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Capacity Development in Public-Private Partnerships

Lessons Learnt from NL Funded Projects

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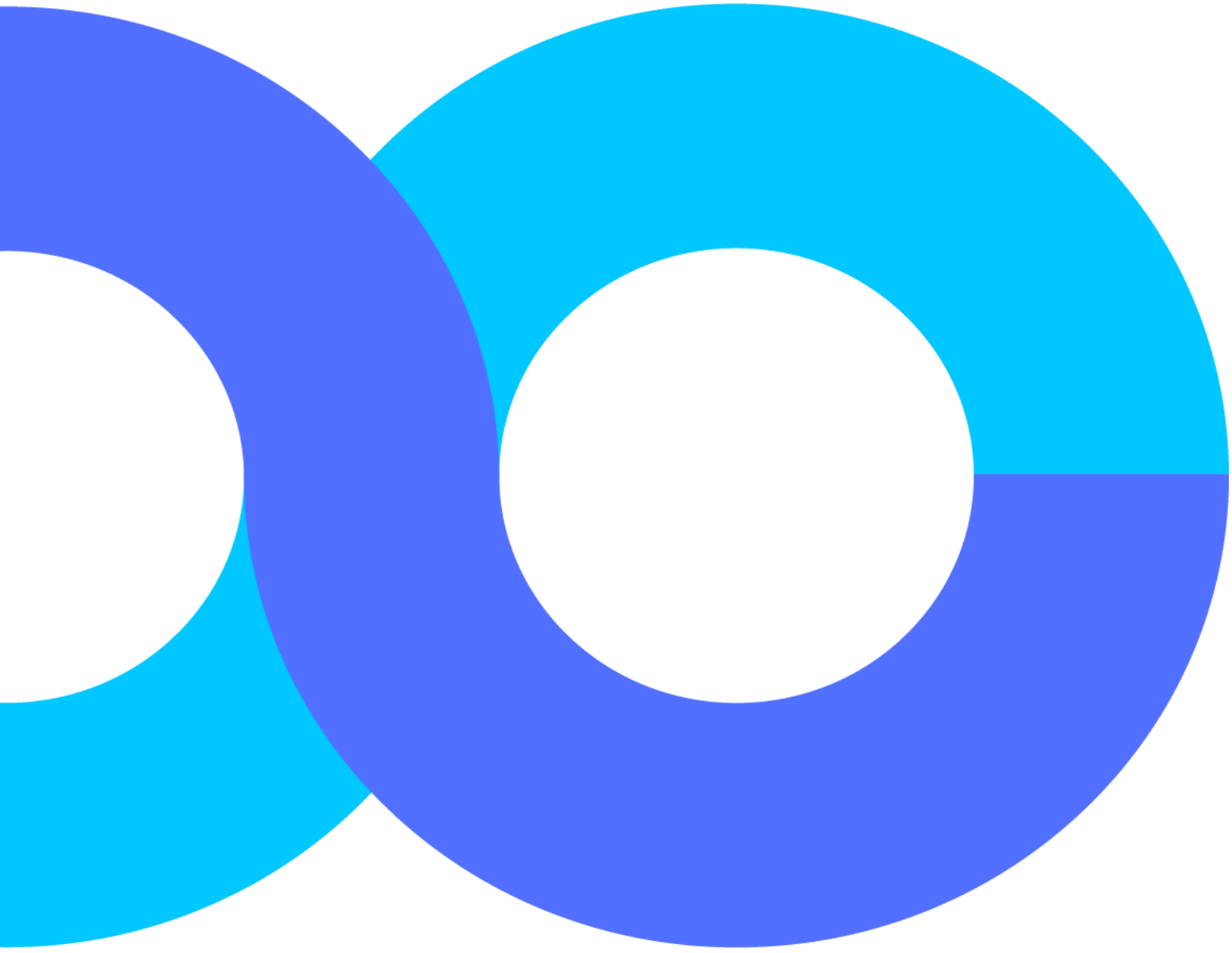

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Of course, any factual errors and fanciful opinions remain those of the authors: Richard Hawkins and Cees van Rij of the iCRA Foundation, Wageningen.

Acronyms

2SCALE	Towards Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship (DGIS Project)
5C (Framework)	5 "core capabilities" (to act and commit; deliver on development objectives; adapt and self-renew; relate to external stakeholders; achieve coherence).
ABC	Agribusiness Cluster
AFRISEM	African Seed Company (subsidiary of Rijk Zwaan)
AIM	Project
AIS	Agricultural Innovation System
ATVET	Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (college)
BFA	Bright Future in Agriculture (OKP project, Ethiopia)
BoA Et	Bureau of Agriculture (Ethiopia)
BSS	Business Support Service(s)
CASCAPE	CApacity building for SCAling up of evidence based best Practices in Ethiopia (Dutch-Ethiopia Project)
CBA	*Conseil Burkinabé de l'Anacarde* (Cashew Council of Burkina Faso)
CD	Capacity Development
CDAIS	Capacity Development in Agricultural Innovation Systems (EU funded Project)
CIAB	Interprofessional Committee for Cashew, Burkina Faso
CMS	Coffee Management Services Ltd. (Kenya)
CPI	Country Plan of Implementation (OKP)
DA et	Development Agent (Ethiopia)
DG-DEVCO	Directorate General, Development Cooperation (European Union)
DGIS	Directorate General for International Cooperation (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
EARNED	East African Regional Network of Excellence in Dairy Training (OKP Project)
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro (unit of currency)
EW	East West Seeds (Dutch Company)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FDOV	Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV),
FIE	Environmental Intervention Fund (Burkina Faso)
FOSEK	Food Security through improved resilience of small-scale producer (FDOV Project)
FPEAK	Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice

HAK	Horticultural Association of Kenya
HBO/MBO	Higher professional education and Secondary vocational education (Netherlands)
HFF	Hollanda FairFoods (Dutch company)
HGT	Holland Green Tech (Dutch horticultural company)
HODECT	Horticultural Development Council of Tanzania
iCRA	iCRA Foundation - the Netherlands
IFDC	International Fertiliser Development Center
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
IGG	International Green Growth (DGIS department)
ISSD	Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) Programme
(IVT)	African Institute for Vegetable Technology (IVT)
KALRO	Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation
LF	Lead Farmer (see also PF)
LMICs	Low and Middle Income Countries
MATI	Ministry of Agriculture training Institute (Tanzania)
MCCMCU	Meru County Coffee Millers Cooperative Union (Kenya)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M/F	Male and/or Female
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture (Rwanda)
NACTE	National Council for Technical Eduction (Tanzania)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NL	the Netherlands
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OKP	Orange Knowledge Programme
PC	Primary Cooperative
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PFs	Promoter Farmer (similar to Lead Farmer)
RCPB	"*Réseaux des Caisses Populaires*" of Burkina Faso (bank).
RVO	Netherlands Enterprise Agency (*Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend*
RZ	Rijk Zwaan (Dutch Seed Company)
SACCOS	Savings and Credit Cooperative Society
SAGCOT	Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT).
SDGP	Sustainable Development Goals Partnership
SECAEC	ECAEC (Solidaridad East and Central Africa Expertise Centre, based in Kenya
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound (indicators)

SME	Small Medium Enterprise
SPF	Seed Potato Fund (Rwanda)
SEVIA	Seeds of Expertise for the Vegetable Industry of Africa (FDOV Project, Tanzania)
SNI	Sustainable Nut Initiative
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (Ethiopia)
SSTCHS	Strengthening skills and Training Capacity in the Horticulture Sector (OKP Project, Tanzania)
SUGECO	Sokoine University Graduate Entrepreneurs Cooperative (SUGECO)
TAHA	Tanzania Horticultural Association
TAP	Tropical Agriculture Platform
TMT	Tailor-Made Training
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training (College)
VC	Value Chain

Executive summary

Scope of this review

This report reviews capacity development (CD) as practiced by selected Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) supported by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), with the objective of identifying inspiring examples, and ways of improving CD. Four completed projects under the Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV), and two ongoing projects under the Sustainable Development Goals Partnership (SDGP) facility were reviewed, five with focus in East Africa, and one in West Africa. Given this limited number, we emphasise that care should be taken in extrapolating our findings to the complete FDOV/SDGP portfolios. It should also be made clear that the purpose of the review is not an evaluation per se of the FDOV/SDGP programmes or the selected projects themselves.

The review was commissioned by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP). At their request, and to increase diversity of project experience and learn from other contexts, the review also included a brief comparison with Nuffic's Orange Knowledge Platform (OKP) projects in East Africa, and 2 other projects - the NL-DGIS funded 2SCALE project ("Towards Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship"; now in a second phase) and the EU-funded CDAIS project (Capacity Development in Agricultural Innovation Systems; 2015-2019), to compare experience and lessons learned with respect to capacity development.

Capacity development: not a component, but a "lens"

The review uses the OECD (2006) definition of Capacity Development (CD) as "the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time". This definition of CD is broader than typically used in FDOV/SDGP documentation, which tends to equate CD with training, and typically training of farmers in good agricultural practices. Indeed, the FDOV/SDGP Programmes can be considered to be "capacity development projects" in general, hence the review treated CD more as a "lens" through which to analyse public private partnership projects, rather than as a distinct set of activities within these projects. We also focus more on the "soft" side of CD rather than on the "hardware" of physical infrastructure development.

Capacity development at different levels

Following generally understood concepts of capacity development in international literature, the review viewed CD in the FDOV/SDGO projects at 3 "levels": individual, organisational and institutional. Typically, these projects focus(ed) on a particular commodity or value chain, and include(d) actions to strengthen capacity at each of these levels. However, the emphasis of the projects (e.g. expressed as relative expenditure) is usually at the individual level, on training individual farmers (including "lead" or demonstration farmers) and developing the group of farmer trainers necessary (i.e. "training of trainers").

Most projects reviewed also included efforts to strengthen producer organisations (farmer cooperatives) and - usually with less effort in terms of expenditure - other organisations in the direct supply chain (such as input dealers, aggregators, processors, etc.). Except for extension services (such as local Bureau of Agriculture in Ethiopia), organisations from supporting services, such research,

education (vocational colleges, universities), finance, etc. were less targeted for project support. Least common (in terms of overall expenditure) were efforts at the "institutional level"; such as lobbying government to affect policies, regulations, and also establishing mechanisms (e.g. multi-stakeholder associations) to improve the coherence and integration of value chains. We conclude that mechanisms such as FDOV/SDGP could be improved by a more systematic and balanced analysis of the integrated capacity development needs and interventions at these 3 levels, during both project and implementation.

Capacity development of value chains

Most of the FDOV/SGP projects reviewed took a value chain focus. That is, they considered actors who together comprised a particular value chain as the main "system" whose capacity was to be developed, rather than simply assuming that training farmers would have the desired outcome at sector level. In other words, these projects focussed their efforts at the level of organisations - or more accurately at a network of organisations.

We conclude that those projects which did include more balanced efforts to strengthen capacity of the different actors within the chain - either "direct" actors, such as input dealers, producers, aggregators and processors, or "indirect" actors, such as educators/trainers/advisors, regulators, researchers, etc. - are more likely to have a sustained impact in the sector and overall food system.

We note the commonly used distinction of "beneficiaries" from (other implementing) "partners" in project documentation. However, we believe this is not helpful, in conceptualising the roles of different actors involved in a project. Rather, we believe that all these actors should be recognised as "partners" within the project. Following our understanding of capacity development as explained above, we concluded that all actors - whether originally considered as "implementing partners" or "beneficiaries", have had their capacity enhanced by the projects reviewed.

The capacity of partnerships

The more complex projects reviewed included as partners many/most of the key actors involved. We regard them as "complex" not only because of number of partners involved, but also because of their differences in culture, governance and operating procedures, transparency, etc. These differences were especially reflected between public agencies (such as local government, research and education) and private businesses (such as producer organisations, SMEs, national or international companies). We argue that developing the capacity of these complex (private-public) partnerships themselves was often the most critical capacity development issue faced by the project, even if not recognised or discussed as such during project development. One of the projects reviewed included a specialised partner with the specific role of facilitating - i.e. developing the capacity of the partnership itself, to achieve their shared objectives. In other projects, one of the partners (typically an international NGO) included this role among others. We conclude that this role of partnership capacity development needs to be more included in a more open and prominent way in PPP projects such as those in the FDOV and SDGP programmes[1].

[1] We understand from RVO that it has assigned the Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) to support the SDGP, by moderating and facilitating project partnerships; a development we endorse.

Technical, agribusiness and functional capacities

We also looked at the different "types" of capacity addressed by these FDOV/SDGP projects. For convenience, we differentiated between "technical", "agribusiness" and "functional" capacities. Most of the projects reviewed focus(ed) mostly on what can be considered as the technical capacities of farmers, such as good agronomic practices (GAP), use of high quality seeds, pesticides, fertilisers etc. To a lesser extent, the capacity of farmers and their organisations to conduct (agri)business was also addressed. Generally given less attention were (are) efforts to improve the "functional capacities" of the different actors within the value chain. Here we include, for example, capacities to govern and manage organisations (such as cooperatives), capacities to communicate, relate and negotiate with other actors in the value chain and supporting service sectors, etc. Again, we conclude that mechanisms such as FDOV/SDGP could be improved by a more systematic and balanced analysis of the integrated capacity development needs and interventions for technical, agribusiness and functional capacities.

The capacity to adapt and respond

One "functional capacity" which was developed to differing extents by the projects reviewed (and rarely as such identified in project objectives) is the "capacity to adapt." In the projects reviewed, events and processes rarely unfolded as expected when the project was developed: new partners joined, others dropped out or performed differently than expected; production incentives (such as input/output prices, policies/regulations) changed; new or alternative opportunities arose.

Most of the projects had mechanisms for coordination and (re)planning, including for example implementation committees, steering groups and annual stakeholder forums. However, some (more than others) emphasised extensive reflection, review and learning sessions jointly with/by all partners, at the end of each activity cycle for example, which can be regarded as a key activity to develop the capacity - of all partners and the partnership itself -to "adapt and respond" to changing circumstances.

We conclude that, apart from anticipating such events at the planning stage, projects could strengthen the capacity to adapt and respond through recognising the importance of developing capacity to respond, by for example, building in regular (e.g. annual) reflection and replanning events (i.e. into the experiential learning cycle), with all partners. In general, we noted from conversations with project implementors that RVO has shown good flexibility to accommodate any changes in project activities and outputs that became necessary to achieve the overall outcomes desired.

The capacity to develop capacity

The FDOV/SDGP projects reviewed also differed in the extent to which they attempted and/or achieved "embedding" their capacity development efforts into the value chain and/or its supporting services. In other words, the degree to which they "institutionalised" capacity development, or developed "capacity to develop capacity" within the project.

All the projects included an element of "training of trainers" (i.e. training a cadre of persons who can train/advise farmers). Some projects, perhaps understandably focusing on the achievement of project outputs such as numbers of farmers reached and the weakness of national "extension systems", directly hired (and themselves trained) the trainers utilised to train farmers in the project. Other projects made more effort to strengthen existing national organisations with a mandate or capacity to advise farmers, either public service organisations, such as local Bureau of Agriculture in Ethiopia, or, private actors in the supply chain, as in agricultural cooperatives.

In the latter case (agricultural cooperatives), projects made serious efforts to strengthen their capacity to incorporate such advisory services as part of their business model, e.g. by the strengthening the technical, agribusiness and functional capacities of the cooperatives, and by phasing out project payments to these advisors over the project lifetime. These efforts to "embed" farmer training/advisory services into the direct supply chain (rather than e.g. strengthen public extension organisations in the service sector) appeared to be successful, in particular when cooperatives have been screened and strengthened on this competence.

We did not find substantial efforts to develop the capacity of national research and education organisations (including vocational colleges and universities); we conclude that although CD of such knowledge institutes might have a more fundamental and sustained impact at national level, the shorter-term and often more value chain focused interests of PPP projects, especially of private partners, does not always encourage substantial efforts to develop capacity of such knowledge institutes. Besides, it would require different expertise, hence the need to be taken into account when composing the consortium.

Capacity development in other instruments

As well as the six FDOV/SDGP reviewed in this study, we also briefly looked at some of the main characteristics and achievements of other instruments aimed at the sustainable improvement of food systems. These included the 2SCALE ("Towards Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning and Entrepreneurship") Project, funded by the DGIS Dept. of Inclusive Green Growth (DGIS-IGG); the CDAIS ("Capacity Development in Agricultural Innovation Systems") Project, funded by the Development Cooperation Directorate of the European Union, and institutional development projects financed by DGIS via Nuffic's "Orange Knowledge Programme" (OKP). All of these operate(d) across multiple countries and placed considerable emphasis in capacity development as a central objective.

CDAIS project and functional capacities

Based on an extensive review of the global literature on CD, the CDAIS project started with the central assumption that development of "functional capacity" was paramount to enable innovation processes. It defined the central capacity needed for innovation as "the capacity to adapt and respond in order to realise the potential of innovation", comprising 4 key functional capacities: 1) capacity to navigate complexity; 2) capacity to collaborate; 3) capacity to reflect and learn; and 4) capacity to engage in strategic and political processes.

The CDAIS project attempted to demonstrate ways of strengthening these functional capacities, with innovation groups (mostly local agribusiness clusters) in eight countries. It concluded that (agri)business and technical (production) capacities needed to be integrated with functional capacities, but that identification and implementation of these two types of capacity development required the initial strengthening of functional capacity (e.g., cluster organisation, clarification of objectives, establishing business relations, etc). Indeed, the Project concluded that at a certain level of functional capacity development assisted by an outside project, groups achieved a "threshold of irreversibility" (or tipping point), after which they were capable of organising their own further development - indicating that outcomes would be sustained beyond the project lifetime (unfortunately, we are not aware of efforts to evaluate this point).

2SCALE Project and capacity of partnerships

The 2SCALE Project has roots which extend back to the Integrated Soil Fertility Management (IFSM) Project, 1988-2005, which concluded that demonstration plots by themselves were not sufficient to solve the multiple challenges faced by farmers - principally those related to "transaction costs" related to accessibility and affordability of required inputs, access to market outlets and financial risk, etc.

The 2SCALE project therefore emphasised the formation and capacity development of local "agribusiness clusters" and their linkage to national value chains and "lead companies". As with CDAIS, the project put considerable emphasis in what can be described as functional capacities (communication, negotiation, joint problem analysis/solving) of the cluster actors and related companies - in addition to production related "good agricultural practices" and business skill development (e.g. through canvas models). The CD at cluster level involved training "agribusiness coaches" to support each cluster, and facilitate reflection and learning by cluster actors. As with the FDOV/SDGP projects reviewed, one of the issues faced by 2SCALE has been how to "embed" these agribusiness coaches within the commercial value chain or national system. In practice, a variety of such arrangements evolved, with some coaches being employed by SME processors or by farmer organisations, with coaches combining this coaching role with other functions such as input supply or produce purchase/aggregation, or by including coaching within a broader role of private advisory services.

OKP and capacity of educational systems

The Orange Knowledge Programme (OKP) is specifically designed to strengthen the capacity of educational institutes (universities and increasingly vocational schools) to produce the knowledge and skills needed in priority sectors, mainly in food and agriculture. The OKP has at its core (of project design, evaluation) organisational strengthening (as outcome), while recognising CD at the individual level (e.g. as project outputs). The need for institutional capacity is also recognised, although typically projects have often found institutional constraints (e.g. curriculum accreditation, national frameworks) difficult to tackle in the normal project time frame of 3-5 years.

The OKP projects "grazed" usually included elements of training instructors, as well as strengthening current courses through developing improved training materials (paper-based, or online). Another focus is the development of improved linkages with the private sector (to better define competence requirements, offer practice opportunities to students), but - as with PPP projects such as the FDOV/SDGP projects reviewed - achieving these public-private linkages in practice is not easy. One promising method is to form multi-stakeholder platforms arounds specific issues, although universities often lack the capacity to form and lead (facilitate) these platforms.

Trade-offs in PPP projects

Overall, our review led to the conclusion that the design and nature of capacity development activities in public-private partnerships, including those financed by RVO and the other instruments looked at, is not just a question of effectiveness or efficiency, of simple "best practice", but more a question of policy choices and trade-offs.

What level of complexity (from farm production to sector performance) is desirable, and hence what level of complexity of partnership is required and feasible? What is a practical and politically acceptable time frame for activities, and what degree of quantification of outcomes is acceptable (and when?) to those financing the project? How important is short-term objectives (e.g., increase in capacity of

farmers to produce), compared to the longer-term objectives such as increasing the capacities of national systems to build capacity themselves, and to adapt and respond to new circumstances and opportunities?

In other words, how important is achieving shorter-term and quantifiable outcomes (e.g. in terms of farmers reached, production), compared to the less quantifiable outcomes in terms of "system change" and "sustainability"? We do not see either approach as necessarily more feasible or effective - but rather see it as a strategic policy choice of emphasis.

Comparing capacity development across programmes

All the programme frameworks looked at, including FDOV and SDGP, 2SCALE, CDAIS and OKP, have tackled the issues involved in capacity development of public-private partnerships. The frameworks have differed, though, in terms of which organisation - and what type of actor - has played a lead role in developing the project frameworks and the projects themselves. These differences have inevitably resulted in these frameworks using a different "lens" to conceptualise, strategise and undertake capacity development.

From our brief review, the authors believe that there is ample scope for different Dutch organisations, funding agencies as well as implementing partners, to learn from each other and perhaps improve these project mechanisms with regard to capacity development. We are also aware of the considerable literature and previous efforts (such as those of the ECDPM and IOB) to better conceptualise and review capacity development more generally, although this short assignment did not lend itself to comparing our approach here with those promoted by these organisations (e.g. the "Five Capabilities" or "5C" Framework).

We therefore encourage RVO and especially NFP to explore activities to bring together programme managers, project implementors and CD experts to compare approaches, experience and lessons learned. Such activities could either be a series of face-to-face workshops, or - and probably more feasibly - virtual online interactions (e.g., a moderated discussion forum). Given that various CD forums already exist, the objectives of any new forum need to be carefully defined, and incentives given for participation by relevant actors, e.g., through recognising such learning as a recognised and relevant activity in job descriptions or funded projects.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope[2]

This review was in response to the "Quotation request: Consultancy for capacity development track RVO and NFP in the agro-food sector," published by Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP) in July 2022.

RVO and NFP noted the various ways in which The Netherlands supports capacity development (CD): e.g., through stand-alone training courses; integrated components in (sector) development programmes with the private sector, NGOs, and/or knowledge institutes and government; improvement of the academic and TVET institutions, etc. At the same time, these organisations recognised that the Dutch policy ambition of achieving "Food System Transformation" through mechanisms such as Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects implies complex processes with multiple stakeholders and a time horizon beyond the period of most project interventions.

They therefore recognised the importance of strengthening capacity of PPP project partners to enable their contribution to these processes. In particular, capacity development actions which enable these projects to reach scale (taken here as widespread and significant impact on priority sectors), and sustainability (continued momentum of change after project financing is completed).

NFP and RVO therefore saw an opportunity to review existing initiatives through the lens of capacity development. Specifically, for the reinforcement and innovation of interventions aimed at increasing capacities of PPP project partners and beneficiaries in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs). This can include more efficient use of existing instruments, but to better contribute to broader Food System Transformation, interventions should ideally also *contribute to scaling, continuity and change of the enabling/institutional environment* (*emphasis in original quotation request).*

Finally, RVO and NFP noted the wealth of projects and experiences available to learn from and build on. NFP and RVO therefore agreed to commission this consultancy, to lead to the organisation of a "capacity development learning track", to improve the development and implementation of programmes and policy.

The scope of this review and learning track, as proposed by RVO and NFP, included:

- A focus on capacity strengthening as an integral part of broader (sector) programmes with Dutch funding. In particular, closed and current projects in the FDOV and SDGP were identified as relevant experience to be analysed, although other programmes such as NUFFIC's Orange Knowledge Platform (OKP) and Tailor-made Training (TMT) were also as source of relevant experience and lessons learned[3].
- Use of relevant project documentation, evaluations, as well as interviews with key stakeholders to feed into the inventory of lessons learned and good practices.

[2] Sections 1.1-1.3 included here are taken directly from the NFP-RVO Quotation request that provided the rationale for this report: Consultancy for capacity development track RVO and NFP in the agro-food sector; Version 8 July 2022

[3] The final inclusion of 4 FDOV projects, 2 SDGP projects, and one Nuffic OKP project were later agreed with RVO and NFP. Other projects, such as 2SCALE and the EU funded CDAIS project were also included by iCRA for comparison and relevant experiences with CD.

- A "learning track" aimed at 2 user groups: first, for staff of RVO and NFP responsible for assessing, coaching and monitoring the capacity development interventions; and second, project partners that implement capacity development activities in their projects and programmes.
- A broader follow-up trajectory to include, for example, a Community of Practice that could continuously exchange knowledge and experience to improve the quality and impact of [capacity development] in new initiatives.

1.2 Expected outputs

The deliverables of this capacity development track, as given in the original quotation request from RVO-NFP, were defined as:

1. A report with an inventory of lessons learned and insights on effectiveness of capacity strengthening instruments (implemented in programmes) and on the impact on the enabling/ institutional environment.
2. Several learning sessions with project partners on these lessons and insights. This makes the insights and lessons available for RVO and NFP and also for project partners who implement relevant projects and programmes. Ideally, these project partners join the learning activities in this track.
3. A checklist for RVO and its partners which helps to improve the next generation of 'training components in collaboration projects'
4. A two-page policy brief with conclusions of the track and recommendations for policy makers.

1.3 Activities undertaken

To achieve the expected outputs, RVO made a shortlist of 4 (completed) FDOV and 2 (ongoing) SDGP projects and provided project documentation and contact details of project partners that could provide information as input to the review. Following the interest of RVO, five of these projects were in East Africa, with one in West Africa.

The consultants then: a) developed a framework to analyse the capacity development interventions of the RVO projects (see chapter 2); b) made an initial review of the 6 FDOV-SDGP project documentation, and c) presented the framework developed to representatives of RVO, NFP and implementing partners of all 6 projects, at a workshop held at RVO on 1 November, 2022. At this workshop, a representative of Nuffic was also invited and the decision made to include a lighter overview of a number Orange Knowledge Programme (OKP) projects in East Africa, for comparison with the FDOV and SDGP projects. At the request of NFP, the consultants also briefly reviewed other major projects with which they were familiar, and which had a strong capacity development component[4].

[4] These were the 2SCALE project, financed by DGIS, as well as the CDAIS project financed by the European Union. Both projects involved the capacity development of agribusiness innovation clusters or groups.

Comments from the initial workshop were used to further refine capacity development issues in the projects which were explored further during bilateral interviews with representatives of implementing partners from the 6 projects during November and December 2022, after which the individual project reviews were revised accordingly.

Following the initial completion of the project reviews, the consultants undertook a cross-cutting analysis of experience and lessons learned, to draw out the main implications and lessons learned regarding capacity development in the projects reviewed. Based on these conclusions, a "checklist" of capacity development issues was drawn up, for consideration during project design and planning of future PPP projects co-funded by RVO and/or facilitated by NFP.

As it provided difficult to find a second opportunity for project representatives to meet and discuss the conclusions and review the checklist, a meeting was held on February 2 with representatives from RVO, NFP and DGIS. Furthermore, the project representatives of each project were contacted individually, to validate the findings, correct any factual errors and complement the analysis undertaken.

Finally, after revision of the report, a short policy brief was added, to summarise the main findings and their implications for Dutch development policy and future PPP instruments.

2. Key concepts[5] and analytical framework

2.1 Systems and stakeholders

The RVO/NFP request for this assignment recognised the need for CD in Dutch funded projects to contribute the "complex," multiple stakeholder processes involved in "food system transformation".

> *The "food system" concept encompasses "the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded". A "sustainable" food system is one that "delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised"; it is profitable, has broad-based benefits for society, and has positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (FAO, 2018)[6]. According to the European Commission, "food systems exist at different scales: global, regional, national and local. They are very diverse and location-specific"[7].*

Generally, project interventions are designed to change elements (actors) and processes considered to be within certain boundaries, with "external" factors being considered part of the given "enabling environment" which determines the "assumptions" integral to project results frameworks or "theories of change".

All projects are therefore oriented towards changing a specific "system of interest" - whether this is made explicit or - more usually - not. The nature of this "system" is determined by those considered to be "stakeholders" (i.e., those with an "interest"), "actors" (those with agency to make or affect changes), or "partners" (those actors formally participating in and implementing the project actions).

The capacity development literature therefore emphasises the need for systems thinking, multi-stakeholder approaches, and understanding capacity from a systems perspective[8]. None of the projects reviewed in this assignment could, by themselves, transform a national or global "food system" as defined above. But the implication of Dutch policy is that they should each *contribute* to "sustainable food systems." A key element of this review is therefore to understand what "system" the project is trying to change, and hence whose and what capacity needs to be developed.

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[5] As used in this report

[6] https://www.fao.org/3/ca2079en/CA2079EN.pdf

[7] https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/food-systems-definition-concept-application-un-food-systems-summit-paper-scientific_en

[8] see, for example, Land, T., Hauck, V. and Baser, B., and H. Baser. 2009. Capacity Change and Performance Capacity development: between planned interventions and emergent processes: Implications for development cooperation. Policy Management Brief No. 22 - March 2009. European Centre for Development Policy Management. Maastricht.

2.2 Capacity development

The quotation request did not specifically define the scope of the term "capacity development[9]"

> *For the purposes of the assignment, we therefore used the OECD (2006)[10] definition of Capacity Development (CD) as "the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time".*

In this sense, we recognise CD as a *multi-dimensional and multi-actor process that goes well beyond the transfer of knowledge and skills at the individual level, and encompasses organisational and institutional dimensions* (after Pearson, 2011[11]). A full review of the CD literature is beyond the scope of this assignment, but we note that Pearson's concept of the 3 "dimensions" - individual, organisational, institutional[12] - has been broadly accepted as a basis for discussions of capacity development in recent years (although the dimension of "networks" of actors is occasionally added as a fourth dimension).

The inclusion of organisational and institutional dimensions to CD are important to this assignment, as these are particularly regarded as critical to achieving institutional change, sustainability and scale. In other words, we see the scope of the assignment as going beyond simple "training" (of individuals or groups), even if this training is intended to have outcomes at the organisational and institutional levels. In other words, while we regard "training" as a component of CD, we do not regard it as synonymous with CD.

2.3 Analytical framework

From the short discussion of CD above, we conclude that the assessment and consideration of CD activities in the FDOV/SDGP projects reviewed needed to go beyond what was specified as "training" (which was a commonly used term in FDOV/SDGP project proposals, activity reports and/or evaluations), or even that which was specified as "capacity development" (a term much less commonly used in these projects). Rather, we considered CD more as a framework through which to review the activities, achievements, and good practice.

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[9] The request for this assignment also used the term "capacity strengthening", which for the purpose of this consultancy we regard as synonymous with "capacity development" (capacity strengthening is a preferred term to many practitioners, as it recognises that some degree of capacity is invariably present at the beginning of any CD process).

[10] OECD. 2006. The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice. Organisation for Economic Co-operation- and Development, Paris, France.

[11] Pearson, J. 2011. Training and beyond: seeking better practices for capacity development. OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers, No. 1. OECD, Paris, France.

[12] By "organisational" CD, we refer to strengthening of organisations, including both those in the direct supply chain, such as cooperatives, processors, etc., and those providing supporting services, such as public extension services, research, and education (TVETs, universities). By "institutional" CD, we refer to changes in policies, regulations etc., that provide the "enabling environment", (dis)incentives, for organisations to act as they do.

The analytical framework used therefore considered 5 main aspects - which we regard as critical for achieving scale, sustainability and an enabling environment- and the interaction between these:

1. The composition and scope of the partnership. For example, did the partners represent and/or include:
    - A "farm level commodity production system" (e.g., vegetables, coffee, potatoes, etc.), which might focus on the CD of farmers to enable them to produce more.
    - A regional "agribusiness cluster or value chain" system, which might focus on (some of) the different and various actors involved (input traders, farmers, off takers, processors, wholesale and/or retail market outlets, consumers), and their economic relationships and livelihoods.
    - A (national commodity) "sector system", which might focus on the value chain actors, but also on the supporting services such as government policy (laws, regulations), education, etc.
    - A local or national "food system," which might focus not only on the economic aspects of food production, but also on social outcomes such as equality, nutrition, health, etc.
2. Whose capacity - at what level - was (to be) developed?
    - At *individual level*, including, for example, farmers, trainers/advisors/extension agents, etc).
    - At *organisational level*, including for example, farmer groups/ cooperatives, as well as private sector agribusinesses such as seed and input suppliers, aggregators and processors, as well as local government, NGOs, educational organisations such as colleges, universities, etc. At organisational level, we also include the networking between these actors in the value chain and its supporting organisations (such as government extension agencies, educational institutes, development NGOs, etc.)
    - At *institutional level,* including the regulations, policies, incentive systems, that constitute the "enabling environment" for individuals and organisations.
3. What type of capacity was (to be) developed?
    - "*Technical capacity"* - how to produce - including good agricultural practices (GAP) such as improved seeds, fertilisation, crop protection measures etc. Also including processing techniques.
    - "*Agribusiness and managerial capacity"* - how to sell and operate as a business - including understanding the economics of crop or livestock production, choice of markets, use of financial instruments such as credit, insurance, negotiation of contracts, etc.
    - "*Functional capacity*" – how to communicate/network with and relate to other actors in the value chain or system, how to learn (from experience), how to understand the complexity and roles within larger systems and/or value chains, etc. For this assignment a somewhat simplified version of the 5 C Framework sufficed[13].
4. What method or approach - was (to be) used to development capacity?
    - Through demonstrations, "one-off" training of individuals/farmers/managers.

[13] The "5 C Framework" developed by the ECDPM, Maastricht, and utilised by the Dutch government (including IOB, Nuffic) for planning and evaluating CD in development programmes comprises 5 "core capabilities" included the capability to act and commit, to deliver on development objectives, to adapt and self-renew, to relate to external stakeholders, and the capability to achieve coherence. See for example: "Bringing the invisible into perspective: Reference document for using the 5Cs framework to plan, monitor and evaluate capacity and results of capacity development processes"

- Through iterative, experiential "learning cycles", where representative individuals and actors jointly discuss objectives, plan actions, reflect on experience when those plans are implemented, replan, etc.
- Through improvements in infrastructure, equipment, etc.

5. How, and to what extent, were the improvements of capacity (to be) "institutionalised" or "embedded" in the system/value chain and enabling organisations/institutions, such that the measures to improve capacity could be scaled up and/or continued/sustained after project completion, without added project funds? For example:

- What measures were taken to ensure that e.g., improvements in production could be continued, upscale on a commercial basis?
- What measures were taken to embed the training (of farmers) and training methods and modules within national extension and/or education systems?
- What key assumptions were made (by project designers, implementors) concerning the "critical threshold" of CD interventions (after which increased scale and/or sustainability was assumed)?

3. Analysis and Implications

In this section, we compare the experiences and lessons learned from the projects reviewed and draw out some of the implications for scaling, sustainability, and likelihood of impact at the broader (agri-food) system level[14].

3.1 Composition and scope of partnerships

FDOV and SDGP Project partnerships have varied in complexity, in terms of number, type and culture of partners[15]. More "simple" partnerships consist of few partners, from one or few to more "types" of organisations (private sector; "knowledge institutes", including research, education and/or extension; "civil society" organisations including NGOs and/or farmer organisations; and government departments)[16]. Partnerships consisting of culturally, like-minded, partners from one country, for example, can also be considered simpler. More complex multi-stakeholder partnerships bring different types of mandate, expertise and authority to contribute to achieving project objectives and especially scale and sustainability but, at the same time, are more likely to bring difficulties in terms of in terms of expectations, understanding, alignment and management.

Farmer Leader Training Cracking the Nut (source: FairMatch Support

Some of the FDOV-SDGP partnerships reviewed, consisted of a limited number of (formal) partners, and partners of the same type or culture. An example here is the FDOV SEVIA project, which included 2 Dutch seed companies, and the field crops subdivision of Wageningen Plant Research. These partners had worked together before, knew and trusted each other, and had few problems in agreeing on objectives, roles and activities. The limitation was that although the project achieved its objectives in training a significant number of farmers in the use of hybrid seeds and hence improved farm-level production, other issues affecting the sector such as marketing to more national outlets, credit availability for improvements in irrigation, etc. were not tackled. Partly because such actions were beyond the

[14] The term "food systems" can be interpreted as going beyond this implied scope, to include outcomes and aspects of health and nutrition of consumers, social equity, the natural environment, etc. While some projects reviewed focused on e.g., organic alternatives to fertilisers, we considered a thorough analysis of the projects about these broader outcomes as unfeasible.

[15] There is a considerable literature on multi-stakeholder and/or public-private partnerships and their facilitation, stretching back several decades. A comprehensive review of this literature is beyond the scope of this assignment.

[16] This simplified typology of 4 actor "types" represents the "Dutch Diamond" - with much of the success of the Dutch agricultural sector being ascribed to the close collaboration between these different sectors or types of organisations.

immediate capability and expertise of the consortium partners, partly because they wanted to keep focused on their core activities, and perhaps partly because they did not want to involve government or semi-government organisations as this was perceived as too risky and more difficult to manage.

The Cracking The Nut project in Benin/Burkina Faso also consisted of partners who knew each other well from previous collaboration, had a good working relationship, a solid network in both countries and had already established a good basis of trust. In this case however, the partners' expertise was broad and complementary enough to extend from production to producer organisations and processing, thus being able to tackle a broader set of capacity development needs along the value chain.

More complex partnerships do not always function smoothly, however. To improve the coffee value chain from local to international level, and at the same time improve food production by small scale coffee farmer, the FDOV FOSEK project included international and regional NGOs (Solidaridad, SECAEC), national knowledge institutes (the public Coffee Research Institute of Kenya, and the private Ecom-Sustainable Management Services), international and national private sector companies (Nestle, Ecom), and producer organisations (co-operative unions in Ethiopia). This partnership enabled a broader perspective and the possibility of embedding training activities and innovation into local organisations (especially the cooperatives) but required some adjustments in terms of input and roles due to differences of understanding (e.g., the role of MoUs versus contracts, as underpinning partnerships). Practical differences which can affect partnerships were also evident in the Low Carbon Coffee Project, where cooperative unions, which are suppliers of inorganic fertilisers, apparently did not appreciate the aim of the project to reduce their use through the promotion of bio-composting; hence the project moved to work more directly with primary cooperatives.

The Potato Value Chains Project was also implemented by a broad spectrum of (six official and 2 additional) partners. Resulting from the amalgamation of 2 original project ideas (on seed potatoes and ware potatoes, respectively), this is the only one of the projects studied in which one of the consortium members (Crosswise Works) had an explicit role as a partnership facilitator. Parties confirm that this functioned satisfactorily, each party knew its role and performed it properly, but due to the complexity and size of the coalition, there is a perception that there are few goals that partners solved together. Apparently, consortium partners did not seem to look beyond their own part in the project, in spite of enthusiasm, clear role distribution and few obvious conflicts of interest.

Potato Harvest (source: Winnaz)

The desirable degree of partnership complexity in a PPP project therefore depends on the scope and scale of objectives. Interventions which are aimed at scale, sustainability and an impact on broader systems (e.g. a value chain or agri-business sector, rather than just farm-level level production), are likely to require more complex partnerships, and/or partners who do not (yet) know and trust each other. These more complex partnerships will often require specific efforts to strengthen the capacity of the partnerships to agree on and deliver joint objectives - a facet of capacity development which is not typically recognised or given sufficient attention in public-private partnerships such as those represented in FDOV or SDGP type mechanisms.

For multi-stakeholder partnerships to work, partners need to share a common goal/ambition, agree on objectives, have clear and accepted roles that contribute towards achieving the goal, an appreciation of others' perspectives and a willingness to learn and adjust together, and - above all - a degree of transparency and trust in each other. Partnerships including both public and private entities can be

especially problematic, because of the different organisational cultures and incentives systems. These can lead to private partners regarding public sector partners as slow to respond, especially to business opportunities, and generally "difficult" to deal with, and public partners seeing private sector partners as self-interested and exploitative.

Most of the project partnerships reviewed here attempted to include public partners (local government, research, education organisations), with mixed success. In the Fair Planet Project in Ethiopia, collaboration with District (*Woreda*) Bureaus of Agriculture worked well, even if they were not formally consortium partners. During implementation of the project, Fair Planet learned that working directly on CD at district level Bureaus of Agriculture was more effective and by far more sustainable than working with a public university (as both options were originally intended). Hence, the Bureaus of Agriculture extension staff witnessed the benefits of the project, they were motivated to spread the use of high-quality seeds and Good Agricultural Practices to their regions' farmers and used the knowledge tools that were developed during the Project's implementation.

In the FOSEK project, the Coffee Research Institute (part of the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation) was a partner, providing coffee-intercropping technology, but could not fulfil a similar role in the later Low Carbon Coffee Project (after changes in personnel, although it did continue to provide other services such as soil testing). In the Potato Value Chains Project, the Ministry of Agriculture was considered a "silent" partner, providing legitimacy to the project, but not so much involved in implementation. Unlike Nuffic OKP projects, FDOV-SDGP partnerships with public universities were not a prominent feature in most cases; private companies not seeing them as a sufficiently updated source of practical production technology, the universities giving low priority to farmers' training (e.g. Fair Planet), and the projects not prioritising formal education systems as capacity development priorities. However, in the Fair Planet project, Haramaya University played a key role in facilitating the legal importation of new seed varieties and in operating the adaptation variety trials, which were crucial for identifying the best production technologies for local farmers.

Source: FOSEK

In the projects reviewed, arrangements varied for the facilitating the interaction and joint reflection and learning of partners. In the simpler partnerships, such as SEVIA, coordination was largely the responsibility of the Project Manager. In some projects, where the lead partner had experience in managing complex, multi-stakeholder projects, such as Solidaridad in FOSEK, filled this role.

In the case of the Potato Value Chains Project, a specific broker - in this case Crosswise Works - was brought in by the partners to broker and merge the partnerships of two previous projects proposed into one broader (but more complex) project; Crosswise Works remained as partner during implementation, with the continued role of facilitating interaction and learning by the project partners.

In complex partnerships such as those increasingly evident in SDGP projects, we would therefore argue that a facilitation role needs to be specifically incorporated into the project, with the recognised objective of strengthening the capacity of the partnership to deliver expected project outcomes. This facilitation role is relevant not just for the project planning phase, but also during implementation to guide partners in joint reflection, learning and replanning).

A number of projects (such as CDAIS, 2SCALE and many others) have built the capacity for partnership facilitation in recent years, and considerable expertise is now available in both the Netherlands and African countries for such partnership capacity development.

3.2 Whose capacity was developed?

As noted in the introduction, capacity development can be targeted at various levels: individuals, (networks of) organisations, and institutions (policies, regulations, institutional mandates and norms, etc.). Sustainability, impact at scale, and impact on the enabling environment normally requires integrated capacity development at most or all of these "dimensions". Time and again, for most project consortia it proved to be a balancing act between concentrating/specialising on strengthening one or few actors of the value chain on the one hand and an industry-wide or value chain wide approach on the other.

Building the capacity of specific farmer organisations (cooperatives) was a focus in most, although not all, FDOV and SDGP projects. FOSEK, for example, directed capacity development at 27 primary cooperative societies in Ethiopia, and eighteen cooperatives in Kenya. The Potato Value Chains Project in Rwanda and the Low Carbon Coffee Project in Kenya also focused on strengthening the management of cooperatives. In the latter two projects, cooperatives were thoroughly audited beforehand and then selected based on their capabilities in financial management, governance and business development and their ambition and development potential.

By means of a yearly cooperative audit, the Cracking The Nut Project classified producer organisations (using 3 levels) which made it possible to distinguish the diversity of the performance of each organisation and to support them in a tailor-made approach rather than a generic support.

The Cracking the Nut project used an integral market system approach by touching on all levels of the primary supply chain, as well as supporting actors and the institutional arena of the cashew sector. However, capacity development was first and foremost centred on optimising the supply chain by strengthening both the pull (processors and their sales via NUTS2) and the push (farmers and their organisations) sides, and in particular on strengthening the business relationship between these two.

Beyond farmer cooperatives, few FDOV or SDGP projects reviewed expressed capacity development activities in terms of strengthening other types of organisations, companies, networks of organisations/value chains, or affect the institutional ("enabling") environment.

An exception is the Cashew Project in Benin/Burkina Faso, where sector associations (platforms) were successfully set up, and had their capacity developed to lobby for their combined interests and for favourable conditions for the cashew sector, as well as to present relevant issues to banks, service providers and government. However, given that other projects reviewed, such as FOSEK and the Low Carbon Coffee Project, included as partners the different actors in the value chain, and that this partnership presumably improved their overall collaboration, this (lack of) emphasis may reflect more on the concept of capacity development as understood and expressed by the actors and/or

The SEVIA project targeted two specific organisations involved in the development, promotion and marketing of improved (hybrid) vegetable seed: a proposed African Institute for Vegetable Technology (IVT), and the local AFRISEM (basically a local satellite of East-West Seeds and Rijk Zwaan). Seven-year implementation plans for these organisations were developed, including improved hardware and facilities, and operationalisation their respective programmes.

RVO, rather than those concepts as used in this report. I.e. the very fact that partners (chain parties) work with each other in a project framework adds to their ability to cooperate, without this being explicitly stated as an objective of the project.

Private sector actors leading or involved in FDOV and SDGP projects are also having their capacity (to do business) developed. Even if this is a key objective of the ("win-win") nature of the FDOV and SDGP programmes, such (organisational) capacity development aspect is rarely made explicit or acknowledged as such in the programme or project documentation.

Source: SEVIA

Although the SEVIA project, for example, recognised (in its documentation) at the outset that systemic issues in the horticultural value chains (such as linkages between producers, traders and consumers) limited the sector, the project only made limited effort to strengthen the vegetable value chain, network of actors, or sector as such. The project "delegated" such responsibilities to bodies such as the Tanzanian Horticultural Association and the nascent Horticultural Development Council of Tanzania, HODECT, with whom the project collaborated but did not focus on in terms of capacity development. Indeed, the seed companies involved in the project seemed reluctant to focus on the value chain per se. EWS and Rijk Zwaan indicated to focus on where they feel their expertise can add most value, leaving other market actors to focus on other parts of the value chain. The seed companies were explicit in stating that fear of competitors hardly plays a role for them when engaging in these projects and fully realize this will also help open up markets for competitors. They consider this a natural quid pro quo for benefiting from public funding for these projects.

Potential conflicts of interest have probably arisen in projects led by private companies with interest in purchasing the targeted commodity, where there is obviously less incentive to strengthen the ability of farmer cooperatives to explore alternative markets or even switch to alternative products (e.g. when prices are low).

The predominant focus of the FDOV and SDGP projects on farmers and farmer organisations contrasts somewhat with that of the other Dutch programmes/projects reviewed in this analysis. The 2SCALE programme placed a strong emphasis on strengthening local agribusiness "clusters" (i.e. groups of local actors linked to a particular value chains).

The main aim of the Fair Planet project was to train the farmers in selecting ad applying the varieties (either local or high quality/hybrid) that were objectively tested and found to be best suited for their local context. This allowed the proposed approach and solutions to be tailored to the farmers' reality (and that of extension officers) and prevented that the interest of the seed companies would prevail, despite the fact that facilitating access for high quality/hybrid seeds to the Ethiopian market was one of the project goals.

This focus is based on the assumption that teaching farmers good agricultural practices is not by itself sufficient to improve their livelihoods or the sectors in which they are involved. The FDOV/SDGP emphasis also contrasts with that of the Nuffic OKP programme, which has a predominant focus at the organisational and - increasingly - national TVET (systemic) level.

On the other hand, experience with the Nuffic programme has shown that a focus on national and public organisations, which might be expected to lead to better possibilities for scaling, and more long term sustainability, often requires sustained effort and intervention beyond a typical project lifetime, and it can also be difficult to reconcile short term and measurable outputs with longer term and less easily measured outcomes in terms of organisational capacity.

3.3 Capacity for what?

In this assignment, we have distinguished between three broad areas of capacity: technical or production capacity (how to produce); agribusiness capacity (how to sell, manage a business, adapt to different business environments), and "functional" capacity (how to organise, communicate, relate to, interact with and influence others; also how to reflect and learn and adapt to experience and changing circumstances).

Source: Fair Planet

In general, the FDOV and SDGP projects focussed mainly (i.e., invested most heavily) on the technical capacity of farmers to produce more and better, through "good agricultural practices" and use of quality inputs (such as hybrid and improved OP vegetable seeds, in SEVIA and Fair Planet). The expected outcomes of most of these capacity development efforts of the projects studied were therefore (mainly) increased production of the focus commodities and increased income.

Typically, there was a heavy emphasis on numbers of farmers to be reached and also typically an emphasis on specific crops or commodities. E.g., in the case of the Potato Value Chains Project, the push to reach the proposed number of farmers, hampered the pursuit of more qualitative goals as well as a more integrated approach to the farm system. In the interview this was referred to as the project having a crop focus instead of a farm focus (e.g., in the area of rotation crops, soil health, farming as a business).

In the Low Carbon Coffee Project, FairChain Foundation aims to improve the agri-business capacity of the coffee value chain in general by introducing blockchain technology, digitising the operations of farmers, offering them a digital wallet, and hence membership of the FairChain platform. This platform will log quantities and prices and creates transparency among value chain actors.

The FOSEK and Low Carbon Coffee Projects did try to improve the production of food crops grown with coffee as well as the Cracking The Nut Project supported the development of business units for processing of by-products from cashew production, though all three with limited success.

What about the agribusiness and functional capacities? When strengthening capacity of farmers organisations (cooperatives), projects such as FOSEK and the Low Carbon Coffee Project focussed more on training key staff and Board members on topics such as managerial skills, financial literacy, management, leadership and governance, business planning, marketing and inclusiveness (gender, youth). In the terminology used here, these topics represent a mixture of agribusiness and functional skills. Expected capacity developments here include improved quality of cooperative management, improved awareness of member needs and requirements, more openness between board and

management and farmers as members, as well as improved business activities, revenues and member income. Project activities in e.g., the FOSEK project also included measures to improve physical infrastructure, such as nurseries, storage and distribution centres, milk cooling plants, etc.

The Cracking The Nut Project also took a broader value chain/sectoral approach, strengthening producers, cooperatives, processors, as well as the linkages between these and other institutional factors. The time factor was clearly in favour here, as the duration of the project was longer than average, namely 7 years.

Although not described as "capacity development" as such in project documentation, one important "functional" capacity that was strengthened to varying degrees in the process reviewed was the "capacity to adapt". Most of the projects had mechanisms for coordination, review, and planning; an example here are the implementation committee, country steering groups and annual stakeholder forums of FOSEK. The Cracking The Nut Project put particular emphasis on reflection, review and learning sessions jointly with all partners at the end of each activity cycle as a means to "adapt and respond" to changing circumstances.

With the notable exception of projects such as the Cashew Project, the FDOV and SDGP projects therefore have often assumed that farm-level production technology and knowledge, with some strengthening of farmer organisations, is key to increased agribusiness and improved livelihoods of farmers. However, if a project aims to provoke changes at system level, it should clearly and deliberately address all links of the particular value chain , i.e. by applying an integral market system approach, including supporters and stakeholders from the enabling environment and strengthen their technical, agribusiness and functional skills.

The 2SCALE project started from the assumption that "functional, agribusiness and technical skills were needed by value chain actors. Functional skills to improve the linkage between actors and hence capacity of agribusiness partnerships per se; agribusiness skills of farmer groups and SMEs to link with larger companies, and technical skills of farmers and SMEs to improve production and processing in line with market requirements.

The CDAIS project started with the hypothesis that functional skills were most limiting stakeholder interaction and hence the capacity of innovation niches (or agribusiness clusters) in different countries and value chains. However, the project soon realised that this needed to be accompanied by agribusiness and technical skills development (requiring the inputs of specialised agencies, in addition to the functional skills capacity development provided by project partners). Interestingly, the project also concluded that functional skills development was usually required to adequately identify more precisely which technical and agribusiness skills were needed, and by whom.

It also analysed the progression of the overall capacity development process, concluding that because of a more pronounced emphasis on CD of functional skills in the beginning, some groups/clusters reached a "threshold of irreversibility" (i.e. the ability to autonomously sustain the development process by applying the right set of functional skills) within the effective project lifetime of 3 years of field activities, while others were still at an early stage of organising and identifying capacity development needs.

The OKP programme is based on a more blended approach of technical, agribusiness, and functional capacities, as well as at individual, organisational and institutional levels. While individual CD can achieve desired objectives in 3 years in terms of output, it often takes longer to cross the point of no-return and to achieve sustainable capacity improvements (outcomes) at the organizational level - and especially at the institutional level. The Cracking the Nut project is a good example of this. The duration of the project was 7 years and with the flexibility provided by RVO, this provided the opportunity to effectively navigate and adapt to changing circumstances and invest in relationships with other (public) stakeholders.

3.4 Capacity development process & integration with national systems

The FDOV/SDGP projects reviewed, focused mainly on training of trainers (e.g., extension officers), who can in turn train large numbers of individual farmers through demonstrations. Most projects included a third "tier" in this training model, comprising "lead" or "promoter" farmers (thus relying on farmer-to-farmer training), who were largely responsible for the practical demonstrations on their own farms as a model for neighbouring farmers. In the case of SEVIA and Fair Planet, at least, other stakeholders such as ministry representatives and private sector interests such as input dealers, financing institutions and buyers also attended field days and demonstrations, enabling them to form business linkages with farmers. As noted by SEVIA: "seeing is believing".

The farmer trainers were drawn from a variety of sources or organisations. Projects such as SEVIA hired individual trainers mainly on a basis of their competence, from whatever organisation or background, including government extension, NGOs, seed sales staff, dealers, etc., (who were then trained in the first instance by the project partner WUR-PR; many of these trainers were hired by East West Seeds, Rijk Zwaan or Afrisem after the project). As well as using volunteers to support the trainers and meet farmers in their fields, Fair Planet sought to embed activities in, and hence strengthen, the system of government extension through training Development Agents[17], particularly at *Woreda* level, since these levels are closest to the farmers. "The closer to the farmer, the more sustainable results" was a guiding principle of the Fair Planet project. This was motivating to farmers as well as to the extension officers as both experienced the direct effect of the CD.

Source: Low Carbon Coffee project

The Low Carbon Coffee Project specifically aimed to enable the local cooperatives to develop a cadre of extension agents (whereas in SEVIA, for example, strengthening of farmers organisations was considered outside of the scope of the project). In this case, sustainability (future continuity of farmer capacity development) will depend largely on the Primary Cooperatives being able to finance the salaries of extension agents on a more permanent basis. to this end, salaries of the cooperative extension agents are initially subsidised at 75% by the project, reducing to 50%, 25% and 0% over years 2-4, such that these salaries are absorbed into the business model of the Cooperatives by project end. A similar strategy was followed by the Cashew Project, where extension officers were first paid by project, with these costs gradually being absorbed by the cooperatives and processing factories, making these

In the SEVIA project, lead farmers were selected with input from local extension services, and/or nominated by farmers themselves. Typically, these lead farmers act mainly on a voluntary basis (with the incentives of supplied inputs, improved production, as well as prestige in the community).

[17] Ethiopia is one of the few countries in Africa which has maintained a strong government agricultural extension service, with each kebele (village) being assigned 3 development agents (crops, livestock, natural resources), supported by subject matter specialists at the woreda and zonal levels. In other countries, "extension" or farmer training is now conducted by a variety of organizations: NGOs, cooperatives, research and/or training and education institutes, as well as government agricultural offices.

services part of the business model, and hence more sustainable.

In other words, projects differed to the degree in which the trainers we re "institutionalised" and could continue to sustain training services on an institutional basis once the project has finished. Projects such as those reviewed are often faced with a trade-off: hire the best available trainers, usually directly on the project payroll, with the danger that their training services will end once project financing is no longer available (e.g., for the Potato Value Chains Project); or work with trainers from an organisation that has a continuing training mandate, which often requires effort and additional project costs to strengthen the training organisation more generally. The former approach may have the best short-term outcome, but the latter is more likely to lead to sustainable capacity development.

Other projects have grappled with similar issues: the 2SCALE project, for example, has been looking at ways in which trainers and agribusiness coaches can be "embedded" in the value chain, either as services offered by cooperatives, SMEs/buyers, or as undefended advisory services, for example.

Source: Delphy

The use of the "third tier" of lead or promoter farmers, who received weekly training on their own fields, to support trainers and/or to transfer the knowledge to their neighbour farmers and/or to organise demonstrations and/or visit farmers, was judged to be highly effective by the Fair Planet project, with the Ethiopian government reportedly interested to see how this approach could be replicated on a broader scale. However, some problems were identified when promoter farmers complained about the lack of financial remuneration, when they were invited to attend the project's field days outside of their villages, which had apparently been offered by other projects in the region.

The Fair Planet project deliberately targeted extension workers from the Ministry and Bureau of Agriculture to secure sustainability and to make it an approach adopted by them. However, the evaluation noted that development agents (kebele level extension workers) mentioned the issue of insufficient remuneration for organising field days and demonstration plots as a potential limitation to sustainability of these activities post-project. The Project also concluded that investing in capacity development on optimising partnerships, negotiation skills and conflict handling would have built and even stronger institutional framework for the future.

Fair Planet built the capacity of a critical mass of local governmental extension staff (mainly of the Bureau of Agriculture) by working directly with them and transferring full ownership of the training process to them. This was considered as vital for the success of the project.

Almost all projects reviewed, from both FDOV/SDGP programmes as well as 2SCALE, CDAIS, OKP, placed considerable emphasis and effort on developing training materials which could be used by trainers as well as national organisations during and after project completion (e.g., by the Bureau of Agriculture in Ethiopia, who "enthusiastically" adopted training materials developed by FOSEK. These training materials were mainly technical (crop production, protection), but also included, for example, how to set up effective practical demonstrations - which were the main tool in training farmers. As well as the more technical manuals for the trainers, some projects also developed a set of simpler and more pictorial manuals, in local languages, for use by farmers. However, it is not always evident (from project documentation, reviews, interviews) what happens to such training materials

after the project ends; who will assume responsibility and "own" them, how and where they will be stored and used.

In this regard, an OKP project as EARNED integrated developed training materials into an electronic digital education platform (https://dairydelta.academy/auth) to support training (mainly) of trainers. The intention of the EARNED project is that the platform is flexible enough to be used to support a range of formal dairy training programmes offered by TVETs and universities, as well as shorter, informal farmer-training courses; in this regard it can facilitate the scaling up of training, as well as reduce the need for each college or project to (re)develop training materials. This will only be sustainable if the cost of maintaining and using the platform can be absorbed into student fees in the longer term. So far, early indications are that this is economically feasible.

Variety trials and training trainers (source: Fair Planet)

Especially in the development of training materials, some of the FDOV/SDGP projects reviewed have involved national knowledge institutions, such as universities and research institutes, either as full partners or as collaborators, support organisations. The role of these partners has been largely in (co)development of the training materials and technology, and/or provision of trainers. Examples include Haramaya, a partner in Fair Planet; Sokoine and Horti-Tengeru which supported SEVIA in Tanzania, and the Kenyan Coffee Research Institute which was a partner in FOSEK and support organisation in the Low Carbon Coffee Project.

However, it is more difficult to ascertain an organisational or sustainable impact of these projects on these national knowledge institutes, their activities, or curricula. When used as trainers and developers of training materials, it is possible that these activities have some impact on curricula, though this was not documented in any of the project evaluations seen.

Projects can also provide useful opportunities for student practical experience; some 50 students from Sokoine University undertaking practical attachments at the IVT during the SEVIA project, for example. Nevertheless, the SEVIA Project considered the capacity development of formal education organisations (colleges, universities), to be outside the immediate scope of the project, a position likely shared by the other FDOV/SDGP projects reviewed. For many universities, such as Haramaya in the case of Fair Planet, continued involvement as trainers of farmers or extension staff seems unlikely, as these activities are not considered a significant part of the universities' mandate. While - in theory, at least - there is scope for collaboration, even integration, of the efforts of PPP programmes such as those of FDOV/SDGP and education-oriented programmes such as those of Nuffic, little such collaboration was observed. Perhaps the transactional costs of such collaboration simply outweigh the perceived benefits, under current incentives.

3.5 Implications for scale, sustainability, and impact on broader systems

From the above analysis, we conclude that - in general- an integrated approach to capacity development, including balanced and integrated activities at different levels (individual, organisational, institutional) and thematic skills areas (technical, agribusiness, functional) is desirable, and more likely to lead to sustainable outcomes and impact on a deeper/broader scale and higher systems levels (value chain, sector). However, such outcomes (e.g. in terms of the adjusted mandate and capacity of key national organisations to support skilling and agribusiness development, and the capacity of key stakeholders to effectively work together at cluster, value chain and sectoral level), often require more time than available in typical project lifetime, a broader range of expertise than often available in project consortia as well as b being more difficult to quantify in terms desirable to policy makers funding the capacity development. In short, it would increase complexity and would need more time for conception as well as for partnership management during execution.

Cashew quality control (source: FairMatch Support

The design and nature of capacity development activities in projects such as those financed by RVO is not just a question of effectiveness or efficiency, of simple "best practice", but more a question of policy choices and trade-offs: what types and complexity of partnership are available and desirable, what is a practical and politically acceptable time frame for activities, and what degree of quantification of outcomes is acceptable (and when?) to those financing such projects?

Nevertheless, and in an attempt to improve the scale and sustainability of PPP projects such as those financed by RVO, in the next section we attempt a "check list" to review many of the points brought out in the above analysis. The intention is that this checklist can be used to guide thinking during project preparation and to help clarify project objectives regarding capacity development. As noted in the introduction, we take a broad view of capacity development; in fact, almost all activities of projects such as those financed by the RVO FDOV and SDGP mechanisms can be regarded as "capacity development", even if they are not explicitly described as such in RVO project guidelines and proposal development criteria.

4. Capacity development in public-private partnership – Trade-offs and checklist for reflection on critical issues in capacity development

Capacity development is an important aspect of public-private partnerships (PPPs). The trade-off table and checklist depicted in this chapter aim to provide a structured approach to assessing and improving the capacities of all parties involved in the partnership and can be used when forming the consortium. The checklist helps to integrate a capacity development lens into a PPP project proposal, ensuring that the development of capacities is given due consideration and attention throughout the entire project lifecycle. The use of the checklist enables that all parties have the necessary capacities to fulfil their obligations and contribute to the success of the PPP.

4.1 Overview of trade-offs in capacity development in public-private partnerships

The table below summarises key trade-offs in terms of capacity development in relation to the complexity of public-private partnerships.

Factors in Capacity Development	Emphasis and Trade-offs	
System (and level of capacity developed)	Limited, simple: • Few actors involved • Agreement and clarity of aims, objectives • Typically on one or few links of the value chain, e.g., local, farm level production of one commodity, • "One size fits all." Farmers considered as one group, with similar conditions, needs	Extensive, complex: • Many actors involved • Diverse set, possibly disputed, objectives • Typically on value chain output and efficiency, including support functions as well as production, possibly integrated production elements (e.g., cash and food crops) • Farmers differentiated according to potential, need, resources (gender, age)

Partnership	Small, executive: • Few partners (often "implementors," not including "beneficiaries") • Similar organisations, (usually private) in culture, function, worldview • Familiar to each other, high level of established trust • Can often function effectively and intuitively	Large, participatory: • Many partners (includes all key actors in system) • Dissimilar organisations, (public and private), different cultures, incentives • Unknown to each other, low level of established trust • Requires specific activities to facilitate interaction and effectiveness
Type of capacity developed	• Capacities within span of control of project (low risk of noncompliance) • Mainly technical (good agricultural practice or how to produce), partly business (how to sell) • Easier to monitor and evaluate. M&E based on numbers	• Capacities outside span of control of project (high risk of non-compliance) • Mainly/initially functional (how to organise, relate, negotiate, communicate, learn and adapt) • Difficult to evaluate quantitatively. M&E based on stories, learning
Degree of flexibility, adaptation	• Predetermined CD outputs and outcomes • Focus on "capacity to achieve"	• CD outputs and outcomes redefined iteratively ("learning cycles") • Focus on "capacity to adapt"
Integration with ambition regarding national systems	• Emphasis on measurable, shorter-term, project outputs (products) • Use of project financed and hired, controlled, CD consultants • Focus on capacities to be developed	• Emphasis on longer term, sustainable outcomes (processes) • Integration with national, possibly unpredictable, national agencies • Focus on "capacity to develop capacity"

4.2 Checklist on capacity development in public-private partnerships

System of interest

Food systems are complex by nature owing to the many domains involved and the different levels and scales on which different processes take place (from farmers to global markets). They may offer multiple potentially competing and complementary points for intervention as well as the capacity needs among stakeholders may vary largely. It is therefore important to first define the system, or part of the system, in which the PPP wants to intervene.

- Define the system, the main actors related to it and the element(s) of the system the project will aim at in terms of capacity development.
- Determine the scope of the intervention. If only one or two elements of a market system (e.g., training farmers and their cooperatives to increase productivity and aggregation) is addressed, define who may address the other elements of the system.
- Specify the overall capacity of the system which is intended for improvement and define the developments in capacity that are pursued.
- Describe and assess the enabling environment that may affect the impact of the system you target and the capacity you aim to develop e.g. by using the PESTEL analysis model.
- Check options to interact and to achieve synergy. Can/should action by the project be taken to "internalise" (i.e., improve the impact of) these factors - or monitor how these factors affect the capacity improvements expected? Are these institutional factors and their likely influence clearly identified in the project logical framework?

Partnership

Complexity of partnerships is often related to the number of partners involved, but also comes with differences in culture, governance, management styles and operating procedures. The art of partnering can be a critical asset to each public-private partnership. This part of the checklist provides elements to consider when bringing organisations together in a consortium and to achieve an effective and trust-based collaboration.

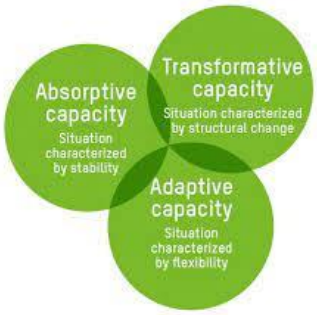
- It all starts with potential and ambition. Check on their expertise, agency, commitment and power to play their part and effect the changes needed to result in the expected capacity improvement of the system.
- Once identified the actors, describe the working relationship and the trust level amongst partners. Do they have prior experience of working together? Is there already a basis of trust between the partners, or will this need to be established or improved? Perhaps you need an inception period to lay a solid foundation for cooperation? What are potential pitfalls or risks in terms of partnering?
- Determine what is still needed in terms of functional skills e.g., to negotiate/adjust project objectives, define roles, nurturing the relationships, as well as the capacity of the partnership to reflect and consolidate the learning and eventually decide on whether to have an internal or external partnership facilitator.
- Treat partners and beneficiaries as equals. Or even better: do not differentiate at all! The role of actors and the size of it may differ, but in the end, they are all stakeholders with a well-defined interest in the project.
- Determine if all the main actors within the system, identified as critical to achieve the overall expected capacity development are represented in the partnership.

- List actors, e.g. public institutions, research, educational institutes) that may be necessary for future scaling and sustainability of the capacity development processes established once the project is completed.
- Define expected roles, functions of each partner identified? What are the improvements of capacity needed by each of them to enable them to effectively play their role?
- For each partner conduct a rapid risk appraisal of factors (institutional, regulatory, cultural) that could negatively impact or impede the expected capacity development and list possible mitigation measures. documentation).

Types of capacity developed

A more systematic and balanced analysis of the capacity development needs and interventions for technical, agribusiness and functional capacities can leverage outcome and impact of public-private partnerships. These are some practical suggestions to make a good start with your partnership.

- Define and prioritize improvements in technical capacity (to produce), agribusiness capacity (to sell, conduct business) and functional capacity (to relate, to communicate, to reflect and readjust) needed by each actor. Is there a need to conduct a capacity needs assessment - either at the level of the overall system, and/or by some or all the identified actors/partners?
- Raise the bar high and identify qualified capacity developers (inside or outside the consortium) to achieve the desired level in technical, agribusiness and functional capacity, of each actor and/or the partnership as a system?
- Take a close look at the capacity of both the partnership and the actors to adapt. Conduct a SWOT in terms of risk management and adaptive governance to assess to what extend absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities are being addressed in the system of intervention. E.g., how to anticipate and/or respond to aspects such as changing market conditions, price volatility, availability of inputs, high inflation, trade barriers, etc?



Capacity development approach

Public-private partnerships often struggle with embedding their capacity development efforts into the value chain and/or its supporting services on one hand and customizing it on the other hand. Every farmer is different. Needs of a recently formed village farmer association can vary a lot from those of a cooperative with a longstanding track record on marketing. How to identify the right people and how to target them? Check out the following aspects on customized and embedded capacity development services:

- List the "influencers" and/or decision makers, i.e., the key individuals inside and outside the partnership who can promote or champion change. Which (groups of) influencers are crucial to achieve each of the technical, agribusiness and functional capacity developments desired of each actor? What capacities do these individuals need to be able to fulfil this role?
- Differentiate the needs of (large groups of) actors such as farmers (farm size, gender, age, etc) and cooperatives. E.g., classify cooperatives according to their level of professional development and tailor the capacity development for each level.

- Specify implications of these differentiated groups for capacity development activities and processes (e.g. types, times of training, supporting information materials, etc.)
- Determine how to strengthen the "capacity to develop capacity" in key individuals/"champions" within a group (e.g. of farmers), organisation (e.g. cooperative, agribusiness) or public institution (e.g. TVET) , so that these key individuals can train/strengthen capacity of their colleagues, members?
- Designate who is responsible for facilitating/coaching "experiential learning cycles" with the main actors/partners involved? How will the learning by the system (actors) be documented? By whom?

Scale, sustainability, impact

Sustainability, scalability and impact combined form the holy grail of successful capacity development interventions and are aspects that are particularly important in a context of food system transformation. Formulated outputs and outcomes of a PPP project become even more relevant when sustained by a realistic view on how capacity development can become part of the business model plus concrete indication of the potential to apply it on a larger scale. The following aspects can be considered in terms of scale, sustainability and impact when developing a public-private partnership.

- Define the "tipping point" or "threshold of irreversibility" and describe what is needed to reach autonomous momentum such that the capacity development process will continue even without project inputs. What capacities are needed by which actors to ensure this autonomy?
- Outline how capacity development actions and processes established by the project will be continued after the project lifetime? Who will continue to provide the capacity development services? Who will pay for these services, once project finance ceases? Who will manage, update, further develop and utilise informational/training resources, either printed or online? How will these resource be made available to a broader audience?
- Determine scalablility of project impact. What is the scale of change (e.g., in metrics such as numbers of producers, agribusiness with improved capacity; production, income levels, etc.) expected to be achieved by the end of the project - and by (for example) 5 or 10 years post project? In line with the Ansoff Matrix, what is the potential for expansion of existing markets, product development, market development and/or diversification? What types of capacity - of which actors - is needed to realise this potential?

- Identify other actors to be involved to achieve impact at a deeper or broader scale (e.g., in the value chain, sector). Do conflicts of interest exist between agribusinesses who are project partners - and these other agribusinesses who are not (yet) - can be anticipated? What organisational or institutional capacity development will be required?

5. Policy Brief

This policy brief is based on a review of capacity development (CD) in selected FDOV and SDGP projects commissioned by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP). At the request of NFP, the review also includes a brief comparison with Nuffic OKP projects, and 2 other projects - the NL-DGIS funded 2SCALE and the (now completed) EU-funded CDAIS project, to compare experience and lessons learned with respect to capacity development.

Given the limited number of projects reviewed (4 FDOV and 2 SDGP; 6 of which in East Africa and one in West Africa), the applicability of our findings regarding PPP projects more generally should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, we concluded that the development of such private-public partnership (PPP) programmes and projects, particularly from the perspective of scale and sustainability, would benefit from:

1. *Explicit capacity development perspective.* In general, most PPP projects are developed, not unnaturally, from a supply-chain perspective, mostly focussing on improving the use of inputs by farmers (especially improved seeds) by small holder farmers or improving the off take of their produce by processors. Often, they do not approach project development from a perspective of "capacity development". Using the broader and more widely accepted definition of CD as "the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time", a broader and more explicit CD perspective at the time of programme design and project development, including actor analysis and CD needs assessment of the system and its actors, would lead to improved outcomes, especially at broader systems levels.
2. *Balanced scope of individual, organisational and institutional dimensions of capacity development.* PPP projects generally tend to focus on a particular "commodity system" or value chain, applying a broad range of actions to strengthen capacity of the different actors in the system. Often PPP focus on training individual farmers (including "lead" or demonstration farmers) and trainers of farmers. Some include efforts to strengthen producer organisations and - less commonly - other organisations in the supply chain, such as input dealers, aggregators, processors. With the exception of farmer advisors (trainers, extension agents), less attention generally goes to actions to improve the functioning of organisations in the service sector (e.g., financial services, education, research) or "institutional level"; such as lobbying to affect policies, regulations, etc. PPP projects could be improved by a more systematic and balanced analysis of the integrated capacity development needs and interventions across individual, organisational and institutional dimensions, and across the 3 aspects of value chains: the direct supply chain, the service sector, and the enabling environment.
3. *Integrated approach of technical, agribusiness and "functional" capacities.* Generally, PPP projects focus mostly on what can be considered as the "technical" capacities of farmers, such as good agronomic practices (GAP). To a lesser extent, the capacity of farmers and their organisations to conduct (agri)business is addressed as well. Often less attention is paid to improve the "functional capacities" of the different actors within the value chain; e.g., capacities to govern and manage organisations (such as cooperatives); to communicate, negotiate and partner with other actors; to reflect, learn and adjust common objectives and joint actions. We believe that these three "types" of capacity are integrated, and each are important to consider in a more balanced assessment of CD needs and actions.

4. *Distinctive recognition of benefits.* By their very nature, PPP projects are expected to lead to a "win-win" situation, where benefits accrue to all partners involved, especially private companies and small-scale farmers. While private companies are open to recognising the benefits to them, project documentation reviewed sometimes referred to "beneficiaries", or "target beneficiaries" - being predominantly farmers - while private sector organisations or NGOs involved were considered as (implementing) "partners". In our view, this distinction is unhelpful: rather all actors who have a significant role to play in achieving desired project outcomes should be considered as "partners", with a more equal consideration in terms of decision making and transparency. While this may be considered as semantic by some, we believe that it is important as a basis of trust - which is often considered the key factor in successful partnerships.
5. *Explicit attention to the capacity of partnerships developed.* While not so apparent in project literature, it became clear from discussions that a key capacity issue in PPP projects is the capacity of the partnership itself - not so much the individual capacity of the partners involved, but rather their collective capacity to interact, agree on objectives, roles, activities, etc. The increasing complexity of PPPs results from not just the number of partners involved, but their different cultures (especially public, private), incentives, and potential conflicts of interest; especially where partners do not have a prior history of collaboration and accumulated trust. This is not a new area: the Netherlands has a history of knowledge and skills development and facilitation of "multi-stakeholder" partnerships. What is required is increased recognition of, and attention to, (mainly functional) CD of the partnership itself during both project development and implementation, through providing the specialised facilitation services that exist in the Netherlands to project partners. We note, the use of the Partnership Brokers Association in the SDGP and encourage this development.
6. *Specific recognition of the "capacity to adapt and respond to changing contexts and circumstances".* PPP projects rarely unfold as expected at the time of project development; partners, incentives, the enabling environment are always changing. Apart from anticipating such events at the planning stage, projects can strengthen the capacity of all partners, to adapt and respond through specifically recognising and building in activities to (jointly) reflect on progress, readjust expected outputs and outcomes (where necessary to achieve the higher goal), and replan further actions.
7. *Particular attention to the "capacity to develop capacity", and its embedding in value chains or national knowledge/service agencies. In* time-bound projects with a focus on specific outputs (such as numbers of farmers trained), it can be easier and more immediately effective for projects to directly hire trainers for specific project activities. However, the advantage in terms of control and short-term efficiency can be at the cost of longer term scale and sustainability, if the training capacity remains project dependent and ceases when project financing ceases. PPP projects that "embed" the training capacity within the supply chain itself (e.g. by building the capacity of farmer organisations, input dealers such as seed companies, or off-takers/processors) to offer training/advisory services, or strengthening the services aspect of the value chain (e.g. by building the capacity of government extension or private advisory agencies), can effectively improve sustainability by "developing the capacity to develop capacity", rather than simply focusing on developing capacity *per se*.
8. *Incentives to engage public partners, such as knowledge institutes.* We believe that knowledge institutes (KIs), such as research, universities and technical colleges, have a key role to play in servicing the agribusiness sector (as recognised in the "Dutch Diamond") and

especially in more "system wide" transformation. However, the incentives for private actors to invest in (largely, but not exclusively public) knowledge institutes such as technical and vocational colleges, universities and research institutes often remain unattractive, given the resilient institutional environment for such public organisations, and the long-term and indirect or more broadly distributed returns resulting from their improvement. Incentives to further increase the involvement of KIs in PPP projects could include, for example, additional and targeted subsidy, and/or "pairing" of PPP and OKP-type projects.

9. *Clear recognition of "trade-offs" in terms of CD, project objectives and strategies.* Increasing the scope of PPP projects to include a) CD of more actors in the supply chain, service sector (knowledge institutions, financial agencies, advisory and brokerage agencies) and "enabling environment" (policy makers, regulatory agencies), b) development of technical, business and functional capacities, inevitably leads to more complexity, loss of control and less predictable outcomes. We believe there are inevitable "trade-offs" between designing projects with more control, predictable, quantitative, easily reported, shorter-term outcomes and projects with longer-term, more sustainable but less predictable outcomes and less evaluable impact on broader food systems. Where such trade-offs need to be made, they should be explicit, rather than simply promising the best of all policy outcomes.
10. *Sharing of experience and mutual learning between different Dutch development instruments.* We note the different perspectives and strategies on CD between, the different instruments financed by the Dutch government and reviewed in this report. While we are aware that discussion and comparison of such instruments is constant in policy making circles in the Netherlands, we believe that comparing them with a specific capacity development "lens", as we have attempted to do in this review, can provide additional insight and ways of improving outcomes, especially in terms of scale, sustainability, and impact at the broader scale of food systems transformation.

Annex 1 FDOV – SDGP project reviews

A1 Fair planet five year plan for Ethiopia (FDOV14ET01)

https://projects.rvo.nl/project/nl-kvk-27378529-fdov14et01

Context, partnership and objectives

Fair Planet is an Israeli and Dutch NGO that seeks to provide African people with food security and new economic opportunities, by making suitable, high-quality vegetable seeds, accessible and affordable to local farmers. Normally, seed companies focus on large-scale farmers and often do not target smallholder farmers. Fair Planet wanted to bridge this gap with this project based on the belief that productivity and farmers' income can improve dramatically by using high quality seeds and improved farming practices. People at Fair Planet have a strong background in the seed industry and the model as applied in Ethiopia is inspired by practices as applied in Israel. The core belief is that good seeds only give good and sustainable results with the right capacity development.

Prior to the Fair Planet five-year plan for Ethiopia Project (hereinafter referred to as Fair Planet Project), Fair Planet had established a partnership with several seed companies to evaluate and identify vegetable varieties suited to Ethiopia through adaptation trials and variety trials. Local standards were incorporated in these trails, considering technical and economic realities of the farmers. The ultimate goal was to increase the farmers' freedom of choice, from locally available (OP) varieties to use of high-quality vegetable seeds developed by global seed companies.

The Fair Planet Project built upon the results of the trial phase by working with 5 seed companies, Syngenta, East-West Seeds, Limagrain, Enza Zaden and Nunhems. Other local partners in the project Alterra BV, part of WUR, and the local partner Haramaya University.

The project was implemented during May 2015-December 2021, with a total RVO funded budget of EUR 1.16m and aimed at the transformation of subsistence farming to an agribusiness approach. More specifically, to introduce high quality and high yielding vegetable seeds in Ethiopia.

The main pillars of the project were:

1. Improving agricultural practices among smallholder farmers who grow vegetables to improve their productivity and build their capacity to increase their earnings.
2. Strengthening farmers' training in improved agricultural practices by local Development Agents (DAs) and Agricultural Experts.
3. Identifying suitable high quality/hybrid vegetables seeds for the various agro-climatic regions and improving farmers and Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) staff's awareness to them, through which increasing the effective demand for these seeds.
4. Facilitating access to seed companies to market their relevant high quality/hybrid seeds in the various regions in Ethiopia to improve the supply of such seeds and lead to an operational market for high quality/hybrid vegetable seeds.

SMART objectives were formulated at the level of training lead farmers, training local trainers (experts and extension staff from regional and woreda level Bureaus of Agriculture and for the desired effect on productivity and income of farmers.

The specific effort to train lead farmers on their own fields served as leverage to bring horticultural production by a larger group of neighbouring farmers to a higher level, including through trials with improved seeds. As a result, demand for improved seed increased substantially and the seed companies involved as well as local plant-raiser companies (and others) created a growing market for their products.

These objectives were largely achieved: more farmers and local trainers have been trained than originally planned, the impact of the trainings on productivity and income of the farmers is substantial, and the market for seed companies has increased.

Whose capacity?

Central to the approach was a comprehensive training and extension program for lead farmers. Through use of project's demo fields, weekly training of lead farmers on their own fields, direct trainings, training of trainers programs, open days and seminars, lead farmers were trained in improved agricultural practices. Methodologies to train lead farmers on how to train other farmers in their district/area were developed and applied. This ripple effect was significant: on average, one lead farmer reached 30 neighbouring farmers leading to the adoption of high-quality seeds and good agricultural practices.

Besides lead farmers, another target group were local development agents from the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as agricultural experts of the Regional and Woreda Bureaus of Agriculture and Haramaya University. They were responsible for the sustained delivery of training and extension services to their regions' farmers and are expected to keep doing that after project completions. Technology transfer methodologies and training manuals were developed for this target group. The target was set in terms of the number of DAs and Agricultural experts trained.

Variety trials and training trainers (source: Yael Moskowitz – Fair Planet)

Capacity for what?

Capacity development was focused on improved agricultural practices, the use of high-quality seed/lings and better irrigation methods, the use of fertilisers in agriculture and better awareness of potential agricultural marketing opportunities.

Capacity development of DA's and agricultural experts took place through training of trainers (ToT). Eleven training modules were developed for this purpose, together with Haramaya University and experts from Bureaus of Agriculture, and combining knowledge of research, seed companies and the CASCAPE project. Not less than 8 crop production manuals and 8 crop protection manuals were developed to be used by the extension workers.

Fair Planet also recruited a cadre of volunteers, who also received professional training as well as ongoing guidance from experts. A small team composed of 1 Fair Planet volunteer, 1 DA and 1 expert visited the Lead Farmers on a weekly basis in their own fields.

Approach to capacity development

In this project, capacity development was largely implemented through training to individual lead farmers (chosen by the local extension staff) and extension agents (ToT). The nature of capacity development was almost exclusively technical in nature with a slight additional focus on marketing, gender, etc. The development agents and technical experts remained employed by the Ministry and the Bureaus of Agriculture, respectively. They received only per diems from the project to reimburse their travel expenses.

The original plan was to train lead farmers in specialised Farmers Training Centres (FTC), but it was soon decided to train lead farmers on their own farms so that the practical applicability of what was learned was also immediately apparent to them as well as to the neighbouring farmers.

This approach did require more intensive supervision than originally anticipated and was (financially) possible only by working with the volunteers, representing some 40 FTE spread over the project period. Each individual lead farmer received full attention and was visited weekly by a team of one Fair Planet volunteer, one development agent (Ministry) and one expert (Bureau of Agriculture). This gave the lead farmers the conviction that what they had learned was feasible and executable on their own farms. Farmers received free seed/lings samples for the first production season (as is usual in the seed industry), were intensively coached and trained, but they continued to run their own farms and bear the regular costs themselves. The final report also concluded that that the presence of volunteers increased farmers 'motivation to successfully participate in the trainings. An additional advantage of this intensive support was that cultivation data (costs, yield and income gained) was recorded during each visit, with the result that an economic analysis of all lead farmers was available during the project.

In general terms, "proximity" is the term that best describes the Fair Planet CD approach. The Project aimed to be:

- *Close to the farmers:* Because of the extensive trials and needs assessment, it was clear from the beginning what the bottlenecks were, what farmers needed, what their technical and economic capacities were, which varieties (local, hybrid) are best suited for the local context, how to incorporate local standards in seed trials, etc. This allowed the proposed approach and solutions to be tailored to the farmers' reality.
- *Close to local agencies:* A crucial pillar of the CD approach from the beginning was the training of staff of the Ministry and of the Bureaus of Agriculture, particularly at regional and *woreda* level since these levels are closest to the farmers. They live in the villages, and they know the farmers. "*The closer to the farmer, the more sustainable results*". Also, the role of the University as a local lead partner was key; their involvement gave a legal foundation to the project, they employed local project staff and contributed most of the hardware needed for proper execution of the project, played a key role in facilitating the legal importation of new seed varieties (and potentially other technologies) and in operating adaptation variety trials, which were crucial for identifying the best production technologies for local farmers.
- Close to seed companies: Fair Planet's lead team are seed experts who know the sector through and through, they talk the language of the industry and were able to effectively bridge the gap between the government (which in principle was suspicious of the global seed companies), the seed companies and the needs of the smallholder farmers. In addition, the local presence of

seed companies proved to provide better and more sustainable after-sales support to the farmers.

Although intensive collaboration with Bureaus of Agriculture contributed largely to the continuity and sustainability of the extension work, capacity development at institutional level of these organisations did not receive much attention and local cooperatives (unions) were less involved in this project. Also, the policy framework was not planned as part of the project and has hardly been touched by it.

Interaction with other projects

Overall interaction with other projects was limited: CASCAPE experiences in one region important for dry chili production were shared, and Joytech (a local SME) distributed Fair Planet's production manuals to its seedling customers.

Several discussions took place with the NL-funded Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) Programme, without concrete results in terms of collaboration. Sharing of tools and information between Fair Planet and SNV took place, e.g., on Farmer Field Schools, but did not materialise in concrete and joint activities.

Technoserve is the local implementing partner of the *Tikkun Olam Venture* (TOV) Foundation project in Ethiopia, which supports social businesses in emerging economies to access, invest in, and adopt Israeli technology and innovations to improve the lives of smallholder farmers. Since 2019, Fair Planet has been providing Technoserve with ongoing agronomic and training methodology support, including training aids, which are based on the experience and knowledge gained within the FDOV Project.

Impact, scale, institutionalisation and sustainability

Crucial in terms of sustainability and institutionalisation of capacity development in this project are the *Woreda* Bureaus of Agriculture, the Regional BoA, the University and the role of Fair Planet volunteers. The intensity of guidance from BoA extension officers led to high levels of ownership and enthusiasm. Overall, the evaluation found that knowledge was successfully transferred from the Fair Planet project to the Agriculture Experts and DAs in different locations as well as to the lead farmers and neighbouring farmers.

In addition, the knowledge gained by DAs and Experts from working with Fair Planet has the capacity to remain in the BoA, which has low staff turnover. All the experts and DAs who were interviewed reported that they have been part of the BoA between 4-20 years. However, the experts and DAs felt a sense of insufficient compensation for extensive farmers 'training and field visits, which might limit their willingness to continue conducting the visits in the same regularity after the Fair Planet project transfers ownership to the regional BoA.

Interestingly, due to COVID and security risks, international staff (and volunteers) had to withdraw prematurely from certain regions. Despite this, the trainings and guidance continued. This as an indication of commitment and sustainability of the interventions. All training materials, modules and manuals are open source and have been shared with the BoAs and other stakeholders and can be used even after the project ends. It is not clear whether this actually happens in practice. It is likely that DAs and trainers involved in the project are still using the manuals, and so does Joytech, that continuously supply these manuals to its customers. A wider reach of the manuals is not evident.

Lessons learnt and good practice

From reviews of the project evaluation and discussions with project personnel, the following can be identified as key to the project success:

- Flexibility and creativity in the CD approach. In this case, the switch from Farmer Training Centres to coaching lead farmers on their own fields, and from training of individual lead farmers to group training of lead farmers enabled the success. In addition, the deployment of long-term volunteers made a big difference to the learning and proved to be a cost-effective method of giving the lead farmers as well as the trainers (development agents and technical experts) the attention they needed. They felt seen and heard, which is ultimately what everyone desires.
- Knowledge of the seed sector by the Fair Planet team, together with preliminary trials and needs assessment conducted with farmers. From the start this formed a solid framework for the project. Development in general terms is often accompanied by a change in attitude. The project showed that the capacity development required for this can be especially effective when stakeholders clearly see what the project aims at and how they can benefit from it. The seeing is believing approach proved to be instrumental, for the lead farmers and their neighbours as well as for the trainers/extensionists. This effect was further enhanced by the change from training on Farmer Training Centres to on-farm training.
- Building the capacity of a critical mass of local governmental extension staff (BoA) by working directly with them and transferring full ownership of the training process to them. The Project enabled the development of a healthy and productive working relationships between the seed companies/distributers and local stakeholders. With some elements of institutional CD added to this, this would have made the business partnership even more successful.
- Select local partners according to potential and motivation. Originally the project identified 2 options to work with in terms of technology transfer: 1) Development Agents (Ministry of Agriculture) and 2) Farmer Training Centres. At first, the 2nd option seemed the most obvious" on paper they looked impressive", but these turned out to be largely dysfunctional. The final evaluation concluded that having local (*Woreda*) BoA as full partners (instead of the Regional Bureaus) is advisable, since for them the importance of a successful project is greater than for regional or national entities. "The closer to the farmer, the more sustainable the results." As for training of trainers: projects should focus on engaging those entities whose *raison d'être* is exactly that: training & extension: in this case, training & extension was a side activity for the experts from Haramaya University, mainly useful as input for their research programs.
- Combine CD at different levels: technical, institutional and on policy framework. As an example, the project considered that the future for the import of high-quality/hybrid seeds is still uncertain, mainly due to Forex issues, and is considered as main bottleneck of further growth and development of the horticultural sector. As for institutional CD: e.g., investing in CD on optimising partnerships, negotiation skills, conflict handling would have built even stronger institutional framework for the future.

A2 Seeds of expertise for the vegetable industry of Africa - SEVIA (FDOV12TZ01)

https://projects.rvo.nl/project/nl-kvk-27378529-fdov12tz01/

Context, Partnership and Objectives

The SEVIA Project (2013-2022) was led by 2 Dutch seed companies with complementary business areas and expertise: East-West Seeds (EWS) and Rijk Zwaan (RZ). The third main partner was the Applied Plant Research division of Wageningen University Research (WUR-APR).

East West and Rijk Zwaan had already established a local partner, Rijk Zwaan Afrisem Ltd, as a breeding station for African vegetables based in Tanzania. Although E-W and RZ had some capacity to develop vegetable varieties for the African market, they did not have the capacity to train farmers to adopt hybrid seeds on a significant scale. They therefore had an interest to develop a new vegetable seed market, and hence develop the African vegetable sector, by providing adapted varieties to the farmers and by setting up an African Institute for Vegetable Technology (IVT) for the development, implementation and dissemination of farm innovations and the screening of genetic vegetable resources for Africa. Following RVO priority, the SEVIA project was focussed on Tanzania, although in the longer term, EWS and RZ intended that suitable varieties would be multiplied and commercialised throughout the region.

The SEVIA Partners also identified several other organisations with a potential role in supporting the Project (e.g., via Cooperation Agreements), including:

- the Tanzania Horticultural Association (THA), a private sector-based organisation representing farmers, exporters, processors and service providers in the horticultural industry in Tanzania. TAHA was expected to establish a Professional Training Centre (PTC) in the Arusha area for the vocational training of medium and higher-level horticultural managers.
- Sokoine University, the most important knowledge institute for the vegetable sector in Tanzania, with BSc and MSc courses in vegetable production, and Horti Tengeru Agricultural College.
- (More than 10) different NGOs, private vegetable seed suppliers, etc.
- World Vegetable Centre.
- Government district offices.
- Other projects aimed at farmer training etc (e.g., IFDC, Agriprofocus, AIM project, etc)

In all, SEVIA collaborated with over 30 other organisations in addition to its major partners during project implementation.

Transplanting at SEVIA farm (source: SEVIA)

The SEVIA Project purpose was "to contribute to the food security strategy and vegetable industry development for Africa". Focussed initially on Tanzania, the "combined output" of SEVIA was expected to be "a range of product / market innovations, well tested,

documented and disseminated among the vegetable sector of Tanzania".

To do this, the project identified 2 tracks. Track 1 was vegetable variety development in Afrisem, organised by the breeding partners. Track 2 was vegetable knowledge and innovation development. SEVIA also expected to carry out extensive variety screening programme of currently available varieties and selections in the East African region.

Specific and expected outputs included new hybrid varieties (30); screening of 100 varieties of 10 vegetable species, practical training manuals for production, crop protection, post-harvest, (booklets, technical newsletters, e-leaning manuals, web-based information centre); production planning instruments and collected economic data; 1000 professionals capable of establishing demonstrations, 30,000 farmers reached, and a regional network of vegetable processionals.

Whose capacity?

The SEVIA project proposal emphasised that "At present, Africa's horticultural industry and institutes have limited capacity, both in knowledge, technology, experience and financial means to improve the current level of productivity". Available vegetable seeds and varieties were considered of poor quality, with limited knowledge of modern crop management, pest & disease control, food safety aspects, responsible irrigation, post-harvest handling, marketing strategy and fresh logistics. Market linkages between producers, traders and consumers were also recognised as needing to be addressed by SEVIA (although these were not specifically the focus of the project).

The main "target group" of SEVIA was identified as "Farmers, Trade, Retail and Consumers, Food Processors, NGO's, Policy Makers, Banks, Insurance Companies, Agro-Input Supply Sector, Fellow Seed Companies, Education, Government Institutions and Mobile Network Providers". Nevertheless, the Project focussed its activities on individuals - farmers - and organisations that were judged to represent the biggest bottlenecks in the vegetable sector. Hence the Project was mainly directed to strengthening the capacity of individual vegetable farmers, especially the larger group of "middle class" professionals, who were considered to have the best potential for growth and improvement and represent future customers of seed companies.

Two main organisations, the proposed African Institute for Vegetable Technology (IVT) and the existing Afrisem were also specifically targeted for capacity strengthening - although the project proposal did not describe their development in terms of "capacity development". Seven-year implementation plans for these organisations were developed, which included improved hardware and facilities, and operationalisation their respective programmes. By the end of the Project, the IVT was operating as a fully operational research and training centre, established at Were Were Farm in Hai District, with office buildings, demonstration plots and irrigation systems, cooling systems for produce, staff, vehicles, etc.

While some 50 students benefited from practical attachments at the IVT during the project, the Project considered the capacity development of formal education organisations (colleges, universities), to be outside the immediate scope of the project. Nor did the SEVIA project specifically intend to strengthen farmers organisations, considering this the mandate of TAHA. (Interestingly a "sister" FDOV project – Vegetables for All in Tanzania did include such CD of farmer organisations).

In the final report, it was also recognised that the capacity of the two main partner organisations, East-West Seeds and Rijk Zwaan, to do business in the region was increased through the project.

Also representing the organisational level, the Project set up a "Vegetable Technology Platform" (think tank) representing horticultural business, knowledge institutes, government and farmers, for the purpose of formulating periodic recommendations for vegetable production.

Although the need for "institutional level" capacity development - particularly in the form of attention to intellectual property rights, regulations for import/export and other legislative issues - was regarded as important for overall success in Project aims and sectoral development, it was assumed that these issues would be taken up by active support of the THA, and through the possible formation of the Horticultural Development Council of Tanzania (HODECT) and fast track implementation of a National Horticultural Development Strategy.

Capacity for what?

According to the evaluation report, SEVIA's training was mainly in (technical) vegetable production only. The project did develop economic projections for vegetable crops to enable farmers to make more informed decisions about technology adoption, although it did not focus on agribusiness training *per se*. Actions to coordinate or develop contracts between farmers, services and vegetable markets were mainly limited to inviting different stakeholders (such as financial organisations, TAHA members) to field days, where these stakeholders could make their own contacts to access credit or markets.

The SEVIA training therefore created awareness of coordination needs within the vegetable value chain, and provided market information, although the Project did not take direct action to further coordinate stakeholders (beyond the establishment of the "Vegetable Technology Platform").

Summarising, the project was focussed mainly on technical aspects, and less on agribusiness or on "functional" aspects (e.g., specifically building capacity of farmers and other stakeholders to collaborate, reflect and learn). The Partners recognised that Project interventions did not cover all preconditions crucial for sector development, such as: farmer access to credit, crop insurance, mobile networks and apps for banking, advice, market information, development of irrigation, development of modern market structures (retail, processing, export), promotion of vegetable consumption, etc. However, it was assumed that the technical innovations in horticulture targeting farmers would be trigger capacity improvements in technical service providers, financial service providers, logistics, cold chain companies and others.

Approach to capacity development

The main capacity development effort of the project was aimed at individual farmers, and not producer organisations, although the demonstrations were also very much targeted at specific *communities* (villages).

A large part of the budget was aimed at developing varieties, production manuals and setting up 1000 field demonstration sites to reach 30,000 individual farmers and 1000 intermediary professionals. "Training" was therefore described as SEVIA's main "intervention type". By 2020 (after 5 years), off-station trainings, field days, fairs and consultancies had reached over 40,000 people (against the original target of 30,000).

To reach these numbers the Project developed a "training of trainers" programme, where the local trainers, drawn from extension, NGOs, seed sales staff, dealers, etc., were trained in the first instance by WUR-APR, and supported by the development of demonstration protocols and extension procedures, as well as technical manuals (transplanting, fertilisation, crop protection, etc.). With the help of government extension agents, the trainers then selected farmers who could manage the demonstration plots, and these supported these with bi-weekly visits, to manage the demonstration plots (each demo site having up to three crops/technologies displayed). These demo plots underpinned the SEVIA training motto of: "Seeing is believing".

SEVIA field days however were not only attended by farmers but other stakeholders, such as suppliers of irrigation systems and pest and herbicides, financial institutions, food handling experts, among others. Although the focus of the field days was therefore on production aspects, they did provide an opportunity for stakeholders to come together, to discuss business/market aspects. The Project also developed 4 online courses in English and Kiswahili (still accessible via https://www.sevia-e-learning.biz/) and crop guides for farmers and sector professionals.

In terms of capacity development of the organisations targeted, the approach consisted mainly of strategic development, operational planning (management, administration, finances, planning, monitoring and evaluation), as well staffing, infrastructure and hardware procurement. Specifically, the increased administrative capacity leading to possible additional fund raising by partners themselves was considered important in terms of "Capacity Development" (as used in this analysis).

Impact, scale, institutionalisation and sustainability

The final evaluation report showed most output targets were achieved or exceeded. Farmer success stories reported increased vegetable production and income and improved livelihoods. The final evaluation concluded that the project was making a difference in the vegetable sector of Tanzania. According to feedback from EWS and RZ, the Project resulted in a general change in "mindset" of farmers - i.e., such that they are more aware of and using improved seed and related practices.

The Project assumed that having strengthened the capacity of sufficient individual farmers, as well as the IVT and Afrisem, that demand for improved seeds, following production/income increases with their successful use, would eventually scale up to a commercial vegetable sector and where seed companies could flourish. The Project expected that this revenue model for seed companies would take 10-15 years to become financially sustainable. The Project partners acknowledged that "To change the African vegetable sector is not easy and will take a period of at least 10 years". Since the end of the project, EZ and RZ's business has continued to steadily increase in Tanzania and the East African region; the companies regard the project as having catalysed their operations in the region, which "would have been slower and smaller" without the FDOV project.

SEVIA also expected to achieve sustainability through the production and continued use of knowledge, information, manuals, recommendations, innovation reports, as well as trained trainers, and the strengthened IVT and Afrisem. Options to institutionalise the IVT towards the end of the project included continuing horticulture research, education and training either as the "SEVIA Foundation" (with funding from the private sector). Another option identified was to incorporate the IVT as a constituent college/institution of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). However, the Covid pandemic and subsequent restrictions prevented further discussions along these lines, and currently (after project completion) the operations at Were Were farm have reverted to agricultural production. Nevertheless, the SEVIA project manager and many of the instructors have been recruited to work within the EWS's own "Knowledge Transfer Team" in Tanzania, or the commercial seed operations of EWS or RZ.

The Project also assumed that TAHA could play a significant role in developing the sector (and hence sustainability of Project Outcomes) once farmers were capable of producing vegetables of the required quality and quantity. Farmers were said to be aware of TAHA, but TAHA's support was more directed to farmers practicing irrigation and small-scale producers with consistent supply, whereas SEVIA farmers had few greenhouses and grow vegetables in small plots. These farmers could not assure the consistent and abundant supply of produce favoured by TAHA registered members. Most of the farmers trained were willing to adopt the vegetable production technology, but lack of access to finance hindered them from building green houses, setting up irrigation systems and usage of other vegetable production

technology. There were no follow-ups on farmers who completed technical training to see how they can be supported financially to enhance farming.

Lessons learned and good practice

Post project, the local Project Manager (a Zimbabwean - who was judged as a key element of the Project's success) produced a booklet reflecting on experience called "The green revolution reborn", which included practical thoughts on project experience (particularly teamwork, organising farmer training).

The "lessons learned" below are interpreted partly from this report, partly from our conclusions (based on the CD framework described above), and partly from feedback from EWS and RZ staff via interviews.

- Technical knowledge transfer has the potential to grow the vegetable industry in countries such as Tanzania. Better varieties and technologies/techniques increase productivity, farmer income and improve livelihoods.
- Practical demonstration of improved seeds and associated technologies is key to development of farmer capacity. 'Seeing is believing'. Taking time to make a comparison between recommended practice and what the farmer is doing makes farmers feel respected. Farmers appreciate an extension officer who goes to the farmer's field to give advice or training.
- Farmers are reluctant to adopt a complete "package" (unlike Asia). Emphasising one or two techniques and technologies at a time, while still highlighting the importance of good general crop management, was more important.
- Farmer-to-farmer learning is important and should be part and parcel of any knowledge transfer strategy. Farmers listen to other farmers more than to anyone else. At the same time, there is substitute for traditional extension work, and direct technical support to farmers is important in making farmers reach a higher level of vegetable production.
- Publications such as crop guides are an important source of technical information for farmers. They should be well-illustrated and in local language. Such materials are an important library for farmers.
- Targeting women and youth in trainings facilitates sustainable vegetable production. Generally, women do most of the field work, and "when a woman does the marketing, the income benefits the entire family."
- For additional impact and scale, capacity to access to water, inputs, finance and markets is also critical. There is obviously better success for farmers who are progressive and have ready access to inputs. In SEVIA, the most successful farmers were those with a reliable water supply. For finance, small loans from village community banks and microfinance (VICOBAs, SACCOS) are not sufficient for major investments such as greenhouses and/or irrigation. Larger loans require collateral.
- Access to markets is the single most important factor in any vegetable enterprise. "If you do not have a market for it, do not grow it. 'Do not encourage production in areas where market access is difficult.
- For further sustained impact on the sector, organisational and institutional capacity also needs to be given more attention. Ways of "institutionalising" the training - incorporating such

training of professionals (farmer trainers/ extension agents) into more formal education systems (colleges, universities) need to be built into project activities.

- Keeping the partnership small and "likeminded" helped keep the objectives and roles clear. In the SEVIA project, there officially only 3 organisational partners, all from the Netherlands. The trend in programmes such as SDGP and Impact Clusters, towards more partners, and more diverse partners would have made the project more difficult to implement. At the same time, however, the small partnership also limited the scale of the project - a broader focus on strengthening the capacity of the broader vegetable value chain (rather than on farmer production) was said to be not attractive to the 2 seed companies involved, due to possible competition.
- Investing in educational institutes may not bring sufficient short term benefits to projects like SEVIA. Sokoine University was contracted by the SEVIA project for specific research projects, and the Project (IVT) hosted significant numbers of students for practical stages. However, the project partners considered that Sokoine did not necessarily have "much to offer" the project. While companies such as EWS and RZ have an interest in better qualified and experienced graduates as employees, and better skilled staff and farmers in the horticultural sector in general, it is difficult to justify their investment in such educational improvements.
- A committed and motivated project manager is an important factor in project success. In this case, the project manager hired by SEVIA, showed exceptional energy and skill in coordinating and leading activities in Tanzania, especially when travel of NL staff became problematic due to the Covid pandemic.

A3 Food Security through improved resilience of small-scale producer - FOSEK (FDOV12KE04)

https://projects.rvo.nl/project/nl-kvk-27378529-fdov12ke04/

Context, partnership and objectives

The FOSEK project purpose was "to improve food security in East Africa by increasing local agricultural production and the income of small-scale coffee farmers in Kenya and Ethiopia". More specifically, it promoted intercropping coffee, a cash crop for global markets, with food crops for home consumption, and local markets (improved nutrition). The two aspects were assumed to be synergistic, in that each made the other more viable.

The "system of interest" of the project can therefore be described as "A system for producing and marketing coffee for global markets and food crops for local markets in Kenya and Ethiopia". The main elements of this system were identified as agro-input dealers, nurseries, farmers and farmer organisations (including cooperative unions), storage and distribution centres (food crops), coffee collection points (including CMS), and traders.

The direct partners included in the Project included: Solidaridad (lead partner, international NGO, based in Netherlands); Nestle (global food company); SECAEC (Solidaridad East and Central Africa Expertise Centre, based in Kenya); Coffee Research Institute (national, public research institute, Kenya); Dorman Ltd (private coffee roaster/exporter, Kenya; Coffee Management Services Ltd (CMS: agribusiness provider and marketing agent Kenya working with 9 cooperatives in Kenya); Ecom Agroindustrial Corps. Ltd. (global commodity trading and processing company); Sustainable Management Services (subsidiary of Ecom, providing technical support to farmers); Yirgacheffe, Sideman and Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Unions in Ethiopia (collectively representing 220,00 farmers).

The project partnership was based on Memoranda of Understanding; some of the Cooperative Unions in Ethiopia were not aware of this formal partnership, according to the post-project evaluation, as Memorandums of Understanding carried less weight than contracts in their normal business relationship practice. Nevertheless, all partners, including the local ones, were involved in project governance, through steering groups in each country and an annual stakeholder forum.

A Project Implementation Committee was also formed, to manage activities of the different implementing partners on a more regular basis. Also, important to note is that many of these partners had previous experience of working together, and so had already established a basis of understanding and trust between them.

Whose capacity?

The main group intended for capacity development included 120,000 individual farmers (80,000 in Ethiopia, 40,000 in Kenya; including 24,000 women). According to the evaluation, these numbers were reached.

At the organisational level, capacity development was directed at 27 primary cooperative societies in Ethiopia, and 18 cooperatives in Kenya. In addition, 33 nurseries were established in Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as 20 storage and distribution centres (including 3 milk cooling plants in Kenya). The intended improvement of regional supply chains can also be considered as "organisational capacity development".

In terms of (what can be considered as) institutional capacity development, the Project intended to improve local markets for food crops/milk, through advocacy with local governments to raise awareness of local consumers concerning good nutrition.

Capacity for what?

In its problem analysis, the Project identified as constraints farmer awareness of good agricultural practice, limited access to finance and financial skills at cooperative level, limited access to quality inputs, unreliable infrastructure (storage facilities and milk cooling plants), deficient transport and links to markets. As the Project proposal noted: "capacity building will focus on agricultural practices and intercropping" (i.e., technical aspects), although it also included development of agribusiness and managerial capacities, and, perhaps to a lesser extent, on other "functional capacities" such as leadership, gender and youth equity.

The training given by the Project was also based on the assessment of baseline data, collected mainly for M&E purposes in the initial phases of the Project, together with key informant surveys and farmer focus groups. This "capacity gap assessment", which determined training priorities and plans for the different cooperatives and farmer groups, was also informed by the previous experience of local project partners and projects (partners had been working with coffee cooperatives since 2006).

The farmer training included not only good agricultural practice of coffee, but also broader approaches to landscape protection, nutrition, diversification of production and marketing of surpluses. The broad nature of this training was said by those interviewed to be more attractive to farmers than just coffee practices.

Some 80 cooperatives were also trained on a range of agribusiness and management skills, including strategic planning, human resources management, quality management, financial management/ accounting, marketing. Training in leadership and governance ("functional capacities"), including gender equal relations in governance was provided to Board members of the cooperatives. The evidence assessed in the final evaluation showed an appreciation of the improved quality of cooperative management, with member farmers reporting an improved awareness of their needs and requirements, and more openness between board and management and farmers as members.

The nurseries established were supplied with new, disease resistant varieties of coffee, although given time to maturity, this probably did not affect yields by the end of the Project). Most farmers interviewed at the time of the Project evaluation reported an increase in coffee yield per tree, from an average of around 2 kg to 10 kg per tree and were very satisfied with these results. In both countries the quality of coffee produced by participating farmers improved from grade 3 to grade 1, so that they received a higher price for their produce. This higher quality was largely attributed to the hardware distributed to all cooperatives in the form of stainless-steel drying tables, which replacing drying on the ground.

For the second business case, that of intercropping (vegetables and other food crops on the one hand, and tree crops as shade trees on the other), macadamia, avocado, and certain vegetables such as cassava were introduced. The Project also provided farmers with hardware (tools, mostly shears and cutters for pruning and lopping).

In terms of agribusiness and functional capacities, assistance in developing markets as well as financial services was also provided, although more successfully for the coffee value chain, than for the food value chains. However, the final evaluation concluded that financial services were not a strong point in program implementation, and access to financial services remained lacking for farmers as well as for cooperatives. Given that financial services were reported as prominent in many other (FDOV) programs

at the time, the Project evaluators regarded this as an oversight in design. The final evaluation also concluded that while market linkages in the coffee value chain were well developed, as the trading partners were partners in the program, access to market for food crops not well developed.

In terms of linkages - networking capacity - the post-project external evaluation concluded that there was limited connection with wider policy, research and other stakeholders in the field, which was said to be a factor limiting scaling and sustainability of the Project. However, the Project staff interviewed did not agree with this finding, maintaining that good relations with government agencies was achieved though, for example, collaboration with the Coffee Research Institute (Kenya) and others to jointly develop training manuals and provide seedlings.

Approach to capacity development

A main innovation in capacity development promoted by the Project was the "3 tier approach" used in both countries to achieve farmer training at the scale required. Under this system, Solidaridad together with the Coffee Research Institute developed curricula and training manuals which were used by the Cooperative Unions (Ethiopia) and Coffee Management Services (CMS) and Sustainable Management Services, SMS, (Kenya) to train "lead farmers" (Ethiopia) or "promotor farmers" (Kenya), who themselves acted as trainers of farmers in general. By Project end, one thousand local trainers had reached more than 120,000 farmers.

Interestingly, the Lead/Promoter Farmers were selected by villagers, following guidelines/criteria suggested by Project partners, mainly to select Lead Farmers who were seen as "influencers" by their colleagues, and more educated to be able to use the training materials. The Lead Farmers were not compensated in the form of salary, although they were given minor expenses by their cooperative for e.g., local travel.

Apart from Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in coffee and food crops, food and nutrition related training was given to farmers. The Project partners also trained the staff of cooperatives in management and business skills.

The Project also developed capacity through infrastructure. Nurseries were rehabilitated and extended to provide coffee and tree and vegetable seedlings and cuttings. Six storage facilities were constructed in Ethiopia with the expressed purpose to facilitate the collection, aggregation and sale of food crop surpluses. In three Kenyan cooperatives, the Project installed milk coolers for dairy production pilots.

Finally, a joint learning platform with other NGOs/ PPPs was organised by the lead partner, Solidaridad, to share experience and lessons learned on specific topics. The platform functioned through annual meetings (workshops) with other projects, policy makers and representatives from other countries (and virtual participation of Europeans) and included field visits to FOSEK sites. The platform was considered as very successful in interviews with FOSEK staff[18].

Impact, scale, institutionalisation and sustainability

In terms of impact, improvements in production and quality of coffee were apparently not reflected at the aggregate level, with average production of cooperatives not increased (perhaps due to wider trends such as rainfall limitations, but also reflecting global factors such as price). The Project evaluation also indicated that intercropping did not seem to have increased in Kenya, and decreased in Ethiopia, and that food security had not significantly improved.

[18] Stephen Kithuka (Solidaridad) and Catherine Nganga (Coffee Management Services)

The project expected that capacity developed in in the form of established nurseries (for coffee, food crops), food/milk collection and distribution points would be viable businesses by project completion, and that increased volume, quality of coffee would lead to increased farmer income and expanding activities within the supply chain (including financing food crop activities). It also expected that extension services/support to farmers from cooperatives and service providers would be viable businesses. The Project proposal also expected to reinforce the institutional capacity of the farmer organisations so they could sustain the support services, handling of nurseries and trainings at a qualitative level, after the end of the project, and to be able to expand services where necessary with the adopted practices, knowledge and resources because of the project.

The Project evaluators concluded that sustainability of certain innovations introduced is likely, but not of all. They were confident that when GAP for coffee are adopted by farmers, they will likely be sustainably used, and knowledge gained will stay. But they also felt that innovations around multi-cropping of food crops had not really been successful and may not be very sustainable. In part, they attributed this to the marginal involvement of women and female farmers, mainly responsible for food crops.

At higher levels, the concluded, institutional sustainability may be assured as far as developed capacity at cooperative level is concerned, including the Lead/Promoter farmer trainers. The 3-tier model was considered an overall success and was said by the final evaluation to have especially influenced the Ethiopian government and its view of extension. In Kenya, CMS was also impressed by the direct method of training and provision of services using this model and considered the implication for their mode of operations. However, there remained issues of compensation and legitimacy of the Kenyan Promotor Farmers, as some of these were critical of the fact that they were not as well compensated for time and travel expenses as were similar roles in other projects. It was also noted that some Promoter Farmers did not get a formal introduction as a trainer in their village, and (especially the younger Promoter Farmers) were not taken seriously consequently.

Also seen as "likely to be sustainable" in the final evaluation was the capacity development represented the dairy training in the Kenyan cooperatives, although further training in animal feed, artificial insemination, etc., as well as improved links to dairy processors, was seen as necessary to consolidate gains.

Of the infrastructural capacity developed, the economic sustainability of the nurseries was to some extent compromised by government policies: government subsidised provision of coffee seedlings led to downward pressure on prices and reduced demand from project nurseries trying to provide coffee seedlings on commercial terms. Although the seedlings were appreciated, they reached an estimated 48,000 farmers of the intended 120,000. However, the nurseries were more successful in producing other tree crops, especially avocado and macadamia, which were offered and taken up at scale, and provided a sustainable business case for nursery owners.

For the storage facilities established and intended for food crop storage and aggregation, the limited production and marketing of food crops resulted in these being used more for the storage of coffee. These food storage facilities did not reach break-even in financial terms, according to the project evaluation.

In terms of wider institutional capacity, very little of the program's experiences influenced either policy at the higher levels or were integrated into the activities of higher-level agencies (according to the evaluation). Certain regulations at the level of the cooperatives have been changed, but in general the program achieved little in this domain (in the opinion of the evaluators). This is perhaps not surprising, as lobbying (for policy change) was not seen as a priority need by the Partners in achieving the Project objectives.

Lesson learned and good practice

From the above, and from the recommendations of the external evaluation of FOSEK, the following lessons and good practice were synthesised:

- A partner with experience and capacity to manage diverse stakeholders is necessary in complex projects such as FOSEK. In discussions with project representatives, the experience and capacity of the lead partner - Solidaridad (an international NGO) - was considered as a key element in managing the large and diverse group of stakeholders in what was described as a complex project over a substantial period of time.
- The three-tier training system, introduced by FOSEK, has clear advantages, and facilitated outreach to significant numbers of farmers. The accessibility of Lead/Promotor Farmers', and the local testing of technologies was appreciated, and outputs increased by strongly engaged farmers. The Lead/Promoter Farmers could easily visit their neighbours to see their farm and give advice. Broadly speaking, the use of Lead/Promoter farmers is seen as sustainable, and has been used beyond FOSEK, with particular interest from the Ethiopian government to scale up this practice.
- The broad nature of the training given to farmers, including not only coffee practices but also diversification and marketing, nutrition, etc. was more interesting to farmers than a focus solely on coffee. It was important to secure family food security, as well as promote a cash crop such as coffee.
- The simplified, concise (5-8 pages, with pictures) manuals on coffee, food crops and nutrition made available to ToTs and PFs/ LFs aided them in training farmers. These should be prepared in local languages. Additional, more "higher-level" training manuals/monographs (in English) presented ToT trainers required a higher level of general and agronomical education to understand and were less useful as course material for training FPs/ LFs and farmers.
- Cooperatives should be assessed for their suitability or training needs at the start of the program. The success of the training provided differed per cooperative depending on their prior level of institutional quality. Future such trainings should be based on such capacity needs assessment, which can be done using a combination of methods (surveys, key informant interviews, farmer focus groups).
- In a complex project with many and diverse partners, such as FOSEK, the existing capacity of one of the partners in managing complex, multi-stakeholder projects is crucial. In this case, this role was undertaken by the international NGO Solidaridad. A good governance structure (e.g., Implementation Committee, Steering Committee, with clear and separate roles, is required to ensure commitment, coordination and coherence, The scope and ambition of the project is determined by the reach of these partners.
- Networking with other projects and countries is a valuable means of learning from the experience of others. The role of an interested international partner (e.g., an international NGO such as Solidaridad) facilitates such "joint learning platforms".
- Increasing the capacity of farmers to access financial services is necessary for them to innovate and adopt new production practices. In the FOSEK project, financial services were not a strong point in program implementation, and access to financial services remained lacking for farmers as well as for cooperatives.
- Capacity development needs to be targeted at the social group responsible for the relevant activity. Women are mainly responsible for food crops, and in this project were not sufficiently reached to have the impact on food crop innovation expected.

A4 Cracking the Nut (FDOV14BJ54)

https://projects.rvo.nl/project/nl-kvk-27378529-fdov14bj54

Context, partnership and objectives

The goal of the Cracking the Nut project was to support the development of an inclusive and competitive cashew sector in Benin and Burkina Faso, in which (smallholder) farmers, processors and service providers are enabled to increase productivity and efficiency in a collaborative way. The Project aimed to significantly increase the number of jobs and the cash income of at least 10,000 farmers and 2,500 workers in the cashew processing industry, leading these people from poverty to acceptable and sustainable standards of living.

The interventions targeted three levels, namely:

- Inclusive and competitive cashew production and stable collaboration between farmers and processors *(profitable cashew production).*
- Competitive cashew processing, export of kernels and sales of cashew by-products (*Growing competitive processing industry*).
- Stable and transparent cashew sector with functional and competitive support services (*Well organised sector with supporting services).*

Most consortium partners (Woord en Daad, FairMatch Support, NUTS2 and the processors ANATRANS and Afokantan already knew each other from previous collaborations and are well acquainted with the region and the cashew sector. The opportunity for co-financing by RVO was therefore not the motivation for cooperation, but it came along at the right time and fitted well with their plans and ambitions.

The project has an explicit market system approach in its design and implementation, with customised capacity development deployed at virtually every link in the chain, though with strong emphasis on CD at the level of producer organisations and processors.

The results of the project are undoubtedly convincing and have been clearly documented and explained, e.g., productivity doubled from 280 kg/ha in 2015 to 584 kg/ha in 2021. Aggregation of smaller farmer groups into larger producers organisations, which has enabled these to professionalize and expand their range of services to members, leading to increase of income, yields and efficiency and reduction of transaction costs

Support to the processing factories in building a sustainable business through stronger relations with their suppliers and an improved procurement strategy led to growth of volume of processed nuts from 2.301 MT in 2015 to 12.646 MT in 2021. The number of jobs increased also from 1.472 fte (full time equivalent) in 2016 to 3.431 fte in 2021.

The business potential of the project was illustrated by the increased investment of the private partner NUTS2. Instead of the budgeted EUR 1.3M, NUTS2 invested EUR 3.5M in hardware and technical assistance.

In essence, it can be said this this is a project of parties who knew each other and the cashew sector well, trusted each other, and knew where they wanted to go and what was needed to get there.

Whose capacity?

Training and other forms of capacity development were realised at the three key levels, namely: 1) farmers and their producer organisations, 2) processors and 3) institutional environment.

A lot of effort has been done to train farmers and a selected group of lead farmers. They were trained in good agricultural practices (GAP) and farming as a business, quality and food safety but also intercropping. On top of that, lead farmers were also trained so they were able to train farmers themselves according to the train-the-trainers principle.

Producer organisations are considered as the interface between farmers and the factory. Strengthening those organisations was therefore one of the key areas of the project, hence training and technical assistance was provided to improve their organisational capacity, plantation productivity, nut quality and operational efficiency. The producer organisations were classified which made it possible to distinguish the diversity of the performance of each organisation and to support them in a tailor-made approach rather than a generic support.

The processors were trained and supported to improve sourcing operations, to increase farm-firm linkages and efficiencies through mechanisation and by installing operational tools such as quality systems for improvements at processing levels.

Sector associations were trained in lobby and advocacy to represent their interests in national associations, and jointly advocate for favourable conditions for the cashew sector, as well as to present relevant issues to banks, service providers and government.

Cashew Quality Control (source: FairMatch Support)

Furthermore, other actors such as micro-finance institutions, (MFIs, providing value chain capital), service providers such as nurserymen, government institutions and inter-professional organisations have been trained and supported by the project to some extent.

Finally, during the entire project period for all stakeholders; from farmers to employees, from suppliers to clients, from investors to beneficiaries, there were multi-stakeholder trainings and meetings to share results and lessons learnt.

Capacity for what?

The capacity development approach encompassed the broad spectrum of mainly training and guidance on technical (agronomic) and organisational aspects, and to a minor extent training and support for development of the institutional framework. Farmers and were trained in farming as a business (productivity, yield, agro-economic analysis, quality, develop food/cash crops mix farming model) and intensive coaching and support was provided to 150 lead farmers/farmers, linked to 150 one hectare demonstration plots and kits to test quality.

Capacity development was done in a very practical/operational way that matched well with what parties needed, when they needed it. Customised agronomic and agribusiness training and coaching were provided at the level of the farmers and their organisations. Most training was done in the off-season when people had more time available. Regular attention was paid to evaluation with all parties involved in the past growing season, so that lessons could be drawn together for the new cycle. Analyses and discussions were conducted based on results and concrete data.

The project specifically focused on professionalizing producer organisations, and this was seen by the partners as one of the drivers of success for institutionalising services to farmers. For example, the more advanced organisations (3-star) have been able to grow into professional organisations who are ready to make the next step and provide services to their members and be trustworthy business partners for their customers. At the start of the project, producer organisations were organised in villages and were relatively small in terms of number of farmers and volumes. Since the start of the project of the project, the number of such producer organisation has declined drastically. This has been the strategy, to encourage smaller cooperatives to work together to pool activities, make use of economies of scale, and form larger and stronger cooperatives.

Approach to capacity development

The cashew supply chain and the business cases related to it were central to this project and guided the types of capacity development offered by the project.

The project used an integral market system approach by touching on all levels of the primary supply chain, as well as supporting actors and the institutional arena of the cashew sector. Capacity development was first and foremost centred on optimising the supply chain by strengthening both the pull (processors and their sales via NUTS2) and the push (farmers and their organisations) sides, and on strengthening the business relationship between these two.

At the start, the assumption had been that sustainable relationship between producers and processors is crucial for the success of the project and moreover for sustainable development of the supply chain. After 7 years, the results have proved this assumption correct. Building a relationship, however, requires commitment, knowledge and skills, and supported with software for reliability and transparency in data, this was consequently heavily invested in. A practical example of partnership development and how to develop more trust and loyalty in the chain was the visit of delegations from cooperatives (suppliers) to the factory.

In the initial years of the project, the agricultural extensionists were employed by FairMatch Support and paid by the project. First, the processors in Benin and Burkina Faso needed all their attention for the expansion and upgrade of their factories. During the project (after 2 -3 years), these tasks were transferred to the processors and in some cases to the producer organisations. The cost of their services is now being covered by business.

During the implementation of the project, at each season the cooperatives were regularly assessed and classified based on their organisational capacity, their level of compliance with the contract and their performance on quality, volume and traceability. The objective was to supply the factories with a reliable volume of good quality, traceable nuts in the quantities desired at competitive costs, through increasing the organisational capacity of the producer organisations, plantation productivity, nut quality and operational efficiency.

The same is true for farmers. It was originally planned that the project would reach 10,000 farmers. In the end, the choice was made to only work with farmers with ambition and potential for cashew production, and in the end "only" 5,481 farmers were involved as suppliers to the factories. However, the total volume of cashew produced by these farmers exceeds the original target for the 10,000 farmers.

Interaction with other projects

Since project partners such as FairMatch Support already knew the region and the cashew sector well, this project built on those contacts and expertise and collaborated in various ways with other projects and initiatives. For example, in Burkina Faso the national project PADA/REDD+ (2018 - 2022, with finance from the African Development Bank), is providing new opportunities for access to finance for planting material. To illustrate, one of the 2-star Farmer Association partners of Anatrans put in place an improved planting material nursery for their members. Through this project, farmer aggregations can benefit from financial support of the Environmental Intervention Fund (FIE) and/or the bank "*Réseaux des Caisses Populaires*" of Burkina Faso (RCPB).

Scale, institutionalisation and sustainability

The approach of reasoning from a market perspective - strengthening trust and cooperation between chain partners, strengthening cooperatives as important aggregator, strengthening the interface between farmers and processors, and optimising each link of the supply chain - offers the best possibilities for scale, if there is a market for the product. In addition, FairMatch Support remains active in the sector and region, working with the processors, NUTS2, etc building on lessons learned from the project.

The same applies to sustainability. In the interview, Herman uit de Bosch indicated that other than the risk of emerging jihadism, terrorism and insecurity in the region, the impact of the project will definitely be sustainable.

The institutionalisation of the approach serves as a model and inspiring example to the Sustainable Nut Initiative (SNI, https://www.sustainablenutinitiative.com/). Project partner Nuts2 is one of the founders of and drivers behind the SNI, which works on creating sustainability in the cashew sector and is trying to convince the supermarkets to buy sustainably produced cashew. FairMatch Support is running the secretariat of SNI, while the experiences and results of Anatrans in the project are often used as an example of how the sector could adjust towards a more sustainable way of operating. The network of SNI has grown substantially in 2021 with new retailers joining. In addition to new members like Aldi Sud and Nord, LIDL and Red River Foods, Daarnhouwer, SNI is also working to address sustainability issues in the cashew sector.

In the case of Burkina Faso, several meetings were held on a regular basis with the different actors in the cashew sector, including: Anatrans, FMS, DGPER, Secretariat of Commerce, ComCashew, etc., with the aim of establishing a common vision for the development of a national cashew strategy. ANATRANS as a leader in cashew processing in Burkina Faso has played a leading role at each stage of this professionalisation through its active role in decision-making bodies such as ANTA and CIAB, and its voice has carried it to the highest political body. It has assumed its advocacy role by joining multiple networks and platforms of the sector.

The structuring of the cashew nut sector in Burkina Faso went further with the creation of the Conseil Burkinabé de l'Anacarde (CBA). This council aims to promote the cashew nut sector through the implementation of actions for the organisation, coordination and development of activities in this sector throughout the national territory.

Lessons learned and good practice

The experience of the "Cracking the Nut" Project shows the following lessons learned:

- A strong market perspective and supply chain development are key drivers of success and scale. The Project focussed capacity development not only on the individual actors along the value chain and supporting this value chain, but also on strengthening the business relationships and trust between those actors. In addition, the Project took measures to support further develop the institutional environment for cashew development. Rewarding producer organisations (and other chain actors) for compliance with contract terms and good performance, with additional services and incentives further improves the cohesiveness of value chain partnerships.
- A good (prior) knowledge of the sector and region in the project consortium, and partners who know each other well contribute to a clear division of tasks and mutual trust between partners. In this case, the Project partners, representing different interests in the cashew value chain, already had a basis of previous collaboration and trust before the project started, meaning that the need for internal discussions to determine roles, responsibilities and reconcile (possible) competing interests was minimal.
- Flexibility - adaptation and adjustment of objectives, targets and planned activities to respond to ever-changing conditions and experience also contributes to impact and sustainability. After each season, all stakeholders jointly evaluated their experience, progress, and jointly adjusted plans for the following season. Services were tailored, based on periodical assessments and assessment of the needs/classification of individual producer organisations. At the same time, increasing regulations and fixation of donors on key performance indicators can tie a project in a "straight jacket", leaving less room for flexibility and adaptation to changing circumstances. Projects such as SDGP are, in principle, meant to lead to more innovative initiatives - risk and flexibility therefore must be built in. Overzealous planning should not compromise this search for innovation.
- Although this is an important condition when evaluating the proposal, the public component of PPP, or an active role of government organizations in the project, hardly materialized. This has not influenced the outcome of the project.
- Respect for farmers and other actors as partners - not 'beneficiaries" - is fundamental. As a general observation, farmers are expected by more and more projects to provide data without it being clear for what, for whom and what happens with it. Farmers see this as simple data robbery. It is time to change the narrative of farmers from "beneficiaries" - and start taking them and their organisations seriously as business "partners."

A5 Increased potato value chain efficiency in Great Lakes Region (SDGP1046RW)

https://projects.rvo.nl/project/nl-kvk-27378529-sdgp1046rw

Context, partnership and objectives

Irish potato is an important food security and cash crop in Rwanda, and Rwanda is the largest producer of potatoes in the East African Community. Increasing urbanisation in Rwanda and the East African region is driving the growing demand for potatoes, and the potato value chain is deemed important for food security and to address malnutrition.

The seed and ware potato value chains are lengthy and complex, involving many actors that support and influence farmers and private actors. Where the two separate value chains connect, there is a high risk of a lack of value chain coordination and a lack of information dissemination. Therefore, the aim of this project is to connect the seed and ware potato value chains in Rwanda and make the two more efficient as a whole. The assumption is that increased coordination and usage of quality inputs and introduction of good agricultural practices will lead to higher production and better income for farmers for both value chains.

The project originated from two separate project proposals, one for seed potatoes and for ware potatoes, which were developed by two different consortia. Upon request of RVO and with help from partnership broker Crosswire Works, one consortium with 7 members was eventually formed to design and implement the current project. Originally, local parties were not involved in the project design and formulated goals were simply presented to them. As a result, the Seed Potato Fund (SPF) of Rwanda was initially reluctant, but this was later rectified.

The four impact pathways of the project are:

1. Increased production of traceable seed potatoes and their connection with the ware potato value chain.
2. Value chain optimisation for introduction of cleaned potatoes from smallholders through processors to end consumers.
3. Improved agricultural practices of seed and ware potato farmers.
4. Increased access to finance via innovative financing for farmers and SMEs.

The main investments of the project are in both hardware and software, with the software consisting mainly of agronomic capacity development.

Output and outcome targets are well defined and comprised among others: construction of 2 warehouses; 1 aeroponic facility and 1 processing line for cleaned potatoes; 20,000 farmers buying improved potato seed, leading to increases in productivity (12 ton to 15 ton/ha) and income.

The mid-term evaluation showed promising results for most output indicators, with overachievements compared to expectations for some targets. For other outcome indicators, such as increases in yield and farmer income, no data was yet available or processed (at the time of this analysis) to measure progress, especially at the level of support farmers.

The consortium members have a clearly defined mandate and role in the project:

- The Seed Potato Fund (SPF) invests in mini tuber production, storage and provides Farmer Field Days for seed potato farmers.
- Hollanda Fairfoods (HFF - Winnaz) buys potatoes from ware potato farmers, cleans and packages potatoes, improves their production line and provides climate-smart storage.
- Holland Green Tech (HGT) and Delphy support an outgrown scheme, providing agronomic support, Farmer Field Days that are developed for lead and support farmers, based on the inputs provided by SPF and the cooperative network of Agriterra.
- Agriterra builds the institutional capacity of cooperatives.
- MoneyPhone (instead of Agri-Wallet) provides access to finance for farmers.
- Crosswise Works is involved for partnership learning and brokering and executed the mid-term review.
- The Rwandan Ministry of Agriculture is considered as "silent partner" and stimulates collaboration and a stable and a supportive business environment.

Whose capacity?

The programme distinguishes between outcomes envisioned for:

1. lead farmers (M/F) - the main farmers supported by the programme.
2. study group farmers (M/F) or support farmers - farmers in the network of the lead farmer who are directly supported by him/her and create a study group with the lead farmer.
3. farmers attending Farmer Field Days (M/F) - other farmers who take part in training days of the programme but with no additional support.

For both seed and ware potatoes, lead farmers are trained to use facilitation skills to disseminate knowledge and adapt their farm to demonstrate good agricultural practices. Each lead farmer is expected to connect and share the learning with support farmers. Each growing season, other lead farmers are selected.

The lead and support farmers are supposed to take part in working groups and study group visits (guided by HGT and Delphy) with the aim to improve agricultural practices, resulting in 50% increase in yield by lead farmers, 25% increase in yield by support farmers and 80% of farmers with offtake agreements from SPF-HFF.

Farmer Field Days are organised as demonstration days for agricultural practices to inform and share with farmers about skills on irrigation, climate adaptation, technological improvements and input provision and market access.

Cooperatives receive training on financial management for farmer-led businesses and training on managing an agricultural cooperative. Another form of capacity development is the so-called Agripool exchange: visits from Dutch farmers and cooperatives to exchange knowledge on warehousing, storage and management information system expertise and cooperative business development services.

Expected outcomes of capacity development of cooperatives include 50% higher revenues, 25% increase in member income, and 25% increase in membership.

Capacity for what?

Farmer Field Day (source: Delphy)

For the lead and supporting farmers, capacity development has been almost exclusively agronomic- technical in nature, focusing on good agricultural practices. Besides, for lead farmers special attention is paid to training their skills in knowledge transfer. For cooperatives, capacity development has been linked to agribusiness development and involves strengthening the overall management of the cooperatives.

No specific capacity development interventions were foreseen for other stakeholders, such as MINAGRI, SPF and Hollanda Fairfoods. The latter two have employed additional staff, e.g., product manager and agronomists to increase their operational capacity. The involvement of MINAGRI is meant to ensure buy in from the government, without specifically addressing its capacity needs.

Approach to capacity development

The CD approach focuses on good agricultural practices and involves training, hands-on learning on demonstration farms, and through study groups for the most active/entrepreneurial farmers (lead and support farmers). A complementary approach is training of cooperatives as a means to strengthen their capacity as a farmer-led business entity.

The project supports the lead farmers in setting up demonstration plots, provides some inputs to cultivate seed or ware potatoes, and trains the lead farmers in organising and facilitating study group visits. According to the mid-term evaluation, the Farmer Field School model used in the project for the study groups, is mostly based on teaching and transfer of knowledge, where an agronomist with a great deal of technical expertise passes on information to the farmers. However, the original model of the Farmer Field School does not just focus on knowledge but also on developing critical thinking and problem solving skills that would allow farmers to troubleshoot issues on their own land and being facilitated towards finding an own solution.

The consortium partners have organised themselves in such a way that agronomists from all different organisations meet up regularly. During these meetings, they update each other on progress and on the information that they share with the farmers, to ensure its consistency and ensure uniform messaging. To this end, the Rwandan potato sector stakeholders have worked with the International Potato Centre, to design a manual on "modern ways of potato farming". This is used by the programme as a reference for all agronomists and lead farmers. No specific attention has been given on training techniques, i.e., how best to deliver a training to farmers.

From the mid-term evaluation as well as from the interview, it becomes clear that the project has a heavy "crop focus" compared to a "farm focus". A lot of the data currently collected from farmers focuses on area, yield, and income (in some cases) related to potato production. But individual farmers cannot sustain themselves only through potato farming because they need diversification to be able to face associated risks and also to be able to maintain healthy soils through crop rotation. With its narrow focus on potatoes, understanding the business case for multiple crops per farmer is not addressed by the project.

At the start of the project, cooperatives are screened (cooperative assessment), based on which points for improvement are identified and, via an annual action plan, a capacity development trajectory is implemented. Besides standard trainings for a set of cooperatives, the cooperative action plan consists of actions aimed at strengthening specific aspects at each individual cooperative. This takes place, among other things, through short peer-to-peer advisory assignments carried out by external experts, e.g., from Agrico.

For both the participating farmers (lead farmers and supporters) and the cooperative, the selection process focuses on their motivation and potential. This is to ensure the highest possible absorption capacity.

Interaction with other projects

The aeroponic facility, co-financed by the project, has received many visitors from Rwanda and neighbouring countries and is becoming a reference for potato seed multiplication in the region. Furthermore, a similar SDGP project is being executed in Uganda, with Delphy, Hollanda Fairfoods and Agriterra as consortium partners. Hence, the knowledge and learning from the Rwanda project extends to Uganda as well.

Impact, scale, institutionalisation and sustainability

The local embedding of the project was expected to be enhanced through close collaboration with the district governments, and by involving the leading cooperatives proactively in the project. In the Rwandan government's agricultural development model, the cooperative has an important position as an aggregator, service and input provider and to strengthen the bargaining position of smallholder farmers. In the project the cooperative is an important backbone to provide access to finance by individual members. Nevertheless, it remains open whether the project has fully exploited the strategic potential of the cooperatives as they have been just loosely linked to the lead farmers and study groups. The mid-term evaluation indicates that from the perspective of making project activities more sustainable and increasing the resilience of smallholder farmers, the cooperative could have played a more prominent role especially related to agronomic services and farm business development.

MINAGRI plays a modest role, being a so-called "silent" partner in the consortium, with the main aim to secure buy in from the government for the project activities. According to the mid-term evaluation, the Ministry of Agriculture and local government are positive about the programme and its results, and its partners are valued for their contributions to the potato value chain. However, not much has been done by the project to improve the regulatory framework in the potato sector, e.g., for accepting new seed varieties. Delphy indicates that lobbying for policy development is beyond the scope of the project and would also require a different expertise.

The sustainability of the project impact and results risk being limited by the sharp focus on agronomic support to potato (seed and ware) production. The agronomists are crucial players to support farmers and they could broaden their scope of work beyond promoting new potato techniques and training modules and provide the social capital for farmers to make their businesses work. They are already the link pin for all stakeholders, signalling opportunities, constraints and potential solutions for issues related to farmer advancement, and thus value chain partners' interests further up the chain.

It is not yet clear who will take over the role of the agronomists and assist lead and support farmers with technical advice on improved cultivation techniques when the project ends. During the mid-term evaluation, some focus group farmers mentioned not being able to apply all steps of the "modern way" of potato farming, or even abandoning specific practices when facing difficulties. These difficulties

mentioned usually fell under the 3 categories of: a) the availability and price of inputs (good quality seed potatoes being scarce and expensive), fertilisers being difficult to obtain and expensive, with lack of fertiliser also driving up the price of manure; b) issues on the topography of farmers' own fields and available infrastructure (e.g. not spraying pesticides because of the difficulty in carrying tanks; inability to make proper beds due to land locked with volcanic rock); c) access to capital to purchase inputs, as farmers report that the price of potatoes being so volatile, they incur a high risk of not being able to repay loans, and do not have access to financing institutions that understand and accommodate the volatility and seasonality of production.

Lessons learned and good practice

- The need to keep sight of the bigger picture. The project is heavily result-driven and focused on realising tasks within the project framework; business opportunities and innovation outside that pre-determined framework are not seized or taken up. The immediate project objective is to reach large numbers of farmers with training on new potato farming techniques, and specifically Holland Green Tech and SPF have established a well-oiled machine to achieve this objective. However, the push to reach many farmers has hampered the pursuit of more qualitative goals and a more integrated approach to the chain and farm system (e.g., in the area of rotation crops, soil health, farming as a business).
- The need for the partnership to be more than the sum of its parts. There is obvious enthusiasm and ownership among the consortium partners, and the mandate and tasks for all parties are clear. However, there is a perception that there are few goals that partners solve together. Inherent to working in a consortium of seven partners is complexity. A good division of roles and continuous communication are crucial for good cooperation. Perhaps a consortium with a smaller number of partners would be better able to operate more decisively, with more flexibility in a constantly changing environment. Nonetheless, the input of Crosswire Works as partnership broker proved crucial prior to the start of the project and during the first years of implementation. As project lead, Delphy felt its role as knowledge partner was somewhat underexposed.
- The need to take a value chain approach. The value chain approach linking the seed potato chain (SPF and cooperatives) to the production of ware potatoes (cooperatives) and their processing (through Hollanda Fairfood) allows for both the push (production) and pull (market) factors. This is a very interesting and valuable concept. However, having only one outlet for Low es (HFF) appears to be a limiting factor, and a more diverse set of buyers/processors would improve sustainability of the concept.
- The need for commitment. Pre-selection of cooperatives and lead farmers based on potential and ambition/commitment is by no means a guarantee for success but prevents problems in terms of commitment and active attitude.
- The need for monitoring, reflection and learning. The project is focussed mainly on training farmers. Three partners deploy teams of agronomists for this purpose and collect data, especially from lead farmers. However, the role of analysing this collected production data is not clearly assigned to one of these parties and, as a result, these data are barely analysed. Data collection is done for the purpose of project M&E, instead of using it to continually improve agronomic or other services to farmers.
- The need for more organisational and institutional capacity development. The project has clear and concrete goals and is being implemented meticulously and efficiently by a broad coalition of mostly private parties. However, a greater involvement of local organisations in the

development of the project, together with a more organisational and institutional capacity development focus, combined with a more integrated approach to chain development and farming as a business, would likely contribute to a greater degree of sustainability and system change than is currently the case.

A6 Developing a low-carbon coffee value-chain in Kenya (SDGP2200KE)

https://projects.rvo.nl/project/nl-kvk-27378529-sdgp2200ke/

Context, partnership and objectives

The SDGP Project "Developing a low-carbon Coffee Value-Chain in Kenya," being implemented from July 2020 to July 2023, is led by the Moyee Nederland B.V., a specialised coffee trader. Other formal partners include Agriterra (Dutch NGO, specialised in development of farmer organisations), FairChain Netherlands Foundation (NGO, specialised in inclusive business models), and FairChain Kenya.

It was originally proposed to include as partner a Cooperative Union, but insufficient interest was expressed during early implementation (possibly due to conflicts of interest, in that the Union received income from sale of conventional inputs such as inorganic fertilisers, whereas one of the aims of the project was to decrease their use). The Project therefore works directly with 7 (as of time of writing) primary cooperatives, although some effort was required to explain project objectives and establish working relationships[19] . "reNature" a Netherlands-based Foundation operating internationally and with interests in more ecologically-based production, also entered into collaboration with the Project.

KALRO Coffee Research Institute (Kenyan public research institute) was also originally proposed as partner, due to their experience in coffee intercropping (see FOSEK project review). However, changes of personnel responsibilities in the CRI made this role more difficult, although the Institute continued to provide soil sampling and training services.

The "system of interest" of the Project can therefore be described as the specialised coffee value chain, centred on the Primary Cooperatives (PCs). The "overall capacity" to be developed by this system can be described as the capacity to produce sustainable, low-carbon coffee, to the benefit of actors in the value chain, including small scale farmers, primary cooperatives (wet mills), and, eventually, coffee consumers.

Whose capacity?

The Project is focussed mainly at the individual and organisational levels.

At the individual level, the main targets for capacity development are the 7,200 rural households (with average farm size of 0.7 hectares, including 0.2 hectares of coffee), comprising the membership of the Primary Cooperatives selected. Of these farmers targeted, 50% are expected to be women.

To reach the individual farmers, the Project also intends to build the capacity of some 24 coffee extension agents (4 per Cooperative), who can advise farmers in good agricultural practices, and 18 bio-composting specialists. These extension agents and bio-composting specialists are staff of the PCs.

At the organisational level, the main targets are the 7 Primary Cooperatives and their members (approx. 1000 per cooperative). The project also intends to strengthen the overall coffee value chain,

[19] Interview with Daan Vreeburg, Agriterra, 21 November 2022.

through improved, equitable and more transparent linkages, as enabled through the blockchain technology introduced by FairChain.

Capacity for what?

The Project intends to develop mainly both technical and agri-business capacity of "trainers" (i.e., the PC-based extension agents), farmers and the wet mills of the Primary Cooperatives.

The technical capacity development of trainers and farmers is centred on regenerative practice and climate smart agriculture in "low carbon" coffee production. This capacity focusses on the judicious use of pesticides, improved soil management, use of improved coffee varieties, agroforestry and intercropping. At the processing level, the Project is improving the mechanisation capacity of the PCs to use coffee husks for brickettes (i.e., energy source) and coffee pulp as a substrate for biogas and organic fertiliser; thus, contributing to a low carbon, circular economy. PCs will also have their capacity for improved water use improved, as well as improved machinery (hardware) to process (previously) waste materials.

Coffee Harvest (source Agriterra)

At the organisational level, the managerial and agribusiness capacity of the primary cooperatives is being improved through training of staff. What can be described as the "agri-business capacity" of both the extension agents and hence farmers are also being improved by developing skills in financial literacy, farm record keeping and financial management. The development of a robust and low carbon "business case" by Fair Chain and Agriterra also contributes to strengthening the agri-business capacity of the coffee value chain actors.

The FairChain Foundation is also intending to improve agri-business capacity of the value chain in general by digitising the operations of 500-1000 farmers, and offering them a digital wallet, and hence membership of the FairChain platform. This platform will log quantities and prices, create transparency among value chain actors, and hence improve linkages (equitable business relationships), using blockchain technology.

In what can be described as a mixture of agri-business and functional capacities, Agriterra is improving the financial management as well as governance of the PCs. The improvements in governance are to particularly include a focus on women's and youth participation and the establishment of "youth councils".

At an institutional level, recent changes in regulations now enable farmers, the primary cooperative societies to sell directly to international buyers, rather than via the "discredited" Nairobi Coffee Exchange. The introduction by the FairChain Foundation of the blockchain technology is intended to better enable the Kenyan stakeholders to take advantage of this institutional change.

Additional institutional innovations introduced by the Kenya government and noted by the Project Proposal include the establishment of a "National Coffee Sub-Sector Task Force" and a "Coffee Sub-Sector Implementation Committee". Beyond the intention to "actively engage" with these bodies, as noted in the Project Proposal, there is no further specific Project activity targeted at strengthening these organisations.

Approach to capacity development

The main strategic elements of the CD approach as included in the Project implementation include:

- Initial assessments of cooperative strengths and weaknesses (governance, financial management, etc.), using Agriterra Cooperative Assessment tools. Followed by development of tailored and "SMART" "action plans" and training/coaching according to needs identified, iterative review of progress and follow-up.
- The training of a cadre of 24 "extension agents" within the 6 PCs, who can then act as trainers/ business development advisors to improve the technical and agribusiness capacity of the 7,200 members of the PCs.
- The development of the capacity of 6 PCs to implement low-carbon processing (better utilisation of husk and pulp) and hence a circular economy, through improved hardware and the training of a cadre of 18 "bio compost" experts, who can oversee the production of the bio compost at the 6 PCs.
- The development of a 7-hectare demonstration farm.
- The development blockchain technology and use, to integrate farmers into the FairChain digital platform and thus enabling them to participate more easily in the (speciality) coffee value chain.

Impact, scale, institutionalisation and sustainability

The sustainability of farmer capacity development will depend largely on the Primary Cooperatives being able to finance the salaries of extension agents on a more permanent basis. In the first year of project activities, these salaries are subsidised at 75% by the project, reducing to 50% in the second year and 25% in the third. By the fourth year, the Cooperatives should be able to fully absorb the salaries into their business model. Initial feedback from farmers is favourable; the provision of capacity development services by the cooperative being a factor in deciding where to sell their coffee (in addition to price).

Lessons learned and good practice

The "Low carbon coffee value chain" Project is still in implementation, and no formal evaluations have yet been carried out. However, from project interviews, tentative "lessons learned" were identified as:

- The need for adjustment and establishment of the project partnership. The initial and relatively complex partnership, comprising partners from both the Netherlands and Kenya, and including private sector companies, international NGOs, farmer organisations, government knowledge institutions, etc. required time and changes to reach an effective working relationship. An initiation phase of approx. 1 year, and the dropping of some partners and addition of others (once implementation had started) was necessary, even though extensive project preparation (another year) had been carried out to prepare the original proposal.
- Interests of different partners in a complex project, aimed at strengthening a system or value chain, may not always coincide. For example, strengthening the management and agribusiness capacities of cooperatives to evaluate market outlets and negotiate favourable contracts with different buyers, may conflict with an individual private company invested in the project to have preferential purchase. Such differences in the interests of different partners need to be acknowledged and managed. In other words, the development of the capacity of the Project Partners to act as a partnership is a significant capacity development need.

- The integration of farmer information and training services into the functions and the business case of the primary cooperative appears to be feasible; although this will need to be evaluated after several years.

Annex 2 Other project reviews

B1 Capacity development for agricultural innovation systems - CDAIS

Context, partnership and objectives

The CDAIS project, with an overall budget of EUR 13.2m and financial support from the EU(DG-DEVCO) was implemented by Agrinatura and the FAO Research and Extension Unit from 2015 to 2019. It was designed to provide support to the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), a G20 initiative the main focus of which is the development of national capacities for agricultural innovation in the tropics.

CDAIS 'goal (expected impact) was: "agricultural innovation systems are efficient and sustainable in meeting demands of farmers, agribusiness and consumers." Its specific objective (expected outcome) was: "a global partnership on capacity development in agricultural innovation systems is established on a sustainable footing, with needs assessed and approaches validated in eight pilot countries" Three results (outputs) were defined as:

1. An effective global mechanism is established to promote, coordinate and evaluate capacity-development (CD) approaches to strengthen Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS).
2. CD needs and existing provision for strengthening AIS in eight pilot countries are defined accurately through inclusive country-led multi-stakeholder processes.
3. CD interventions in AIS within eight pilot countries are demand-driven and efficient, integrating the development of individual competencies, organisational capacities and enabling policies around priority themes and value chains.

The project was implemented at global level (the TAP), and specifically in eight "pilot" countries: Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Rwanda.

The expected project beneficiaries included: smallholder farmers, agricultural food-related enterprises and consumers in the pilot countries, international and national agricultural research and innovation organisations.

Whose capacity?

The CDAIS project also identified 3 inter-connected "dimensions" of capacity development: individuals, organisations (public and private) and "enabling environment" (institutional set up, policies, regulations, etc.). The project contemplated and designed interventions at all 3 levels, thus involving farmer groups, organisations involved in agricultural innovation at the local and national levels (research organisations, NGOs, private sector input providers, offtakers and processors) as well as policy makers in local, regional and national governments.

Capacity for what?

An early project activity was a global review of CD for innovation, resulting in a "Common Framework" for CD in AIS (footnote key doc links). The overall capacity was defined as "Improved capacity to adapt

and respond in order to realise the potential of innovation". This in turn was defined as an integration of 4 key "*functional*" capacities defined as:

- Improved capacity to navigate complexity.
- Improved capacity to collaborate.
- Improved capacity reflect and learn.
- Improved capacity to engage in strategic and political processes.

Approach to capacity development

In each of the eight pilot countries, the CDAIS project first held a national forum to establish national steering committees and technical advisory groups were established, which could provide guidance and strategic direction in each of the countries. These committees/groups comprised representatives of national government, EU delegations, researchers, development agents, NGOs and producer/consumer organisations.

Members of these advisory groups then identified 3-6 local or thematic "innovation niche partnerships" in each country. These innovation partnerships were generally focussed around local/provincial value chain clusters or thematic innovation platforms (e.g., production and/or marketing and/or processing of a given product; access to improved seeds, farm inputs or markets, improved functioning of national programmes, or policy development, etc). They consisted of different actors or stakeholder groups (farmers, producer organisations, NGOs, private companies, government organisations, etc), with a stake in promoting or developing or promoting an innovation.

The national advisory groups also nominated a core group (of about sixteen persons in each country) of "national innovation facilitators," who could, in turn, facilitate the interaction between, and learning of, the stakeholders involved in the innovation partnerships. These innovation facilitators were taken through several national and international training events, focussed on analysis of complex problems, multi-stakeholder facilitation, and capacity needs analysis. In turn, these facilitators led the stakeholders in the innovation partnerships through several, sequential "coaching cycles" over 18 months-2 years. These coaching cycles focused on different "functional" capacities (such as multi-stakeholder planning and reflective learning) as well as technical and agribusiness capacities, according to the needs of individual partnerships.

To address CD needs at the organisational level, an additional group of facilitators was identified to conduct organisational needs assessment of the main collaborating organisations in each country (mainly national research organisations). This assessment was conducted via interviews and guided questionnaires with key managerial staff of each organisation. This assessment led to the development of organisational capacity development plans, although the implementation of these plans was incomplete in most cases at the end of the project.

As part of the ongoing analysis of needs of each partnership, certain constraints at the "enabling environment" level were policy were identified for the different partnerships: e.g. seed regulations and regional seed systems in Ethiopia, Angola; environmental taxes on bee keepers in Guatemala and pig producers in Laos. Through lobbying and "policy dialogues", these issues were addressed by government. Resulting from the local partnerships, national strategies for key commodities were also developed or revised (e.g., for the potato value chain in Honduras, cacao and avocado in Guatemala). In Burkina Faso, the "High Council National Scientific Research and Innovation " was created, chaired by the Head of Government. In Rwanda, trade regulations were changed for maize, cassava and rice, and

inputs were provided by CDAIS for the revision of the national Strategic Plan for the Transformation in Agriculture (PSTA 4).

As part of its key activities on developing methodology, the CDAIS project produced a series of training guides.

Interaction with other projects

In most cases, the CDAIS project attempted to strengthen niche innovation partnerships already in place or established by other national programmes or projects, as well as "grassroots initiatives". The general aim was to further build on the technical and agribusiness capacity development typically deliver by such projects with the functional capacities being promoted by CDAIS. The complex nature and time scale required for impact through innovation partnerships makes such inter-project collaboration desirable.

Impact, scaling up, institutionalisation and sustainability

At the partnership level "institutionalisation" was expected through the organisational changes achieved (strengthening, and in some cases legal formalisation, of the partnerships) as well as future activities of the "innovation facilitators" (who have in many cases used their facilitation skills in other local partnerships), and the organisations to whom they are attached. At the national level in the 8 pilot countries, institutionalisation, and hence sustainability, was expected through the improved capacities of the partner organisations involved (mainly national research organisations). Two publications – 'Stories of Change' and 'Conversations of Change' – synthesised the impacts of the project in three of the innovation niche partnerships in each.

Beyond the 8 pilot countries, the CDAIS project was designed to have a more general impact on capacity development for agricultural innovation at a global level. The principal mechanism for this is the ongoing *Tropical Agricultural Platform,* as established by the Ministers of Agriculture of the G20 countries and given impetus by the CDAIS project (and follow up project being implemented by FAO). Project experiences and learnings regarding CD methods were exchanged in biannual forums of the TAP Partners, who include major regional and national agricultural research and development agencies. An online depository of CD experience - *"TAPipedia"* was also established.

An *evaluation of the project* by the FAO Independent evaluation unit, concluded that sustainability was achieved through individuals with first-hand experience of the project adopting tools and approaches, as well as key organisations supporting CD in AIS. The evaluation noted that two countries had set-up a national level platform for CD in AIS, while others have focused on strengthening existing mechanisms and strategies, and that TAP partners are using and promoting the Common Framework, although some more than others. The evaluation found evidence of influence in formal education systems, noting that the Common Framework has found particular resonance with universities wishing to revamp their agricultural systems curricula. Overall, the evaluation concluded, the CDAIS approach is potentially transformative.

Lessons learned and good practice

Following project completion and a final global workshop, implementors conducted an in-depth *"transversal analysis"* to compare experiences across niche partnerships and countries, and derive

lessons learned concerning the innovation process itself, the usefulness and usability of the "common framework" (i.e. focus on "functional capacities"), and suggest potential improvements to this framework. The project was both ambitious and complicated, and many of the conclusions about the innovation process followed by agricultural partnerships is too complex to report here. However, some of the lessons relevant to programmes such as FDOV and SDGP can be summarised:

- The project confirmed the importance of developing "functional capacities," in addition to the technical and agri-business capacities which are also needed for innovation (and which are the more typical and common focus of most projects). Important functional capacities identified and redefined included the capacity to organise, to identify, mobilise, collaborate, negotiate, learn with new partners, expand the partnership, as needed in order to address the different dimensions as the innovation itself and the innovation process evolved. Innovation partnerships are temporary communities with constantly evolving innovation agendas. The faster niche actors acquired these functional capacities, the faster their niche moved through the process and stages of innovation.
- The development of basic functional capacities is often needed as a precursor to the identification of the technical and agri-business capacities needed by the innovation partnership. The capacity to engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships, and to manage an innovation agenda are key enabling capacities for joint innovation. Cycles of CD activities need to be based and readjusted based on evolving perceived needs, as expectations and understanding grow, and trust is developed. When the partnership has developed an adequate understanding of the situation, developed trust between partners, and has agreed on common objectives can the needs for technical and agribusiness capacity development be more precisely identified and efficiently delivered. Functional capacities by themselves were not sufficient
- Capacities for innovation - change in agricultural practice - need to be developed or strengthened at 3 levels (a "triple pathway"): the "micro level" of innovation "niche" partnership; the level; the "meso-level" of "innovation support services" (i.e. organisations that can take the role of facilitating multi-stakeholder interaction and learning), and the "macro-level" of policy makers who can change the enabling environment of regulations, etc.
- Capacities needed by Innovation support services (ISS) include the capacity to organise farmer groups and stakeholders, to develop and manage an innovation agenda and strategy; the capacity to develop synergies with other projects, to identify providers of technical and agribusiness training, to access to funds for technical activities, prototyping and experimentation, in order to improve the business and technological environment of innovation niche partnerships they support.
- Capacity at the at the macro-level of enabling environment could be developed through a stepwise process of "policy dialogues" that built on evidence accumulated by niche partnerships, with the progressive involvement of the right actors with whom agricultural innovation policies could be discussed and resolved, thus allowing innovation at the innovation niche partnership level to be triggered or accelerated.
- The full transition from primary to longer-term and systemic impacts usually takes longer than the typical project life cycle. During the limited timespan of the CDAIS project (4 years) only a range of indications of these impacts were observed in some countries. Nevertheless, it was possible to see the beginnings of the emergence of primary impacts (new or improved support services, scaling up of innovations) and expanded impacts (increased yields, incomes, productivity or competitiveness, business and job creation) due to traceable expanded outcomes. The project concluded that an 'irreversibility threshold ' was crossed when the niche actors as well as ISS providers and policymakers reached a level of appropriation and acknowledgement of their respective changes (expanded outcomes), which allowed them to jointly maintain the momentum which in turn provided incentives for further completion.

B2 Towards sustainable clusters in agribusiness through learning in entrepreneurship – 2SCALE

Context, partnership and objectives

The project, specifically Phase 1 (2012-2017) mainly discussed here, represented the culmination of some 30 years' experience with smallholder farmer development in Africa, particularly by the lead agency, IFDC. The project was based on the concept of the "agri-business cluster" (ABC), and the "Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE)" approach. Described as an actor- oriented, grassroots approach to agricultural and agribusiness development, based on action- oriented interactive learning and empowerment processes, the 3 "pillars" of case were described as:

- Agribusiness cluster formation, the strengthening of local level capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship, involving a diversified array of actors and stakeholders.
- Value chain development, linking farmers to consumer segments, emphasising the integration of other local actors.
- Transaction governance capacity-building, involving both public and private stakeholders, and fostering improvements in the institutional environment for agribusiness development.

The agribusiness cluster links farmers, local entrepreneurs (involved in supplier and channel value chains), bankers (financial services) and business support services (BSS) in the target region. Agribusiness clusters in turn are linked to the value chain. Recognition of the institutional environment, principally business ethics and regulations were also important. The case approach represented a "delicate balance of competition and coordination", based on values of local ownership and sustainability (described as the maintenance of competitiveness).

In 2012, DGIS financed the 5-year 2SCALE project with a grant of EU focus on the development of competitive rural agricultural systems, viable agro-enterprises and the use of public-private partnerships (PPPs). The project was implemented by a consortium of IFDC, iCRA and BoP Inc.

By 2017, 2SCALE had developed 53 partnerships across African countries, centred on vegetables/fresh produce, staple crops, oilseeds, and dairy. About half of the partnerships were developed with lead partners from the ABC side, and half with agri-business lead partners from the value chain (mostly produce buyers, but also some input suppliers). Almost all partnerships were aimed at domestic markets, with an emphasis on poorer consumers ("base of the pyramid").

Whose capacity?

Over the lifetime of the project (2012-2017), over 2,000 producer organisations, 1000 SMEs, and 585,000 small holder farmers benefitted from "capacity development", normally through a process of training and coaching at the ABC level. A further 500 "back- and forward SMEs" were considered to have been strengthened indirectly.

In particular, 2SCALE partners oriented their capacity strengthening activities more towards producer organisations taking up additional roles, e.g., in post-harvest handling, storage, grading/cleaning, collective marketing, and purchases of inputs. As a result of these activities, these producer groups and cooperatives had improved their technical and business skills and are engaging in collective marketing or purchase.

Capacity for what?

The 2SCALE project approach required considerable development of capacity across a wide range of actors in the agribusiness clusters and value chains. In broad terms, the project can be described as a capacity development project, although it was not always described in these terms (the term "capacity development" is found only 3 times in the 99 pages of the final independent evaluation).

Fundamental to the capacity development were "functional capacities" - the capacity for the many different stakeholders to find each other, negotiate, agree on common objectives, develop business relationships, etc. In addition, farmers required technical production skills (good agricultural practices or GAP), and some SMEs required technical skills in processing, often with a focus on developing and marketing products for low income consumers. Both farmers groups and SMEs developed their capacity development for agribusiness and marketing.

Broadly speaking, the capacity development of "functional" skills required by ABC actors was led by iCRA (one of the 3 main partners of the implementing consortium), while technical and agri-business CD to SMEs was provided by the third partner: BOP Inc. Technical skill (GAP) development by farmers was often outsourced to suitable local trainers and organisations.

CD approach and interventions.

At the heart of the 2SCALE CD approach was the development of agribusiness clusters (ABCs), through coaching by "Agribusiness Coaches" or "Business Support Services" (BSS)[20]. These coaches provided networking/brokering services to the ABC actors, facilitation of action-research training through a process of coaching, and advisory services. These services included providing information and advice, assistance in business planning, marketing and negotiation, and facilitation of business- to-business linkages. ABC coaches therefore required a mix of functional and agribusiness skills (and an ability to sources technical trainers as necessary).

To reach the numbers of coaches required (one for each cluster), 2SCALE first selected a core group of some 24 agribusiness trainers covering West and East Africa. These trainers then received training from iCRA through a series of training events, after which the trainers trained the ABC coaches in their respective countries.

The coaching process followed by the ABC coaches was integrated with the annual partnership development plans of each partnership. The initial plan was based on the outcomes of a "diagnosis and design" workshop during which business and support actors jointly analysed the value chain and identified technical, financial and organisational issues requiring attention. The joint reflection at the workshop, and in subsequent coaching cycles, helped actors to understand each other and develop trust. Based on the annual partnership development plans, specific tailor-made capacity strengthening plans for each partnership were developed. These capacity strengthening plans and the wider the wider action plan of which it was a part, were reviewed during a partnership "Review and Capitalisation" workshop at the end of each annual implementation cycle. This workshop led to new inputs and the refinement of the following annual action plans.

The actual coaching process at ABC level consisted of 3 sequential actions:

[20] The terms "Agribusiness Coach" (ABC Coach) and "Business Support Service" (BSS) are sometimes used interchangeably, although BSS may also refer to a specialised organisation providing such services.

- A workshop, grouping the ABC coaches of a specific value chain partnership to introduce new concepts, tools, ideas and principles around a specific theme. At the end of the workshop, the terms of reference for a specific field assignment are developed for each coach.
- Field coaching sessions, where the ABC coaches use their newly acquired competences to coach their respective ABC actors. Typically, the trainer also joins at least one such coaching session in the field to mentor the coaches.
- A review and reflection session with all ABC coaches to review experiences and draw lessons for the next learning cycle. In practice, this session is immediately followed by the introduction workshop of the following learning cycle.

During 2SCALE phase 1, several training resources (facilitator's guide, exercises, reference sheets) were developed to support the process described above. These focussed mainly on development of rural organisations, stakeholder (value chain) integration and brokering/negotiating of business relationships, agri-business planning, management and market development, which gives an indication of the topics that emerged as requiring capacity development during the project.

A more detailed description of this process of ABC capacity development is described in the 2SCALE thematic paper "*Strengthening business support services for agribusiness partnerships*".

Interaction with other projects

The external evaluation of 2SCALE noted the similarities and differences between the project and the FDOV/SDGP programmes. Similarities included the objectives (food security and private sector development), the use of the public-private-partnership (PPP) model, and the geographic target countries.

Key differences noted were that 2SCALE had a more inclusive focus than FDOV, in that it supports value chain actors at an earlier stage of development, and that 2SCALE focussed more on smaller, more resource poor farmers, and worked to strengthen their bargaining position. 2SCALE also builds partnerships and value chain linkages from the "bottom up", while FDOV takes existing linkages as given and is more focused on deepening existing relationships. Another difference noted was the more elaborate strategy to ensure gender inclusion in 2SCALE.

Impact, scale, institutionalisation and sustainability

The *final external evaluation of the 2SCALE* (Phase 1) project noted that "The sustainability of 2SCALE outcomes and impact also depends on the extent to which 2SCALE can have a broader, systemic impact on the sector or the country through policy dialogue or replication by others (demonstration effects). Empirical evidence from the field suggests that this is largely achieved due to the programme's engagement with local actors, open and sustained dialogue between all VC actors, equitable partnerships, minimal use of subsidies or other market distortions (avoidance of 'crowding out'), and strong market linkages." It can be argued these achievements were largely due to the "functional" capacity development undertaken by 2SCALE, led by the agribusiness coaches/business support services.

While the ABC coaches were initially paid by the project, measures to ensure the sustainability of capacity building in 2SCALE therefore centred on how to "institutionalise"or "embed" ABC coaches and coaching services within the cost structure of the ABC and value chains. The BSSs used and developed by 2SCALE were drawn from different institutional sources, including "external" NGOs and consulting

firms to "internal" staff members of producer organisations, SMEs or the lead partner itself. Measures to recover training costs by coaches in the project included integrating these with provision of other goods or services to the producer organisation (e.g. transportation, farm inputs), or through sales levies managed by the producer organisation. In other cases, provision of support services was seen by SMEs or agri-business partners as a cost of doing business with small holder producer organisations. By the end of the project, 55 of 165 BSS were "embedded" in the value chain in this way.

Other measures to increase scale and ensure sustainability included "training of trainers". In Ethiopia, activities in the maize and soybean partnerships involved eight coaches from three unions, which in turn supported 33 cooperatives that produced maize and soybeans for sale to other partners. The coaches worked with leaders (and especially finance officers) from the union's constituent primary cooperatives, ensuring that financial and enterprise management innovations reached very large numbers of farmers while keeping training costs low. This was one of the reasons why the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Federal Cooperative Agency (Ethiopia) recognised 2SCALE as "Best Capacity Builder/Project of the Year."

Lessons learned and good practices

The external evaluation of 2SCALE in 2017 noted that the bottom up 'PPP (public-private-partnership) strategy represents a successful business incubator model that can serve as an example for private sector development (PSD) programmes targeting value chains in an early stage of development. It noted that the project was been particularly successful in building trust and relations between farmers and companies and linking them to networks of local actors (agribusiness clusters), playing an important role in building these partnerships, as opposed to other PSD programmes such as FDOV (now the SDG Partnership Facility), where partnerships need to be established before they can apply through a tendering procedure. While the evaluation did not specifically express these outcomes in terms of CD, it is argued here that the overall CD activities in 2SCALE played a key role in building such functional relationships between ABC and VC partners.

In terms of capacity development, lessons included:

- Integrate functional, technical and agribusiness capacity development. Technical (hard skills) training does by itself not necessarily lead to desired technological changes and business breakthroughs. Also necessary are business skills, as well as organisational and relational training on "soft skills" through functional capacity strengthening.
- Individual organisations/firms cannot take responsibility to deliver all needed CD services; technical services may need to be complemented with separate business support services within the ABC setting.
- The capacity for local networking and the development of vertical business relationships at the level of the ABC was key to most 2SCALE partnerships.
- Increased functional capacity improves resilience - enabling farmers and farmer organisations to overcome "shocks" such as shifts in market outlets.
- Building *a network of certified trainers and coaches takes several years and is* an intensive "learning by doing" experience. The professionalisation of business service delivery is a key aspect of developing their capacity on a sustainable basis.
- Buy-in of partnership actors is essential. The functional capacity development approach is complex, and impact is hard to measure. Not all partnership actors immediately value the approach. Agribusiness firms may see empowering smallholders through CD as weakening their own bargaining

power, and only progressively learn that more professional partners are beneficial to their own business.

- Building capacity to "reflect and adapt" is a key aspect of monitoring and learning (A manual for this was later developed in 2SCALE phase 2).

There is no standard recipe or package of activities for the development of inclusive agribusiness partnerships - and hence CD activities need to be flexible and adaptable. To achieve the right blend of agribusiness results and social impact, a tailored combination of support activities is needed.

The "capacity to co-innovate" is key. In any agribusiness partnership, new problems and opportunities emerge, and the most important factor to sustain competitiveness and maintain inclusive agribusiness relations resides in individual and collective capacities to co-innovate. Such capacity is not likely to be the product of a program that tries to solve all identified problems once and for all, but by collectively addressing problems of a manageable size, with short term concrete activities designed within longer-term ambitions and objectives.

Other refs:

Partnering for inclusive growth, the 2SCALE approach:

https://www.2scale.org/upload/7479bf_2SCALE_paper1.pdf

B3 Orange Knowledge Programme - OKP

Context, partnerships and objectives

The Orange Knowledge Programme (2017-2023)[21], administered by Nuffic, aims to develop the capacity, knowledge and quality of both individuals and institutions in the field of academic, professional and vocational education in low and middle income countries. It consists of four instruments: institutional collaboration projects, group training, scholarships and alumni activities. The focus of the OKP is therefore very much through a lens of "capacity development."

The institutional collaboration projects are focussed on the priority themes of food and nutrition security, water, energy and climate, sexual and reproductive health and right, and security and the rule of law. Forty-one such projects have been granted during 2018-2022, with budgets ranging from about EUR 600k to EUR 2.8m. These projects are a joint effort between one or more Dutch partners, and one or more organisations from one of the 21 eligible countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Grants usually run from 90-100%, with only modest confounding required. Under the OKP programme, the emphasis has been strongly on formal vocational training, rather than (what has often been seen as) the theoretical or "academic" education afforded by universities.

Projects are developed based on a "Country PIan of Implementation" (CPI), previously developed by Nuffic and itself linked to Dutch development strategies and target sectors (esp. horticulture, dairy) for each country, and a specific call for proposal document. Projects are therefore expected to support/link up with other Dutch development instruments (incl. RVO) where possible. All Nuffic calls confirm to a standardised OKP M&E framework (logframe), which specifies the expected long term impact (promotion of agricultural growth, creation off ecologically sustainable food systems, and increased water efficiency), and a "menu" of mandatory and optional indicators of long and medium term outcomes (e.g. good quality, relevant and accessible higher education, inclusive and sustainable partnerships, enhanced workforce for key sectoral organisations) . To a large extent, this standard M&E framework, and the indicators given, already determine the who and what of capacity development.

The development of (sustainable) North (NL) - "South" partnerships, i.e. between educational institutes (University/HBO/MBO) and TVETs in OKP focus countries, is also a key objective of the OKP Programmes, as well as the capacity of NL organisations to offer services in the South.

Whose capacity?

At the individual level, OKP projects typically focus on the training of TVET instructors with a view to improving their capacity to deliver curricula which better prepare students for the labour market more. Such training may be supported by better training resources (printed or e-learning). TVET/university managers are also supported, through individual training, study tours etc. As the OKP programme coincided with the Covid pandemic, many training programmes which were scheduled to take place in the Netherlands were re-framed to take place via distance learning.

The focus of OKP Institutional Projects however is usually and more specifically aimed at the organisational level (using the term as applied in this report). Typical activities here include initial assessments of gender/inclusion, leading to policies and plans to increase the percentage of women

[21] https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/orange-knowledge-programme/orange-knowledge-programme-overview#anchor-heading-262

and disadvantaged groups in teaching and management staff. Under the OKP framework, a key focus is also on the capacity of educational organisations to partner with private sector actors, leading to activities to assess such partnerships and develop collaborative activities and agreements. Following OKP project guidelines, 20% of the project budget is used for infrastructure development (upgrading of teaching facilities, provision of needed equipment etc).

Approach to capacity development

As part of the proposal development process, the (Southern) partner organisations are assessed using the "5C" or 5 Capacity framework. The "5 C's" include: 1) the capacity to commit and act; 2) to maintain internal coherence; 3) to deliver on organisational objectives, 4) to adapt and self-renew; and 5) to relate to external stakeholders. These assessments provide a useful starting point to determine more concrete objectives and organisational development strategies, although project outcomes are evaluated more in terms of numerical indicators (e.g. proportions of female/minority staffing, collaboration agreements, strategy documents, etc).

Institutional factors, including, for example, education (TVET) policy, national regulations on curriculum accreditation, quality assurance mechanisms are often key factors affecting the capacity development of individual TVET organisations. [22]

Impact, scaling up and sustainability

The OPK institutional projects follow on from the previous and similar Nuffic NFP (2002-2010) and NICHE (2011-2017) programmes. An impact evaluation of the NFP Programme[23] concluded that there was more evidence for positive effects of the NFP at the individual level than at the organisational level. Although the benefits at organisational level noticeably led to better qualified staff, creating the conditions for improved the quality of products and services of the organisation, it was noted that these effects are difficult to measure and that there was little formal evidence of contribution of the NFP programme to socio-economic developments in the regions or countries.

The NICHE strategy document[24], which increased emphasis on vocational education, concluded that success would depend in large on institutional factors, and that capacity development needs are often at the "system level" (e.g. accreditation, quality assurance, etc.). However, another study by major implementors of Nuffic projects[25] concluded that it was difficult to effectively address institutional factors in capacity development within the typical project time frame of 3-4 years. The Nuffic strategy also focused on formal (at certificate, diploma level) training, recognising that NGOs are often better placed than educational organisations to deliver short term, non-accredited, training of importance to the private sector.

[22] Hawkins, R. 2021. Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) in Sub-Saharan Africa: Overview and integration within broader agricultural knowledge and innovation systems. Netherlands Food Partnership.

[23] ECORYS, Evaluation of the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP) 2002-2010, Final report June 2012

[24] NICHE strategy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Nuffic July 2010.

[25] KIT-iCRA-CDI, 2013, The need for institutional change in capacity development of tertiary agricultural education Report from CDI-ICRA-KIT writeshop, October 2013

Specific OKP institutional strengthening projects

In the following section, a number of OKP institutional development projects in East Africa were lightly reviewed to illustrate examples of capacity development in these projects, and identify elements that could prove interesting for RVO PPP projects. More specifically, the degree to which, and how, these projects linked with, and intend to strengthen, the private sector was looked at, to identify future opportunities for improved synergy between NL projects aimed at the education and private sectors, respectively. A more thorough comparison of CD in Nuffic projects, and general lessons learned from these, was considered outside the scope of the current study (and is suggested as a later, more focussed assessment, once the current round of OKP institutional projects is completed, the intended outputs and outcomes can be assessed, and lessons learned.

B3.1 East African regional network of excellence in dairy training - EARNED

This OKP project differs from most in that it is aimed at (i.e., has as "system of interest") a regional dairy training network, rather than an individual TVET organisation or even national TVET system. The principal intervention was therefore more institutional: the development and adaptation (from a model used in the Netherlands) of an e-learning platform to support dairy education and training in 3 East African countries: Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. By combining both theoretical content with practical tasks (the results of which need to be uploaded to the platform by students), the e-learning platform is intended to make the training more practical and business-oriented, as well as offer opportunities for students to engage with dairy farms and the private sector. The platform was designed to complement and improve existing curricula, rather than introduce or accredit new occupational standards or curricula (which was assumed to take longer than the project lifetime).

To achieve the aims of the EARNED project, the Dutch implementing partners (led by AERES, supported by Wageningen CDI, the iCRA Foundation and Bles Dairies), worked with a lead implementing educational partner in each of the 3 countries (the Ethiopian Technical University; Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda, and Eldoret National Polytechnic in Kenya. Through these regional partners, an additional 8 universities and technical colleges (both public and private) also participated in training of instructors and use of the e-learning dairy platform.

Some 60 dairy instructors from 11 TVETs and universities (both public and private) were selected for training in how to use the e-learning platform, after which they were encouraged to pilot the platform in their respective courses, with additional coaching and mentoring from coaches from the Dutch and local partners. Some equipment (computers, multi-media projectors, improvement of internet access) for instructors, and - especially - mobile smart phones for students (less widespread in some countries than others), was also provided by the project.

This basic intervention was complemented by measures to assess and increase the capacity of 9 of the organisations (TVETs and universities) in the 3 countries that opted to collaborate with the Project. Activities included gender and inclusion assessments and drafting/revision of gender plans; organisational assessment and revision of educational "business plans" (including the use of e-learning).

Assessments of partnerships between the 9 organisations and other stakeholders were undertaken to gauge the existing degree of cooperation with other educational and government organisations, and especially the private sector (dairy farms, dairy cooperatives and processors). This assessment showed that most of the universities and colleges involved had numerous links with the private sector, including formal arrangements (e.g. those with existing and written cooperation agreements) but also many informal agreements which were often based on personal connections or temporary arrangements to e.g. enable students to undertake practical attachments on farms. Selecting only a few private sector actors to host students was difficult, due to the limited capacity of the private sector player to host the numbers of students involved, and also because students preferred to undertake these near their own family home area, to save funds in accommodation and travel.

In terms of scale and sustainability, the introduction of the e-dairy learning platform appears to have considerable potential. The platform was given extra impetus when many of the institutions were physically closed to students because of national Covid lockdowns, and e-learning provided a feasible alternative to allow students to continue learning at home - the platform has now been demonstrated by the partner organisations, and has received enthusiastic feedback from both students and teaching staff. In Uganda and Kenya (but less so in Ethiopia), national TVET authorities are now interested to

adopt the platform, and roll out its use to other colleges at a national level, which will extend the training programme to thousands of additional instructors. Each teaching organisation will pay a modest subscription to AERES, which enables it to integrate its own teaching material and adapt the platform according to its own curriculum, as well as allow future improvements and also functional contacts between universities/colleges in the region with the Dutch lead partner, which has created a separate Foundation to further the development of the dairy platform. The success of the dairy e-learning platform has also led to the AERES Foundation to consider the development of similar e-learning platforms in other sectors, such as horticulture.

Lessons learned

- The EARNED Project demonstrated the need to combine the right persons (to champion project objectives in each country), with the right organisations (those willing to experiment with the programme, do things differently) and the right institutional environment (national interest in the use of e-learning and willingness to integrate with approved curricula, perhaps strengthened by the Covid pandemic, and also the growing availability of e.g. smart phones in countries such as Kenya and Uganda). In other words, the combination of capacity strengthening at individual, organisational and institutional levels was key to success.
- "Bottom up" participation is of key importance. In the EARNED project, the enthusiastic response of students and (therefore also) instructors after piloting the platform was what gave the project momentum.
- Projects which are aimed at practical training across a regional sector, such as the case of dairy training in East Africa, can have a bigger impact at scale than projects aimed at just one particular organisation. The introduction of "scalable" procedures - such as a widely applicable and adaptable e-learning platform for a specific sector such as dairy - can have a widespread impact, as well as encourage collaboration across educational institutes. The provision of such a platform with user fees set at an accessible level, can lead to sustainable improvements in teaching practice. The integration of practical tasks in such a learning platform - even simple tasks such as filming dairy practice - can address the widespread criticism that dairy training is too theoretical and classroom-based.

B3.2 Bright future in agriculture: enhancing employability and food security in Ethiopia through quality TVETs in horticulture and dairy - BFA

The BFA and BFA-South Projects (Jan 2019 - Mar 2023; and Oct 2019-March 2023, respectively) are operating mainly at organisational and systemic (networking, institutional) levels, to strengthen horticultural and dairy vocational training in Ethiopia. It is being implemented by the Netherlands Maastricht School of Management and the Ethiopian Technical University in Ethiopia as joint lead partners.

The Projects intend to build the capacities of 7 TVETs in 3 regions of Ethiopia (Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR) to produce graduates who can meet industry demand and create a long terms partnership with the private sector. This includes the development of the capacity of these colleges to perform inclusive agro-processing, value addition, and production teaching, technology transfer and industry extension, in particular in dairy and horticulture, meeting the needs of the labour market/private sector, and being positioned as models for other ATVETs in these regions.

At a more institutional level, the capacity of the regional TVET Bureaus is being strengthened to ensure, support and monitor the delivery of inclusive market-oriented teaching, technology transfer and industry extension by the ATVET colleges in their respective region - and hence to perform better their regulatory roles. In addition, the capacity of the Ethiopian Technical University (that trains TVET instructors), is being strengthened to improve the relevance of its teacher training programmes in the fields of agro-processing, value addition, and production, to labour market standards and inclusivity.

To achieve these outcomes, the Projects combine a mix of training of key individuals, assessments of capacity and labour market needs, the formation of inter-organisational platforms, linking the education, government and private sectors, and holding policy dialogues.

The training of individuals mostly focuses on the TVET instructors and management staff.

A number of instructors have been awarded in-country scholarships for Masters in Business Administration, horticulture and dairy. To further strengthen the capacity of instructors at the participating colleges for technical and agribusiness teaching, short-term trainings have been held on topics such as labour market needs analysis, gender and equity, and specific technical subjects related to horticultural and dairy production and processing, water management, etc.. These trainings have included the associated development and validation of skills sheets that form the basis of student teaching, or in the development of (e.g.) dairy farm case studies that can be used in teaching.

In addition, key managerial staff have been trained on "Communication, Teamwork and Team Building" - i.e. functional capacities, as described in this report. The capacities include, understanding and managing conflict, relationship and task-orientation, how to run meetings, interviewing skills, presenting an organisation, dealing with the media, team development and roles, goal-setting and performance management in teams, giving and receiving feedback in teams, problem solving, and stages of team development. Follow-up training with additional staff at the colleges is expected. In conduction with this, BFA is supporting the Ethiopian Technical University to establish a "Leadership and Management Centre of Excellence". Short term trainings in "Strategic Leadership" and "Change Management" were also offered in the Netherlands at the Maastricht School of Management for participants drawn from the Amhara and Oromia Regional TVET Bureaus and the Agricultural Bureau of the SNNPR.

As well as organisational assessments of the capacity gap at the colleges, labour market assessments in the horticulture and dairy sectors, and studies on how the TVET system can better support IDPs

(internally displaced persons) have been undertaken. Derived from these studies, a pilot project involving Kombolcha ATVET College was implemented, involving training of instructors in practical entrepreneurship customised for IDPs.

At the organisational level, the project had assessed the 5 capabilities of the beneficiary TVET organisations during the preparation of the proposal, as required by Nuffic guidelines. This assessment provides a general indication of organisational strengths and weaknesses, although (in common with many other OKP institutional projects) it is not rigorously used for monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes.

The "Triple Helix Platforms[26]" being established aim to provide the opportunity for key public and private stakeholders to bring together their knowledge, expertise, and resources around a particular sector, value chain or area of innovation. The process typically involves identifying the key stakeholders, their joint analysis of the particular thematic area or value chain, and the identification of actions and roles needed for joint innovation. These platforms therefore serve to better align the academic and research efforts of agricultural TVET colleges with the demands of the private and public sectors and hence employability of agricultural TVET graduates. So far, such platforms created include the "fruit cluster" in the SNNPR, Amhara Dairy Partnership (ADP) and Bako Vegetable Platform (BVP). However, the convening and facilitation of the stakeholders involved in such platforms remains an issue (as it is in many proposed "multi-stakeholder platforms", as it rarely falls within any individual organisational mandate and hence the required capacity is often lacking). In BFA, this facilitation role has been largely undertaken by the universities involved, with the support of an overall platform coordinator employed directly by MSM. MSM also uses the triple helix platforms as a key element in other OKP projects in the region (Uganda, Tanzania), and the outcomes of this approach merit particular review after completion of these projects.

At the institutional level, policy dialogues are being held to create a space for different actors from government agencies and donor organisations and projects, as well as the private sector and sectorial associations, to discuss ways to improve the Ethiopian TVET system. An initial dialogue at federal level focussed on entrepreneurship development within the TVET system. Others planned include a focus on internship and apprenticeship programs, gender and women empowerment, public-private governance and finance, skill development, and how TVETs can better support marginalised groups.

Lessons learned

- Strengthening the capacity of education organisations such as universities and TVETS to play an effective role national development involves improving technical, agribusiness, managerial and functional capacities.
- Capacity development of the target educational (knowledge) organisations needs to be accompanied by strengthening the related government (federal and regional) organisations (TVET, Agriculture), as well as the institutional factors such as policy and regulations, etc.
- The capacity needs of education organisations, at institutional, organisational and individual levels, need to be differentiated through baselines studies, capacity needs assessments and planning

[26] The "triple helix" model emphasises the need to integrate the strengths and roles of academia (knowledge institutions), industry and government for innovation to take place. As applied by MSM, it can also be regarded as a "multi-stakeholder" platform, to bring together the actors needed for innovation at technological, organisational, and institutional levels. A related concept is the "Dutch Diamond", which adds the 4th sector of civil society (NGOs) to the proposed partnership model.

workshops, not only with the educational organisations themselves, but also with instructor training colleges (such as ETU, in Ethiopia), government organisations such as the regional Bureaus of agriculture, and the private sector.

- Educational organisations, such as the TVETs in BFA, need strengthening in management, facilities, technology transfer and industry extension programs, career services, and partnerships. Regional bureaus need to improve the system of labour market needs assessment, management information and quality assurance. Private enterprises need to be encouraged to participate in the TVET system, help define educational needs, and offer practical experience to students through hosting visits and attachments.
- The need for more intensive and structural relations between the educational organisations and the private sector can be achieved through their participation in multi-stakeholder platforms (such as the "triple helix" platforms). Such platforms can be sustainable if they are established in a participatory manner, start small (before being scaled up), and bring economic (capacity) benefit to all partners. However, the convening of such actors and the facilitation of their interaction requires both recognition of this role, and the development of functional capacities to be able to carry out this role.
- Collaboration with other development projects (in this case Hortilife, and the BRIDGE dairy Project, both financed by the Netherlands), adds value and complementarity to educational projects such as BFA.

B3.3 Enhancing partnerships for industry-led vocational training and education in the horticulture value chains of Kenya - ePIVOT -

The ePIVOT Project is being implemented from June 2019 to December 2022. Leading the implementation partnership is Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI), in collaboration with Aeres group (MBO), HAS University of Applied Sciences (HBO), and Van Hall Larenstein (HBO). The 6 primary Kenyan beneficiary organisations are Meru University of Science and Technology (MUST) as lead Institution in Kenya, together with. Marimba Campus (a campus of MUST focusing on TVET), Meru National Polytechnic, Tharaka Technical and Vocational Training Institute, Ahero Vocational Training College, and Siala Technical Training Institute.

Following the general OKP M&E framework, the ePIVOT project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Kenyan educational organisations to produce graduates with competencies to address key issues in the horticulture sector, building on previous (NICHE project) labour market assessments. Key activities include the training of key TVET staff to deliver competency-based education and training (CBET), through sort courses and MScs at MUST, and the development of training manuals to support the delivery of the national diploma/ certificate horticultural curricula already accredited by the national TVET authority.

Other measures to strengthen the organisations involved include the improvement of the Quality Assurance Departments (through assessment, planning), implementing graduate tracing systems (graduate, employer surveys), and development of investment plans. Additional curricula for non-degree short courses are being developed/revised to enable the participating TVETS to train extension staff to deliver results-based and contextualised technical information to farmers. Infrastructure is being improved to allow testing of innovations (e.g. greenhouses, produce washing houses at the training colleges. Joint research is being developed with Kenyan research organisations, such as KALRO. Efforts are being made to improve the participation of women and marginalised groups, through development of a gender strategy and a working definition of "marginalised groups", although significant increases in the proportion of women staff and students will take longer than the project lifetime.

To improve linkages between horticultural TVET and the private sector, MoUs and linkages with trade bodies (Fresh Produce for Export Association of Kenya (FPEAK), the umbrella body representing horticulture industry and the Horticultural Association of Kenya (HAK), a key professional body in horticulture have been developed. Strategic plans (defining mechanisms, guidelines) for such partnerships are being developed, with the objective of promoting practical internships for students and improve training programmes.

Also in line with overall OKP objectives, the project aims to consolidate institutional collaboration between green education institutions in Kenya and in the Netherlands, through collaboration agreements, staff/student exchange visits, joint learning events, etc. Future collaboration will depend on ensuring mutuality of benefits between Kenyan and Dutch partners.

B3.4 Strengthening skills and training capacity in the horticulture sector in Tanzania - SSTCHS

This project is being implemented during 15 Jun 2019 - 31 Mar 2023 by the lead partners Maastricht School of Management (MSM) from the Netherlands, and the National Council for Technical Eduction (NACTE) in Tanzania. Project implementing partners from the Netherlands include InHolland University of Applied Sciences, Q-Point BV, and Profyta BV. The Dutch consortium is supported by Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in Tanzania. Local beneficiary training institutes include the Horticultural Training & Research Institute-HORTI Tengeru, MATI Uyole, and Mahinya College of Sustainable Agriculture. Industry stakeholders collaborating include the Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA) and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT).

In this project, the 3 beneficiary horticultural education institutes in Tanzania are having their capacity developed to introduce gender-sensitive and market-driven (blended learning) programs and to perform inclusive value chain management, food safety & production teaching, technology transfer and industry extension (incl. apprenticeships). The four outcomes of the project are:

1. Increased quality of the educational programs of horticultural ATVETs, with an emphasis on skill development, blended learning approaches, inclusivity, entrepreneurship, gender-sensitive and private sector involvement. So far, curricula have been assessed and improved curricula approved by NACTE and launched by participating institutions. College staff have been trained (online) in applied research (with development of proposals), and in water smart agriculture, IPM and fertigation. Greenhouses are being established to improve practical field trials by students.
2. Increased institutional capacities to implement gender-transformative competency-based horticultural programmes with an emphasis on innovative approaches, teaching methodologies, technologies to increase productivity, inclusive value chain innovations and hands-on capacity. College staff have been trained in institutionalisation of a gender sensitive and inclusive learning environment and have developed action plans to combat identified gender issues.
3. Improved entrepreneurial skills of staff and students and start-up support service at TVETS particularly for youth, women and marginalised groups; new and improved TVET curricula with a focus on skills for self-employment and mentoring programmes together with the horticulture sector. The Sokoine University Graduate Entrepreneurs Cooperative (SUGECO) is collaborating with MATI Uyole on incubation and horticultural start-ups, and is working on practical short courses to benefit students from MATI and also neighbouring colleges.
4. Established triple helix horticulture innovation platforms and working groups in water-smart agriculture to create broad support and cooperation of relevant private & public stakeholders to support research, extension, training and incubation services matching the industry needs. Platforms so far being established include one in Arusha to optimize water-smart agriculture, after mapping of different private and public actors in the horticultural industry and a survey to determine the theme for the working group. In this effort, TAHA is taking the lead.

Preliminary lessons learned, identified by the Project mid-term evaluation, include the importance of a strong lead local partner with authority in the education field as key to success. Also necessary was the nomination of one key implementing staff member per organisation, due to changes of focus and staffing.

In terms of project sustainability, endorsement of all key project activities by relevant Tanzanian authorities via NACTE is key. The project is now embedded at all levels – from National Ministerial level to District level, and from TVET level to that of key public or private sector stakeholders. NACTE accredited and supported curriculum being rolled out to additional TVETs after the project should become part of a self-sustaining educational offering nation-wide. Involvement of local and Dutch private and public organisations such as Horti-Pro Limited, Q-point, InHolland University of Applied Sciences, SUGECO, Profyta, TAHA and SAGCOT in the project should ensure sustainable linkages to the private sector and partnerships between the education and private sectors. The establishment of the Moodle e-learning platform will the basis of a long-term partnership and result in professionalisation of continuous professional development.

Partnerships between TVETs and private and public organizations create joint working groups around topics that are crucial for horticulture growth, and input from horti-sector players will improve the relevance of TVET education. MoUs to be established through the triple helix platform should contribute to continuous sustainability of partnerships between TVETs and public and private actors.

B3.5 Good practice and lessons learned of OKP institutional projects

In this section, we review some of the characteristics of the OKP programme as applied to capacity development, with some illustrations from the individual projects noted. However, it must be recognised that these projects are only now nearing completion. Hence it is still early to compare the effectiveness of many of these activities and draw out definitive lessons learned, especially in terms of wider impact and sustainability of project outcomes. A more thorough assessment of these will require review in perhaps one or two years.

- The general OKP approach is explicitly oriented around capacity development concepts (unlike the FDOV/SDGP programmes, which have a more public-private partnership focus). The overall M&E framework of the OKP programme recognises and requires integrated capacity development at individual, organisational and institutional levels, and the interaction between these. For example:
    - training of individuals is typically intended to have an organisational impact, rather than just on these individuals personally, and training is often accompanied activities to provide an enabling organisational environment to allow the trained individuals to apply new knowledge and skills;
    - OKP projects such as BFA and SSTCHS are focussing on working with national level TVET authorities, which can scale out good practice from the necessarily limited number of targeted TVETs to the wider institutional system. These national authorities have the recognised mandate and can convene and coordinate organisations necessary to achieve project objectives, as well as ensure compliance and coherence with existing polities, accreditation mechanisms, etc;
    - Projects such as EARNED are focussing on introducing widely applicable innovations such as e-learning platforms, which can easily be scaled to colleges and universities additional to those initially targeted.
- In addition to improvement of technical capacities, OKP Projects typically recognise the need for improving agribusiness and management capacities, as well as the (functional) capacity to collaborate with other organisations (whether other educational or business-related organisations).
- In terms of collaboration, the OKP explicitly requires actions to address the typically poor interaction between skilling organisations and the private sector which requires those skills. Different projects have approached this challenge in different ways:
    - One approach is to include private sector players as formal members within the project consortium. This can include regional interests of Dutch companies and/or national private sector associations. Such partners can provide more practical, business oriented training and perspectives to teaching staff, as well as support needed infrastructure development such as greenhouses, irrigation, etc. A potential issue here is the sustainability of these linkages once the project is completed.
    - A second approach is to improve or formalise alliances (e.g., via MoUs) between TVETs and local or national private sector actors or national associations. Most colleges and universities have an extensive network of mostly informal collaboration with farms and businesses to provide placements for student practical attachments but deepening this relationship via structured and formal agreements or MoUs, to provide more structured assessment of students and/or input to curricula development, further improves such linkages.

- A third approach is to encourage colleges and universities to participate in - or even coordinate - multi-stakeholder or "triple helix" platforms. When such platforms are organised around resolving a challenge faced by the private sector, and involve relevant stakeholders who can tackle the issue from different perspectives (e.g. government, NGOs, research and education, as well as the private sector), they can integrate education, research and business developments, thus providing an incentive for participation by the private sector. However, a broader issue often cited in studies of such multi-stakeholder platforms is the question of who (which organisation) convenes and coordinates the actors involved, and the development of their (facilitation) skills to do so.
- The OKP projects also show the need for the utilisation of existing assessments of the current situation (labour markets, existing curricula), or further assessments where necessary, before suggesting or designing improvements. Importance of working within national guidelines (e.g. already validated curricula), but at the same time support and build on these through improved training procedures and materials, for example.

- In addition to new knowledge, the capacity development of TVETs and the educational system need other types of capacity to effectively enable graduates to develop skills and establish businesses. Physical capacity, in the form of infrastructure such as greenhouses or irrigation systems allows students to develop practical skills. To be effective agricultural entrepreneurs, graduates also need access to credit and business networks/services - although the question remains whether this should be part of an educational capacity strengthening or complementary programme.
- Finally, the experience of OKP projects seems to indicate that while the "5C Capability" framework often provides a starting point for the assessment of organisational capacities, it is less used as a structural framework for designing or monitoring/evaluating capacity development interventions. Both local education organisations and Dutch implementing partners find this framework difficult to operationalise in practice, perhaps due to the subjective nature of relevant and suggested indicators (compared to the quantitative indicators required by the overall OKP M&E framework). To more effectively utilise the 5C framework (which has previously been advocated as a basis for capacity building in Dutch programmes), additional guidelines and training are needed.

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