

## Factsheet final findings Global Challenges Programme Call 1



Learning Platform meetings with cocoa and oil palm farmers in Ghana (photos: Edith van Ewijk)

### Inclusive value chain collaboration in Ghana and South Africa

#### Summary

This project developed a farmer-centred approach to value chain collaboration (VCC) that is inclusive of different groups of smallholders, their knowledge and innovation capacity, and the environment. It centred on knowledge sharing, co-creation and joint learning in learning platforms, with a focus on ‘innovations from below’ and peer-to-peer learning via change makers. These learning platforms offer a safe space for farmers to voice their concerns, interact with institutional actors, and learn from the latest research findings. Research offered insight into different farmer profiles and associated differences in opportunities, constraints and aspirations and the effects of expanding tree crop production – cocoa, oil palm, avocado and macadamia nuts - on food production and the broader landscape. This project innovatively combined ethnographic research and cluster analysis to study farmer diversity; action research to develop a farmer-centred approach towards learning and innovations; and a combination of remote sensing and participatory spatial methods to analyse the effects of expanding tree-crop farming on the landscape and unravel farmers’ views of their landscapes. The aim was to find out how VCCs can be made more inclusive and enhance food sovereignty and landscape sustainability. Research questions addressed were:

1. How do partnerships align with the livelihood profiles and innovation capacity of male and female smallholders involved?
2. How do they contribute to farmers’ food sovereignty (access to food, having a say over the way in which it is produced and marketed, and the sustainability of its production)?
3. How can “learning platforms” make the collaboration more effective, inclusive and innovative?
4. How can tree crops contribute to sustainable landscapes?

#### Final Research Findings

1. Smallholder tree-crop farmers are generally food secure both in Ghana and South Africa, However, seasonal food insecurity exists and food production is becoming under pressure in Ghana. In South Africa experience-based indicators indicate food security, but nutrition-based indicators suggest deficient dietary diversity. New forms of food production (e.g. intercropping) emerge in South Africa.
2. Small-scale farmers are not all the same. They differ in being full- or part-time engaged in farming, off-farm income, access to land and assets, age and gender. This creates different conditions for engagement in value chains, and receptiveness and capacity for innovation.
3. Farmers engage in multiple value chains to reduce risk and dependency and retain autonomy. They use VCC to negotiate access to markets, credit, resources, knowledge and innovations.
4. Change makers can be entry points for transformative change. They are “movers and shakers” and have a vision, a network, and drive to improve farmers’ lives for the better.
5. Innovations come as much “from below” as they come “from above”. “Endogenous” innovations are usually small and concern technologies used in the production process or forms of collective action in farmer associations or savings and credit groups. They form the starting point for peer-to-peer learning in learning platforms.
6. Learning platforms offer a space for joint learning and knowledge sharing if organized close to the farmers. Farmers and practitioners expressed high appreciation for the learning platforms, and knowledge sharing and joint learning have resulted in change of practices.
7. Expanding tree crops prejudice land for food crops and tree cover and leads to a landscape that mimics one of large-scale plantations. Farmers acknowledge adverse effects on food production and ecosystem services but prefer a segregated over a mosaic landscape for income and efficiency.

<b>Messages to</b>	<p><b>A) Actors from private sector:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go beyond the “low-hanging fruit”. There may be potential amongst those excluded from the value chain collaboration.</li> <li>• Recognize diversity amongst farmers when providing support services.</li> </ul> <p><b>B) Civil society and practitioners organizations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play a role as bridging organization by bringing together actors from different sectors and operational levels, and act as knowledge broker and facilitator of learning platforms.</li> <li>• Perform a “watchdog” function in partnerships between actors of differential power.</li> <li>• Knowledge exchange and support services should start from the farmers and their networks.</li> </ul> <p><b>C) Policy makers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize different ways of knowledge exchange and the importance of combining cross-level with peer-to-peer learning to enhance innovation.</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge products</b>	<p>There are various products available at the <a href="#">Wordpress project page, including:</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For general public and professional use, there are info sheets and newsletters available. Here is the <a href="#">newsletter</a> from November 2016, and the most recent <a href="#">info sheet</a> from May 2019 with end results from South Africa. There is <a href="#">brochure</a> on the learning platform and a professional publication on the <a href="#">inclusiveness of the Ghanaian oil palm industry</a>.</li> <li>2. For the academic community, MSc theses and peer-reviewed articles are available. As an example thesis from June 2019 please see <a href="#">The role of civil society organisations in VCCs</a> by Maaïke van Woerden. For an example of a peer-reviewed article see the article by Malin Olofsson on <a href="#">socioeconomic differentiation among tree-crop farmers in Limpopo, South Africa</a> or the <a href="#">article that unpacks inclusiveness in smallholder value chain contexts</a> written by the UvA-KIT team..</li> <li>3. For consortium and associated partners and donors, there are also internal reports, for example the <a href="#">learning platform report of South Africa from July 2018</a>.</li> </ol>
<b>Knowledge networks</b>	<p>Learning platforms that bring farmers together with practitioners, private sector actors, researchers and practitioners, played a key role in this project. They are arenas of joint learning and knowledge exchange through sharing experiences, concerns, solutions, innovations and research findings, and peer-to-peer education. They strengthened the participants’ networks beyond the project.</p>
<b>Co-creation</b>	<p>Knowledge co-creation with farmers and peer-to-peer learning occurred mainly in and after the learning platforms, but also through joint fieldwork by the consortium partners. The complementary skills and different perspectives of practitioners and academics in the consortium allowed for the “translation” of transdisciplinary knowledge in academic products, and of academic knowledge in the practice of value chain collaboration with smallholder farmers. In both countries, there has been a strong interaction with the private sector through collaboration with Armajaro Ghana Limited in Ghana (thanks to a subsidy of the Lindt Cocoa Foundation) and the South African Subtropical Growers' Association (Subtrop), an association of associations of avocado, litchi, macadamia and mango growers. Lessons about innovations “from below” and transformational change were learned from interactions with “change makers” in the public and private sector, and people on the ground. Last but not least, there was a strong mutual learning between researchers and farmers in Ghana, who experienced to be partners in research rather than informants or respondents.</p>
<b>Future research and activities</b>	<p>Remaining questions include how different types of agricultural support differ in empowerment outcomes, and what role peer-to-peer learning and local innovation networks play in the co-creation of knowledge. In Ghana several efforts are being undertaken to follow up on the learning platforms and have them institutionalised. The Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission and the University of Energy and Natural Resources have already adopted and incorporated the learning platform concept in their activities. Also the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) is using the concept in several projects with private cocoa and chocolate companies.</p>
<b>Consortium Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">University of Amsterdam (UvA) (NL)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) (Ghana)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">University of Limpopo (UL) (South Africa)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Royal Tropical Institute, KIT (NL)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ghana Agricultural Associations Business &amp; Information Centre (GAABIC) (Ghana)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Agricultural Research Council, ARC (SA)</a></li> </ul>
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<b>Project websites</b>	<p><a href="#">Wordpress Project page</a> - <a href="#">F&amp;BKP Research Project page</a></p>