



The Gambia SCEDP NEWSLETTER JUNE–AUGUST 2013

The Sector Competitiveness and Export Diversification Project (SCEDP) aims at responding to some of the trade related development priorities identified in the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) by providing agriculture sector specific support for cashew nuts, groundnuts and sesame through finding new export opportunities and product diversification.

Beneficiaries

- ❖ Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
- ❖ Ministry of Agriculture
- ❖ Gambia Bureaus of Statistics
- ❖ The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ❖ The Gambia Revenue Authority
- ❖ Farmers and Processors of Groundnut, Cashew nut and Sesame

Partners

- ❖ Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
- ❖ Agribusiness Service Plan Association
- ❖ The National Women Farmers' Association
- ❖ Cashew Alliance of the Gambia
- ❖ National Codex SPS Committee

❖ SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

❖ TRADE INFORMATION REFERENCE CENTRE AND NETWORK

❖ INCLUSIVE TOURISM FEASIBILITY STUDY

Trade Information

- ❖ UNDP is currently in consultation with MOTIE on the procurement of high speed internet service.
- ❖ The Trade Information Centre at MOTIE has been set up and four Staff members identified to oversee the centre.

Sector Strategy Formulation

- ❖ To formalize the Sector Development Committees (SDCs) for Cashew and Sesame it is imperative that formal bodies tasked with overseeing the successful implementation of the strategies are in place.
- ❖ Consultations and trainings geared towards formalizing the committees to oversee the strategy management were held for Cashew and Sesame for the implementation of strategic objectives.

Inclusive Tourism Feasibility Study

- ❖ Upon completing the Tourism opportunity study, a draft project proposal was developed and is currently being reviewed internally by the NIU, MOTIE and implementing partner Gambia Tourism Board. The proposal will then be subjected to a wider stakeholder review.

SCEDP in the Media

- ❖ The SCEDP continued to gain momentum in the media with several workshops and trainings publicized for a wider audience, while the project also works on finding ways to reach out to a more diverse audience especially farmers in the regions.

Quality Enhancement

- ❖ Workshops and trainings on enhancing the quality of products produced in the Gambia were held; this included a packaging training and Farmer Field Schools training of Master and Core Trainers.

Sector Strategy Implementation

- ❖ As a follow up to the capacity building workshops held in November and April a detailed implementation activity plan of action was developed with prioritized objectives and overall development visions of the Cashew and Sesame sector. A TOR has also been developed for the Committees tasked with the implementation of the sector strategies for Sesame and Cashew.



Farmer Fields Schools Training of Master Trainers

During the first mission of the FFS International Consultant, several consultations were held with the three lead institutions ASPA, NAWFA and CAG as well as NARI and DOA to pave the way for the successful implementation of the FFS. To further build the capacities of FFS in the three sectors - Groundnut, Cashew and Sesame a training of Master Trainers was scheduled from 10th – 15th June to train five master trainers for each of the sectors mentioned. These five MTs were to further train forty (40) Core Trainers who will train farmers in the field. Along with the three (3) National Consultants, recruited by ITC under the close supervision of the NIU, the lead institutions selected to coordinate the implementation of FFS in the three sectors led and facilitated the trainings which were held in different parts of the country.



EIF Coordinator Awards Certificates to Master Trainers

The FFS Master and Core Trainers trainings touched on areas such as; setting up and managing FFS – incorporating the concept and principles of FFS, understanding the concept of adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for the production of high quality Cashew, Sesame and Groundnuts and creating awareness in quality enhancement and food safety issues on all three crops. At the end of the trainings a total of fifteen (15) Master Trainers were trained and one hundred and twenty (120) Core Trainers who will train farmers in the field.

A four (4) day training on packaging was held from 17th -20th June as a follow-up to the recommendations of diagnostic studies carried out in November 2012. The training, which was specific to Cashew, Groundnut and Sesame, was attended by thirty participants including twelve (12) women.



Packaging Training

The training sessions conducted by the International Consultant was a balanced mix of lectures, examples and exercises with a strong emphasis on practical work through group sessions to reinforce the learning experience. At the end of the training participants had an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of packaging, branding and marketing in general and more specifically in relation to their specific sectors whether Cashew, Groundnuts or Sesame through packaging clinics.



Packaging Resource Centre at GCCI

On the final day of the training, the International consultant along with the NIU and representatives from MOTIE proceeded on to the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) headquarters to set up the Packaging Resource Centre which will provide a wider framework for networking with packaging suppliers, food processors, experts and other institutions to provide an opportunity for continued learning.



Project Steering Committee Meeting

On 6th August, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) held its second meeting of the year. The meeting was attended by all members of the PSC except UNDP making it a total of seventeen (17) participants including the NIU. The meeting, chaired by the project Focal Point appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture was held at the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI).

The role of the PSC is to provide technical guidance to the project. In that regard a review meeting was scheduled with the objective of analyzing the bi-annual progress of the SCEDP project, which highlights the activities implemented from January – June. The bi-annual progress report also provided the PSC an overview of the successes, challenges and lessons learned during the first six months of the year. During the meeting the Minutes from the previous PSC meeting held on 12th March was reviewed and adopted by the PSC.

The PSC were satisfied with the responses to recommendations made during the last meeting. All recommendations were addressed and this included the need for more farmers to come together as cooperatives and for the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) was to coordinate the process. This process has already started and the MOA is in the process of registering farmers and farmer associations. The PSC had recommended that due to the rapid approaching Cashew season a buyer-sellers meeting should be held earlier than indicated in the work plan, the President of CAG responded that a buyer-sellers meeting has already taken place. Transport refund to the Committees has been approved by ITC and previous SDC meetings have been covered. The work plan prepared by ITC is now more reader friendly with the new format.

The PSC were given an update on upcoming project activities such as the workshop on the revision and validation of both the Sesame and Cashew sector strategies, the training on sector strategic management and implementation and the upcoming Annual Review Meeting of the SCEDP to be held in Banjul according to the project document.

A revision and validation workshop of the sesame and cashew sectors strategy was held on 19th and 20th August as a follow-up to the Sector Strategy workshops held in April 2013, to validate the cashew problem tree, conclude detailed implementation activity planning and to define and prioritize objectives and overall development visions of the Sesame and Cashew sectors. The SCEDP which provides specific support for the Sesame and Cashew sectors under Component A also focuses on finding new export opportunities, product diversification, improved value-addition, quality enhancement and strengthened sector support institutions. In that regard many high profile government representatives, national and international stakeholders as well as representatives of the two sectors including farmers, producers, processors and exporters came together to further revise and validate the strategies developed.

The Sesame workshop conducted by an ITC expert on Sector Strategy Development was attended by thirty-one (31) participants including eight (8) women and the Cashew workshop attended by thirty (30) participants including three (3) women. The revision and validation of the strategies will not only enable stakeholders of the project to produce implementable activities identified in the Plan of Action, but their participation and inclusive involvement in the sector strategy design will ensure efficiency in coordinating identified activities to ensure sustainability and explore ways and means to mobilize resources.



Revision and Validation of Sesame Sector Strategies

During the Mission, several consultative meetings were held with key stakeholders on 21st August to discuss the terms of reference for the committees, ways of facilitating more project synergies, complementarities and follow up activities as stipulated by the EIF Executive Secretariat Recommendations. These meetings include MOTIE - was attended by the Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary and Director of Trade, NAWFA and CAG representatives as well as with the Chief Executive Officer of GIEPA, who will be a major player in the implementation of the strategies as it links to the National Export Strategy (NES).



ITC Expert Training on Cashew and Sesame Sector Strategy Implementation

A training for the Sector Implementation Committees who will be tasked to take responsibility for the implementation and management of Sesame and Cashew strategies was conducted by two ITC expert for two (2) days 22nd and 23rd August. The training attended by twenty-one (21) participants including four (4) women consisted of members of the project SDCs other beneficiaries who were trained on Strategy Implementation. The aim of the training was to build the capacities of the committee to be able to guide, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the sector strategies for Cashew and Sesame.



Annual Review Meeting of the SCEDP

From 26th to 28th August the NIU received another Mission from ITC, this time consisting of the Senior Trade Promotion Officer and Associate Programme Adviser, both from the Office for Africa, Division of Country Programmes, which is responsible for overseeing the SCEDP. The purpose of the Mission was to attend the Annual Review Meeting (ARM), meet with project stakeholders and beneficiaries to assess project progress and outcomes beginning to register, to identify challenges/problems potential areas for improvement in terms of project coordination and delivery in the field as well as possible remedies to ensure attainment of project results and finally to hold meetings with the EIF National Implementing Unit to address various coordination issues including preparation for the Mid-term Evaluation of the project.

As part of the project's Monitoring agreed in the project document, at the end of each year of implementation, an Annual Review Meeting will take place in Banjul. The meeting brought together many stakeholders and beneficiaries to discuss achievements, share lessons learnt and recommend possible adjustments to be made on the proposed work plan.

The meeting attended by twenty-two (22) participants, including four (4) women, from various government and public institutions, private sector bodies, farmer associations and private business owners and exporters addressed key issues encountered by implementing partners CAG, NAWFA, NARI, ASPA, NCSPSC, GIEPA, MOTIE and GTBoard. At the end of the meeting several recommendations were made on how to further improve on the coordination of the project to achieve its desired goals and objectives but also on how to improve trade facilitation in the Gambia, by creating new export opportunities, how to add value to products by improving the quality of products, how to further strengthen sector support institutions and finally how to reduce poverty through trade.

The SCEDP is funded by the EIF Trust Fund and implemented by the International Trade Centre with local partners including the EIF Programme under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE)

"The project aims at responding to our trade and development needs with the objective of employment creation and reducing poverty in the Gambia. It is one of four Tier 2 projects developed by The Gambia under the EIF Programme and the first to be approved by the EIF Board for The Gambia, hence making it a challenging endeavor. Therefore, the collaboration of key stakeholders is paramount for the successful implementation of the project."

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