

Building the next generation of farmers

Supporting capacity-development of African Farmer's Organisations through improved Policies, Technologies and Capabilities

**Brussels, 6-7 November 2018
Marivaux Hôtel, Boulevard Adolphe Max 98, 1000 Bruxelles**

Background Note

1. Context

Feeding more than 9 billion people by 2050 will require doubling food production on a sustainable basis and Africa is well placed to contribute to this. Agriculture should be resilient - able to withstand or recover from stresses and shocks. The challenge is to generate sustainable agricultural growth that produces enough food, ensures it is accessible to all, is inclusive of the most vulnerable and is resilient, and hence able to withstand the increasing multiple stresses and shocks.

In Africa, agriculture is the only sector seen as having the size and economic linkages needed to generate broadly based, poverty-reducing growth—at least over a reasonable time horizon. Moreover, because agriculture generates between 20 and 50 % of gross domestic product (GDP) in low-income African countries, faster agricultural growth will foster additional growth at the national level, including in the non-agricultural sector. Thus, assigning a more active role to agriculture in Africa's development process is justified from a growth perspective.

Recognizing the role played by organized smallholders in the agricultural transformation of the continent is key as well as supporting farmers' organizations initiatives to get to the next farming generation. Farmers' organizations can contribute to employment, higher incomes and more inclusive growth. They play a crucial role for integration of smallholders in markets and value chains and to access innovation and information. To do so, they need access to information about their own members and governance and to external information (on markets, production conditions, innovations).

Empowered rural women and women entrepreneurs can be and are powerful agents of change. Greater empowerment of rural women through access to financial resources, land, inputs, equipment and new technologies, would enable the continent to deal with more force to the food and nutrition security, sustainable management of natural resources, preservation of the ecosystems and the environment. Rural women could further contribute to the success of SDGs, the eradication of hunger and poverty reduction and economic growth in Africa.

Organized youth can play a pivotal role in the transformation of agriculture in Africa. Increasing youth participation – as entrepreneurs, innovators, and catalysts for change – can significantly expand opportunities for employment and investment into African agriculture. The vision that young farmers have about agriculture is commonly oriented towards the modernization of the sector, strengthened linkages with the agribusiness sector, increased use of information to plan and innovate with improved access to innovative technologies.

In that context, smart farming, precision farming¹, membership registration and data management by farmers' organizations and innovative technologies are already being

¹ Precision farming or related applications like satellite farming or site specific crop management are farming management concepts based on observing, measuring and responding to inter and intra-field variability in crops with high tech solutions. Precision agriculture and the decision support system related to precision agriculture allow to optimize results on inputs while preserving resources. It can include practices as geo mapping and high



used to develop solutions for farmers in value chains. With the right policy environment, with participation of the private sector and of key stakeholders such as youth, women, as well as development partners, these innovations will assist African Farmers' organizations and countries to contribute to the ambitious programme of ending hunger in Africa by 2025, including the acceleration of agricultural growth by at least doubling current agricultural productivity levels (Malabo Declaration on Accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods – 2014).

PAFO/AGriCord/CTA Partnership

The partnership between PAFO, CTA and AgriCord together with other partners aims at contributing to expand and upscale successes in inclusive and successful business models led by farmers organisations in collaboration with other value chain actors and SMEs. It looks also at promoting the use of various forms of data as well as information and communication technologies (ICTs) by farmers' organizations.

A key area aims at supporting capacity building on agribusiness management and business skills, critical for FOs members (including youth and women in agribusiness) to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. A number of opportunities have emerged to help manage farmers organisations and farmer-led businesses to provide improved services to members.

2. Objectives of the workshop

A two day workshop will be held in Brussels with the following objectives:

- (i) Share successes on capacity building development on entrepreneurial skills of FOs and cooperatives to expand and upscale the business
- (ii) Identify policy, technology and finance gaps
- (iii) Define a fundraising strategy for the way forward and potential partners
- (iv) Document and share best practices

Participants

This workshop will bring together around 40 participants drawn from farmer-led agribusiness and farmers organisations as well as policy-makers, development partners and finance.

3. Content

Session 1 : Digitalisation in agriculture : Benefits for smallholders

There is an exponential growth in data accompanying the digitalisation of agriculture. The effective management of this data could lower cost and reduce information asymmetries. Digital mobile platforms have reduced the time and cost of data collection and integration. Innovation is not just about adopting new technologies, it is also about improving existing ones, a focus on data can improve yield, reduce loss, add value and increase profitability and resilience.

Policy support

To put the enabling environment in place to make the most of data driven services there are some areas which need to be addressed by the development agencies and government. In handling digital data we must also safeguard the farmer in the use of this data and to this end data rights and use needs to be considered.

Currently there are four groups approaching farmers for digital profiling - a)Government for national registration, b)Researchers for surveys and studies, c)Development agencies to assess impact of projects and d)The farmers associations and farmer led businesses.

precision positioning systems, automated steering systems, sensors and remote sensing, integrated electronic communications.

These profiles are the basis of any agricultural service and are comparatively expensive for the farmers association. Consideration is needed to determine the best way to collect this data cost effectively and enable the associations to use the profiling for member services. They are in a position to provide trust centers for the farmers - best positioned to maintain farmers rights to their data and act as an intermediary to aggregate services and supplies to and from the farming community.

The project addresses the policy issue by:

- a) Working with the farmers organisations to determine priorities in terms of data collection and management.
- b) Working with government to introduce the farmers organisations concerns into policy formulation (e.g. for open data and data rights).
- c) Raising awareness in the development community of the issue to encourage collaboration and support the farmers organisations/farmer led businesses to play a role in the digitization process as data trust centers and ensuring benefits for smallholder farmers and food security.

Farmers' organizations membership registration systems

Membership information is essential for FO's to develop adequate services for their members and to manage their position in value chains, as well as for advocacy and lobbying ends and to establish partnerships. It is important that farmers' organizations can own data and improve ways of collecting it. Two critical areas are ICT-enabled membership registration systems and collection of information on members' access to inputs and on their (potential and effective) supply. The exact interest of membership registration and the type of information needed can be significantly different between RFO's. Establishing systems will include the necessary capacity development and capitalization of the processes in various RFO's by PAFO (deduction of principles, success factors, and approaches).

Engaging youth in smart agriculture including precision farming

Technology is perhaps the most important entry point to attract youth to agriculture, and as African youth participation in the development of new technologies and applications increases, it is equally important that the agricultural sector also benefits from this dynamic. Exposing youth to agricultural technologies is therefore a key deliverable of this programme, and this component seeks to focus on creating impact directly on the constituents who are most able to transfer the lessons learnt and skills to the field, namely young farmers.

Session 2: Promoting agribusiness development and entrepreneurial skills for improved market access

It is critical to improve market access for value-added products for small-scale producers by linking them to a dynamic, competitive private sector that can provide agricultural inputs, technology for processing and distribution, financial services, and information to strengthen market linkages for relevant value chains and integrate small-scale producers into supply chains and PPPs.

There is a need to work with strategic partners in: (i) entrepreneurship skills development for small-scale farmers and SMEs; (ii) strengthening institutional capacity of FOs as drivers of change; (iii) improved market access for small-scale farmers; (iv) access to adapted finance schemes.

SMEs and cooperatives can play an active role in the market by adopting new technologies and know-how, supporting technical innovations, developing new product lines and linking better with their members through skills enhancement. Investment in human capital and entrepreneurial capabilities are a prerequisite for expansion, improved production and competitiveness.

Managerial skills are needed to start and run profitable farm businesses, and an 'entrepreneurial spirit' is critical to advance agriculture to the next level. Innovation platforms, incubation services and start-up support programmes to be developed by local institutions can be supported.



Strengthening information on marketing opportunities, production technologies, availability of business support services, prices and sources of key inputs is a prerequisite for business development.

Agribusinesses should be enabled to meet best practices in food safety, food production and processing technologies, process standards and marketing tools. This can be achieved through working with buyers, service providers and processor to comply with market requirements and with policy-makers to address key barriers to trade.

There is a need to deliver to commercially oriented activities through business fairs, strengthened linkages with the other actors in the value chain, increased use of smart farming tools. Further partnerships could be developed for online mentoring and business counselling services, e-market platforms for buyers and sellers to strengthen business partnerships.

Session 3: The way forward: learning from successes and building coalitions

The areas of digitalisation and business development have a potential to be known, upscaled and expanded. It is also critical to promote exchange of best experiences and lessons learnt amongst the FOs across the regions in Africa.

In this context, we will document best practices and the drivers of success.

More investment and support are needed to the FO's led business successes. The organisers will invite development partners to promote a support around the next generation of farmers.