

## Inclusive business-smallholder partnerships in Ghana & South Africa



### Summary

Against a background of policies aimed at integrating smallholders in value chains through business-smallholder and public-private partnerships; evidence of adverse incorporation and declining dietary diversity with increasing market integration; and recent trends of businesses investing “beyond the chain” in innovation platforms, smallholder productivity and crop diversification, this research aims to clarify under what terms of engagement business and public-private partnerships with smallholders involved in tree crop systems in South Africa and Ghana can contribute to increased food sovereignty, more inclusive innovation platforms, and sustainable landscapes. It aims to contribute to topical academic debates on food sovereignty, multifunctional mosaic landscapes and inclusive chains, and to generate new insights into options for making innovation platforms more inclusive and effective for greater food security. Deliverables include insights and recommendations on terms of inclusive engagement and spaces for innovation in business-smallholder and public-private partnerships and a methodology for equitable smallholder engagement in innovation platforms.

### Midterm summary of progress

Following a sequence that starts with a describe & validation stage, the first year revolved around exploring livelihoods and diversity among tree-crop farmers in Ghana and South Africa, which led up to learning platforms where the data collected was validated with farmers, policymakers and practitioners. Year 2, the explain stage, explored change agents and key actors in value chain collaborations (VCCs) closest and most important to farmers, leading to the second learning platform themed “Brokering innovation - the role of change makers”. Acquired insights made us realise that we should organise the learning platforms where farmers are embedded in networks – the district level. In Ghana we thus entered the negotiating stage in which knowledge is exchanged and contested across levels and professions. The focus thus shifted from the mismatch between input and service packages in VCC and farmers’ needs to inclusion in institutional settings, processes of cross-level and peer-to-peer learning, and the role of change makers. This line will be continued in Year 3 – the explain / negotiate stage – when we further develop a more nuanced understanding of inclusiveness and try to influence how support is given.