- Low prioritization of the pig sector by government

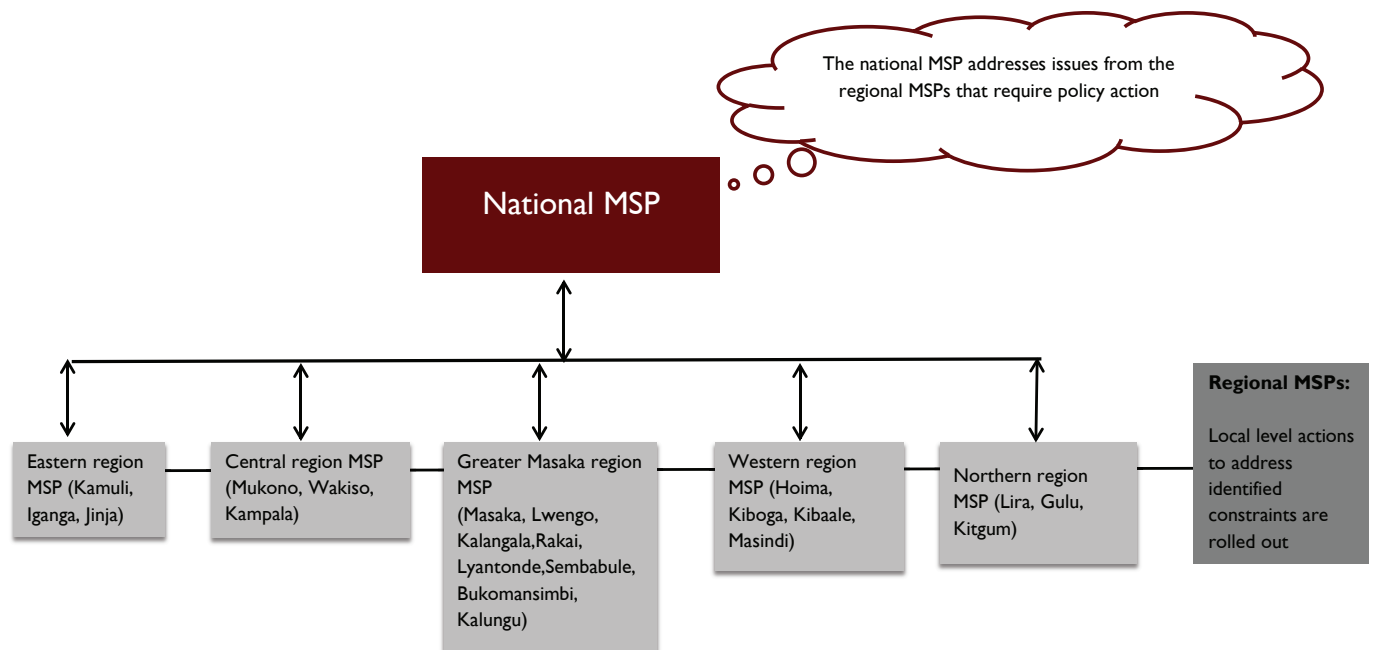
Lack of understanding by value chain actors and government of the full scope and potential of current policy

Social and cultural barriers hindering equitable consumption

Poor disposal and utilization of pig waste

Value addition processes poorly or inefficiently implemented

Figure 1 Structure of the multi-stakeholder platforms



Regional multi-stakeholder platforms: Such platforms operate closer to the grassroots and bring together value chain actors (pig producers, input suppliers, pig traders and processors, consumers, regulatory authorities) at village, sub-county and district levels. Due to their proximity to farming communities, the platforms are well attended by pig producers who mainly seek pig production- and market-related information. The regional platforms identify constraints along the pig value chains and agree on workable solutions. A work plan is agreed and taskforces appointed to oversee its execution. Those constraints in need of policy change are fed into the national platform for action. During the course of their deliberations, all the regions identified poor quality of feeds and disease prevalence as the key constraints. Region-specific issues highlighted included: genetic decline of pigs (central), inadequate availability of water for pig production (eastern) and unfair prices for pigs (greater Masaka).

National multi-stakeholder platform: This is the overall coordinating body for pig MSP processes in Uganda. Its members are mandated to discuss salient policy issues identified at regional level and chart ways forward. It comprises a seven-person steering committee, including representatives of regional MSPs, and is attended by

representatives of different value chain actors and pig sub-sector stakeholders nationwide. The national pig MSP reviews the progress of regional platforms, and identifies overarching constraints at regional level, proposes solutions based on feedback from members, and where necessary, drafts policy proposals in support of lobbying and advocacy activities.

Following the identification by the regional platforms of substandard commercial feeds as a key constraint, the national platform began engaging MAAIF policymakers on the incorporation of improved standards into the revised national animal feeds bill. The process is ongoing.

Notable gains

Starting from a point of perceived obscurity, the pig sector in Uganda has steadily progressed courtesy of the pig MSPs and their enablers.

Value chain coordination

By bringing together different actors along the value chain, the platforms continue to catalyse coordination and communication within the pig subsector. Regional platforms facilitate the creation of market linkages; for instance, input suppliers and auxiliary service providers

are presented with opportunities to interact with farmers, while farmers benefit by gaining access to information, markets and networks. The platforms enable pig traders to identify potential suppliers among farmers, while at the same time marketing their products to consumers. Policymakers and regulatory authorities use the platforms to communicate the different government programs and sector regulations.

At producer level, organized farmer groups are starting to emerge. The pig farmers have readily embraced collective action and several producer cooperatives have been established. In the greater Masaka region, for instance, the MSP has catalysed establishment of 10 pig farmer cooperatives and tens of pig producer groups. The pig cooperatives have in turn come together to establish the Greater Masaka Pig Cooperative Union to further strengthen their advocacy activities and improve pig production and marketing in the region.

Networking, communication and knowledge sharing

The MSPs have proven to be an effective communication channel through which to engage and share knowledge with pig value chain actors. ILRI has used the platforms to raise awareness of its research interventions, while other actors regularly share information among themselves at platform meetings. In the central region, platform members have embraced the use of social media for communication and information sharing by creating chat groups on WhatsApp—a smart phone social networking application open to all members who seek and share information on pig production, markets, inputs, disease outbreaks, etc.

Inclusion of the pig sector in government priorities

The animal resource directors of MAAIF and the director of the National Livestock Resources Research Institute (NALIRRI) are part of the pig value chain steering committee, working closely with the national platform to address issues that require policy action. So far, two Uganda pig value chain districts have prioritized piggery in their plans, and NALIRRI has also recently incorporated pig husbandry research in its portfolio.

Public–private sector partnerships

The platforms have catalysed private–public sector partnerships by providing spheres of engagement between private sector players and government officials. In the greater Masaka region, for instance, the local government has been actively engaged in the promotion of pig production. Masaka municipality has offered land to the pig cooperative union for the construction of a centralized pig abattoir. By streamlining pig slaughter and marketing in the district, Masaka municipality is encouraging the equitable distribution of the socio-economic benefits from the value chain among all the actors involved. In the central region, the Mukono local government has provided a venue free of charge to the regional platform to host its meetings; in the northern region, Lira district government is running a radio program to raise awareness among pig farmers of African swine fever and its control.

Policy influence

Having identified the low quality of commercial pig feeds as an overarching constraint across the regional MSPs, the national platform undertook to lobby the government of Uganda to incorporate a clause on acceptable standards of commercial pig feeds into a revised national feed policy. Consequently, the leadership of the national platform met with the cabinet minister of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries who invited them to submit their policy proposals to the technical team reviewing the feed bill. Though the bill has yet to be enacted, it was the first time that pig value chain actors were given an opportunity to participate in policymaking.

Lessons

Leadership

Though largely informal, the platforms require a steadfast leadership team chosen from the value chain actors to coordinate the members, steer the planned activities, track progress and engage regulators and policymakers.

Neutral facilitator

The platforms attract business people (pig/pork traders, input suppliers and service providers), bureaucrats, politicians, development organizations and farmers, each with their own interests. Given the diversity of participants, it is important to have a neutral facilitator to help navigate the layers of power dynamics, interests and politics. A neutral facilitator ensures that individual interests do not surpass the collective interests and objectives.

Participation

Participation in the platforms is largely free. Members are allowed free entry and exit depending on their motivation and objectives. The regional platforms have been predominantly attended by pig farmers, while the national platform strikes a balance between pig farmer representatives, input suppliers, and other private and public sector actors. Participation in MSPs fluctuates over time depending on the perceived interests of members. It is, therefore, important to assess their motivations for participation to align platform activities to member expectations. This will not only boost platform sustainability, but also encourage wider participation of value chain actors.

Sustainability

Despite the gains made so far, the MSPs need a plan to ensure their long-term sustainability. This requires taking care of logistical requirements of organizing platform meetings, coordination and follow up on planned activities. Platforms ought to devise self-funding mechanisms or sources of external support. Fortunately, the private sector has taken a keen interest in the platforms because of the market opportunities they provide. In greater Masaka for instance, the regional platform has attracted support from a regional microfinance organization that hosts platform meetings. Strong public and private engagement is part of the essential sustainability of the platforms.



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