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LEO
Leveraging Economic
Opportunities

Market Facilitation Peer-Learning Event 2014 East & Southern Africa region

COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

The following list comprises of a synthesis of several of the commitments to action that projects made at the closing sessions of the peer learning events.

- **Organize country-level coordination meetings between projects around FTF activities working at the same level of the system.** “Following this event, we will now organize a meeting with all of the FTF activities in the country to coordinate with all the projects working on input supply models to share what each of the project activities are doing in this area. We want to try and map out the relationships and come up with some agreements and synergy relevant to the whole system.”
- **Move forward discussions on what is or is not permissible under different contracts.** “We plan to have more discussion online around different contract terms, what’s allowed and what’s not allowed.”
- **Maintain spirit of dialoguing and learning through continued online forums.** “We want to share our learning online and continue dialogues.”
- **Organize national level workshops on market facilitation approaches for more project staff.** “We were thinking that we’ll do a national level workshop comparable to this one, bringing in outside facilitators and getting the staff of projects on the same level of understanding of what the facilitation approach is all about.”
- **Collect practical implementation examples from the region to share across projects.** “We’ve created a FTF learning network in the country and we would like to have it be even more meaningful. We will now plan to have regional sharing opportunities, particularly to bring out practical examples. It will take multiple countries collecting examples, and this will require some collaboration. We hope it will be between missions as well as partners.”
- **Organize learning events with technical staff together with government.** “We plan to have a learning event with several of the FTF projects and with the government included in the meeting, since there is some mismatch in our expectations and goals. This meeting will be with technical staff rather than leadership.”
- **Organize learning visits between projects.** “Learning visits are essential. We plan to try to make learning visits part of more events and meetings.”
- **Host periodic inter-project meetings for greater collaboration.** “We are working hard to meet targets but are lacking in terms of collaboration. We think we should have a more deliberate move to meet quarterly to discuss our projects.”
- **Use participative, interactive workshop formats to enhance learning and dialogue.** “Generally trainings happen in 5 days straight and everything gets crammed in and after a day or so you have difficulty continuing to concentrate and contribute. This two-day event felt like two hours since we were constantly sharing and working as a group. Although there were some facilitators, it felt like everyone was giving this workshop. We would like to recommend that it would be useful to have trainings in the future done in this interactive way.”

- **Organize greater coordination between projects working in the same region that are providing different stages of support to the same beneficiaries as they move up the pathway out of poverty.** “We realize now that our project is dependent on the other in terms of linking our farmers to markets. We recognize the importance of meeting to discuss this. For example, savings group members have reached a stage where [they] are now supposed to go into producer groups so there’s a need for the project coordinating linkages to markets to know at what level we are amongst our projects in the same region.”
- **Share expertise in the different technical areas each project is working in within the same geographic regions.** “We want to share more of our expertise in the different fields we are working in. One project is trying to go in and get info on savings groups in their areas of operation, and they will now involve our project so that they can have expertise to help them in a way that these groups are supposed to be formed.”
- **Collaboratively map all the projects working in the same region, across donors and technical areas.** “In terms of mapping... there are so many projects in eastern province outside of USAID and we need to know who is where and what we are all doing.”
- **Coordinate regarding overlap of beneficiaries and challenges of double counting.** “One of the worries we have is the issue of double counting which usually comes up. Moving forward, we want to make sure we are not double counting since we have the same beneficiaries.”
- **Aim to build capacity for greater youth participation.** “On the issue of youth participation, we say that we need to make an active effort to get youth but we need to ensure that these youth are actually able to participate in these interventions in value chains.”
- **Consider a shared MIS system** “... the importance of building MIS and something which can be accessible by each and every person in the project and even the value chain.”
- **Explore the potential of a community-based monitoring system that can support project-level M&E:** “...we wonder how to put [a community based monitoring system] in place - it would just be supporting M&E for all the projects in the area.”
- **Host similar peer-learning events for a wider audience.** “We need to invite those who aren’t in the room to these events. We now all have very similar experiences around facilitation. The challenge can come up with those who do not have as rich of an experience. That’s what will move this forward.”
- **Coordinate when working with similar local partners.** “A trend our projects have detected is how in the last 2 years, we are consistently increasing the use of local partners, so our grants have increased in number. One project has over 50 partners and the other in the same region has over 20 partners. We recognize that in many cases these are the same partners and it would be good for us to coordinate more going forward.”
- **Discuss challenges similar to all projects and approaches being taken to overcome these.** “We’ve identified that we have the same challenges within our projects. The bulk of our partners are input suppliers and processors/buyers. The activities we’re doing are similar. We’re working on increasing volumes and having aggregation points to ease logistical challenges that farmers are having. For us, it was good to hear that we’re hurting in the same place and comforting to see that we have the same ideas to try and tackle these problems. We plan to continue sharing more learning between our projects in this way.”
- **Partner on specific activities in areas where overlap geographically according to area of greatest competence.** “Following this event, our projects plan to work together, especially around literacy. One project has community volunteers who are specialists in certain fields, so we think this would be good to work together in districts where we overlap. Likewise, on the technical side, we now realize that the other project has produced dairy-specific materials and another project

was about to start producing these, so rather than reinventing the wheel, they will take a look at what we have. We have already set up a collaborative meeting.”

- **Coordinate and share learning and questions with other projects.** “One great thing that I’ll take away is coordination, cooperation, and collaboration, and I’ll add competition – these are all essential among us as implementers. It’s been an enriching environment here where I’ve managed to get a lot of information without paying high consultants’ costs. We will continue to reaching out to many of you to learn and share.”

- **Pilot interventions being done by other projects that appear applicable to own contexts.** “There were a lot of rich discussions and new ideas shared at this event that we would like to pilot. We are excited to pilot adult literacy to complement market development interventions. The ideas around financing shared by the other projects got our wheels turning. We are also now planning to pilot something similar to the village savings and lending concepts to the beneficiaries that need these.”, and “We plan to try some of the secrets about innovative finance shared by the projects.”