

Examples of smallholder farmers' promotion

■ UNIDO's pro-poor sustainable supplier development programme (SSDP)

Farms and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries often face difficulties complying with market requirements and lack the technical and financial means to produce cost-effective goods of sufficient quantity and required high quality. As a result, when profitable new market opportunities arise, they are unable to be accepted as suppliers. These challenges are shared by companies like the Metro Group, who are committed to making their supply chains not only more efficient but also more inclusive and sustainable by including smallholder farms, especially as they expand their operations in developing countries.

Together with the retailer Metro Group, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has developed a capacity building programme to apply the

Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) Global Markets Protocol, which enables suppliers to meet the internationally recognised requirements in terms of food safety and quality. The programme is sustainable through a successful business model, where all stakeholders, including the United Nations, governments, the private sector, donors, academia, etc. contribute either in-kind or financially.

UNIDO has implemented sustainable pilot projects in Egypt, Russia and India, where suppliers have achieved considerable improvement in their performance and compliance with food safety standards and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). As a result, the quality and volume of marketable products has improved. At the same time, consumers have benefited from better and safer products and can expect more stable food prices. Metro

have signed contracts with the majority of the upgraded suppliers. Due to its success, the sustainable supplier development programme (SSDP) has been expanded to cover the non-food sector as well as environmental, social and ethical issues. Currently, UNIDO is implementing a supplier SSDP with AEON, the biggest Japanese retailer, in Malaysia and is planning to expand the programme to other countries in the region. UNIDO is also negotiating with other top retailers, such as Walmart, Pick n'Pay, H&M, Marks and Spencer, etc., to deploy a similar programme in Africa and other regions of the world.

► www.unido.org

Gerardo Pataconi, Chief of Clusters and Business Linkages Unit; Valentina Varbanova, project management consultant; UNIDO

■ Promoting competitiveness of African cashew farmers

Nearly 40 per cent of the global cashew crop is produced by about 1.5 million small farmers in Africa. The vast majority of these farmers live in rural areas and struggle to make as little as 90 to 330 euros of gross revenue per year through the production of cashews. Cashew farmers in Africa rarely organise themselves into associations. They are also insufficiently linked to international markets. Adding to the problem is the fact that only ten per cent of African raw cashew production undergoes further processing in Africa.

The main goal of the *African Cashew initiative* (ACi) is to increase the competitiveness of African cashew production and achieve a sustainable reduction in poverty in the five project countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mozambique. ACi is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and private sector companies. It is implemented by a consortium of implanting partners led by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Through a combina-

tion of strategies, ACi has reached 240,000 cashew farmers in three years' time, aiming to add at least 100 US dollars (USD) to their annual income. The project's intervention has led to the creation of 4,000 new jobs in cashew nut processing, with 70 per cent of them for women, and providing an average annual income of USD 900 per job.

Improving nut quality and production. Success in the global marketplace depends on the production of superior nuts. Therefore, ACi focuses on helping African cashew farmers meet international quality standards through training farmers on good agricultural practices to increase yields and quality. The initiative works with both public and private service providers and identifies "lead farmers" who can ultimately train other farmers.

Increasing the amount of local processing. Start-up processors are provided with a range of advice on how to grow their business, keep up with current market developments, access loans and financing, improve their use of technology and expand processing of cashew by-products.

Expand links to the global marketplace. With a 32-per-cent share of the global nut market cashews are highly prized in Europe and North America, with a growing demand in Eastern Europe, China and India. The African Cashew Alliance (ACA), primarily a cashew industry association functioning as a supranational platform for public and private partners, assists in the global marketing of African cashews.

Advocate policies that favour adding value and structuring the cashew sector. ACi works to inform policy-makers and government officials about the potential of the cashew value chain. This includes establishing platforms where knowledge sharing takes place and representation of interest groups is promoted to advocate the sustainable development of the cashew sector.

► www.giz.de/themen/en/33437.htm

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Photo: M. Drexler

Farmers on cashew farm with intercropping.

■ Cooperation is the key: an inclusive approach to rice in Lao PDR

Recognising the importance of improved rice production to both food security and development in Laos, the Enhanced Milled Rice Production in Lao PDR Project (EMRIP) has united rice millers and smallholders to increase rice supply, open new distribution channels and improve livelihoods for more than 100,000 people.

A joint initiative of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and Helvetas, implemented in partnership with the Lao government with support from the European Union's Food Facility programme, EMRIP has facilitated the development of fair trade relations between over 20,000 smallholder households and more than 20 rice mills over two years. The project has also contributed to an improved government framework for rice production and trade, enabling rice exports to neighbouring countries, and the formation of a team at the department of agriculture to work on drafting a national rice strategy.

Millers in the middle. EMRIP focused on improving the capacity of millers to establish and strengthen fair trade links with smallholder farmers, and improve post-harvest handling and processing. Millers were helped to develop an inclusive business plan, including guidance on supporting farmers in producing high-quality rice. Millers received training and advice on forming

and strengthening farmer groups, providing inputs to farmers, and business management skills. Millers also improved extension services by collaborating with government extension officers – expanding their traditional role by incorporating the provision of seeds, fertilisers and extension services based on production agreements with farmer groups. Investments in improving rice value chains and upgrading equipment were made possible through a co-investment fund. Millers only received funding if they were willing to form farmer groups and provide inputs and training to farmers. Consultation between millers and farmers helped ensure the uniform supply of quality seeds, affordable access to fertilisers and information about production techniques.

The SNV/Helvetas EMRIP project has improved livelihoods for over 100,000 people in Lao PDR.

Photo: A. Dockery



Taking it to scale. EMRIP has increased the supply of single variety paddy rice to the mills, leading to a 9-14 per cent gain in prices for milled rice and a 60 per cent increase in income for participating farmers. Meanwhile the rice mills participating in the project have taken a lead role in forming 14 miller groups in their respective provinces. The EMRIP approach is currently being expanded to four other Lao provinces.

➤ www.snvworld.org

Ranjan Shrestha, SNV Lao PDR

■ COLEACP: supporting sustainable agriculture in ACP countries through training

COLEACP (Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee) started as a not-for-profit interprofessional association in 1973. It represents and defends the collective interests of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) exporters/producers, consultants and EU importers of fruit and vegetables. Its main goal is to promote competitive trading between ACP countries and with the EU, and sustainable agriculture, notably by building capacity of food business operators, facilitating matchmaking among network members and advocating on behalf of the industry.

COLEACP has integrated training as an essential component in building capacity of technical staff in ACP horticultural companies, which are having to cope with ever more new conditions for access to the European market. Educational and support methods specifically adapted to this new environment had to be created from scratch. This is exactly what the PIP and EDES programmes

are about. The European Commission (EC) has entrusted COLEACP with implementing PIP since 2001 and EDES since 2010. Both share the goal of reducing poverty in ACP countries. PIP works to maintain and increase their horticultural exports, whereas EDES supports their exports across all sectors by strengthening national food safety policies. PIP and EDES are complementary, with PIP directly supporting specific operators in the private sector and EDES primarily targeting the public authorities and services.

Training is based on a cascading approach via training of trainers and a revolving system fuelled by the local trainers. It has three components:

- long-term capacity building of ACP experts (Train the Trainers) and maximum involvement of local resources in the training activities;
- training courses for targeted audiences (e.g. managers, workers and small-scale

growers), group training courses, in-house training courses and e-learning;

- ongoing development of new tools and new training courses (training methods or topics) adapted to needs expressed during the programme, which are then further developed and integrated into the initial training scheme.

Since 2001, COLEACP work has evolved from food safety to food security for ACP countries. By boosting and sharing resources, tools and methods, removing barriers between export and local levels and organising the mutual exchange of 'know-how', COLEACP supports small-scale producers in becoming able to feed tomorrow's world.

➤ www.coleacp.org/pip

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