

# Crafting the Missing Link

Promoting value-added production by farmers in eastern Africa

*Azene Bekele-Tesemma*



316.324.5  
BEK







This document has been financed by Swedish international development cooperation agency (Sida). Sida does not necessarily share the views expressed in this material. Responsibility for its contents is entirely with the author.



# Crafting the Missing Link

Promoting value-added production in Africa



Farmers' Competence Initiative

*Azene Bekele-Tesemma*

ICRAF LIBRARY



Publishers	World Agroforestry Centre – Eastern and Central Africa’s Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA in ICRAF), ICRAF House, Gigiri P. O. Box 30677 - 00100, Nairobi, Kenya, and Link ProVaMP – Ethiopia P. O. Box 1505, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
©2007	World Agroforestry Centre – Eastern and Central Africa’s Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA in ICRAF) and Link ProVaMP-Ethiopia.
Editor	Helen van Houten, Nairobi, Kenya
Design and layout	Gikang’a John, World Agroforestry Centre, Nairobi, Kenya Nyetumba Bonaventure, IIRR, Nairobi, Kenya
Photos and text	Azene Bekele-Tesema, RELMA in ICRAF, Nairobi, Kenya For more information contact: Azene.Bekele@cgiar.org Tel (+254) 20 722 4412

*The opinions expressed in this book are the author’s and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the publishers.*

**Production of this book was supported by the following organizations**



**LinkProVaMP - Ethiopia**  
P.O. Box 2203, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
E-mail: link\_provamp@ethionet.com  
Tel: 251-1-234735, Fax: 234736



**World Agroforestry Centre**  
TRANSFORMING LIVES AND LANDSCAPES

**World Agroforestry Centre**  
Eastern and Central Africa's Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA in ICRAF)  
ICRAF building, United Nations Avenue, Gigiri  
P.O. Box 30677 – 00100, Nairobi, Kenya.  
Tel: (+254) 207224000, Fax (+254) 7224401

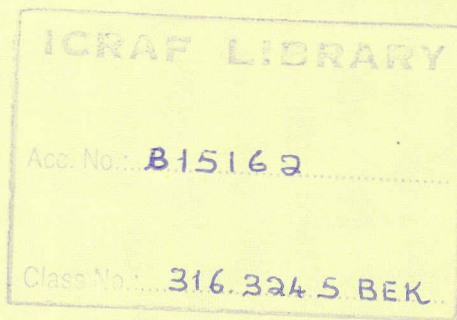


INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

**Africa Regional Centre**  
P.O. Box 66873-00800, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel.: (254-20) 444-0991/2610  
Fax: (254-20) 444-8148  
E-mail: admin@iirr-africa.org  
Website: www.iirr.org







# Contents

First foreword	v
Second foreword	vii
Preface	viii
Definitions and abbreviations	ix
<b>1. Problem context and background</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background and rationale .....	1
1.2 Prevailing situation .....	4
1.3 Major production challenges .....	10
<b>2. Vision, mission, goals and objectives</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Vision .....	13
2.2 Mission .....	13
2.3 Goals .....	13
2.4 Objectives .....	15
<b>3. Issues</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Problem domain .....	17
3.2 Strategy domain .....	22
3.3 Action domain .....	25
3.4 Critical knowledge gaps in linking production with value adding and marketing .....	30
<b>4. Strategies</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1 Strategic support .....	32
4.2 Strategic actions for implementing FCI .....	33
4.3 Functioning modalities .....	43



<b>5. Actions</b>	<b>45</b>
5.1 Getting ready for action: professionals.....	46
5.2 Joint actions .....	47
5.3 Sector-specific actions .....	48
5.4 Linking mechanisms and options.....	58
<b>6. Relevance to national, regional and global efforts</b>	<b>59</b>
6.1 Relevance to national efforts .....	59
6.2 Relevance to regional efforts .....	60
6.3 Relevance to global efforts.....	61
<b>7. Recommendations</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Selected references for further reading</b>	<b>64</b>

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of Farmers' Competence Initiative .....	35
Figure 2. National knowledge houses form a network . . . ..	38
Box 1. Policy in in-house discussion.....	29
Box 2. Farmers addressing the production challenge .....	51
Box 3. Letter to a subject matter specialist from a development agent .....	54



## First foreword

Patterns and distribution of development strategies, programmes and initiatives in societies are changing rapidly. The agendas for dealing with poverty and unemployment and for managing the environment, energy, and rural and urban development have evolved into multidimensional and multisectoral issues that require sustained professional attention, that turn in new directions with new institutional approaches, and that have a sensitized people's genuine participation. Organizations acting alone are ineffective, given the mounting complexity of economic development and the inadequate knowledge about policies that would support synergy among production, value addition, marketing and policy. We strongly believe, however, that we can best achieve victory in gaining food security if we all exert our efforts to link farmers' production to value-addition efforts and market them through supportive infrastructures, with institutional help and benign policy environments.

There is enough food for all of us in the world, but many are limited in their purchasing power. Many still sleep with an empty stomach and these many are often rural communities subsisting on farming. Therefore, building the economic capacity of farmers is central to the national food security agenda.

Most farmers do not realize the possibilities and profitability of linking their production to value addition and marketing because professionals and institutions are themselves not complementarily linked. Though supermarkets are mushrooming, and national and regional markets are becoming more and more conscious of quality, quantity, and continuity of production, many farmers have neither the competence nor the facilities to meet these requirements. They do not have the facilities or the competence to maintain the quality of seed or breed. They have neither the facilities nor the competence to process and increase the shelflife of their products. They do not consider coming together and planning together to address issues of quantity and reliability.

*The fact that farmers' production is not linked to value addition and marketing has a number of negative effects on national economic development.*

- The industry and service sectors do not provide job opportunities for school leavers and young farmers living in rural areas as much as they could.
- Jobs in areas such as preservation, manufacturing, processing, quality grading, standardization, certification, branding, packaging and storage remain untapped by farmers' children due to lack of focus in these areas in our education for skill development.
- Farmers continue to focus only on crop production. Crowding and competition for cropland is exacerbated while marginal lands are cultivated beyond their potential. Continued environmental damage results.



- The value of bulking produce and of forming groups for market accountability and collective management is not yet appreciated. Fragmented and individual efforts that can not lead to farmer prosperity dominate.
- Crop production remains short of effectively contributing to farmers' economic empowerment, and farmers' economic access to food remains limited. The battle against food insecurity remains unresolved and the burden on cultivable land continues to be worrisome.

These projected situations are not to be tolerated. Efforts are needed to reverse the situation. How to do this is extensively addressed in this booklet.

At this juncture, I would like to thank the World Agroforestry Centre and Link ProVaMP–Ethiopia for their successful efforts to publish this important booklet. The same goes to the author, Dr Azene Bekele-Tesemma. Let me also take this opportunity to welcome all participating readers and urge you to think synergistically, exercise the utmost determination and commit yourselves to implementing the plan that the booklet outlines.

*Dr. Abera Deressa*

*State Minister of Agriculture*

*Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development*



## Second foreword

The persistent and unique poverty situation in Africa necessitates a different approach to our development strategies and actions. It is distressing and a professional challenge that people starve in sub-Saharan Africa. While we witness this current situation, we need to understand the unique nature of economic development strategies and action in this part of the continent.

Africa was historically a land of plenty. People were self-sufficient, with everyone producing what they needed. Unfortunately, this mindset of production for consumption continued even after civilization and specialization advanced. Unlike in developed nations, most sub-Saharan African countries still believe in achieving food security by maximizing production and productivity of the food crop. The focus on all fronts has remained mainly on cereal food crops. But producing solely for consumption cannot be the sole agenda for successfully achieving food security. This booklet sheds light on these pragmatic issues and defines the way forward for achieving food security. It focuses mainly on the following important points.

- Changing the mindset from production for own consumption to production for marketing.
- Focusing on selected productions that have comparative economic advantage in earning cash for farmers.
- Encouraging policymakers and other professionals in all relevant sectors to focus on those economically advantageous productions and supporting farmers in, adding value to them and marketing them effectively.
- Enabling professionals, institutions and farmers to work complementarily in linking production to value addition, marketing and institution building for producers to benefit from the national, regional and global market opportunities.

This booklet documents a remarkable piece of work done. In this regard, we thank Dr Azene Bekele-Tesemma for this new initiative. The work of the many other collaborators who contribute to this success is also appreciated. The booklet is interesting to read and raises pertinent issues. We hope every reader will benefit from it and play an important role in pursuing the agenda on gaining food security and an improved way of life in Africa.

*Dr. Henning Baur, Regional Coordinator, Eastern and Central Africa Region  
World Agroforestry Centre  
Eastern and Central Africa Regional Program*



## Preface

I first would like to express my special thanks to His Excellency Ato Belay Ejigu, former State Minister of Agriculture, for his useful critique, advice and support. Gratitude is also extended to Mr. Ake Barklund and the RELMA in ICRAF project crew for their invaluable critique and support. This support has given me the required impetus.

The Farmers' Competence Initiative (FCI) concept was born from the real problem those countries in sub-Saharan Africa uniquely face. Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa is such everyday phenomenon that people seem to submit to. Much effort to overcome the poverty has been made on the part of multilateral and bilateral donors. Many national governments have made utmost efforts. However, many sub-Saharan African countries have not overcome poverty. I have been dismayed by the lack of success in overcoming the problem. To me, it seems obvious that we must take a fresh look at the problem and plan a strategy for a new solution.

I have presented the initiative to various expert workshops, seminars and professionals' forums in Africa, Europe and Asia. Participants came from the areas of production, value adding, marketing, policy and institution building. Many have given me important and useful comments and encouragement. It is unrealistic to list them all; all deserve my thanks.

The issue is the focus in the effort. Currently, more effort is expended done for self-sufficiency in foodcrops as opposed to the effort needed on producing economically advantageous productions that targets the market for generating the cash needed for purchasing food and other items that provide an improved way of life. The latter focuses on improving capacity and linking institutions and professions that form a common front for strengthening cash gain by the farmers. It calls for creating a joint forum of professionals that serves as a clearing house and establishing Link ProVaMP promotion units in every relevant institution for realising a change in mindset and mainstreaming FCI ideals.

Experts in Ethiopia and Tanzania have established such a joint forum, called Link ProVaMP-Ethiopia. The same is happening in Kenya and Tanzania. All have contributed many important ideas to the clarity of this initiative. They deserve my special thanks. I also thank the World Agroforestry Centre and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction for financing the publishing costs.

*Azene Bekele-Tesemma*

*Capacity Building Adviser, World Agroforestry Centre, East Africa Region*



## Definitions and abbreviations

AU	African Union
CBO	Community-based organizations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Farmers' institutions	Establishment and use of grassroots organizations for bulking assets, labour and market goods at economic size and for earning credibility in the face of lending organizations, contracting market dealers, and similar entities
Farmers' production	Farmers' focus on selected economically advantageous floricultural, horticultural, agronomic, livestock, fishery, apicultural and any other production through effective land and water resource management as well as by using improved breeds and germplasm
FCI	Farmers' Competence Initiative, which focuses mainly on improving capacity and linking institutions and professions to impact on value-added production in Africa
FCI Promotion Units	A unit within governmental, non-governmental and private sector institutions commissioned to mainstream FCI ideals into the activities of their respective institutions
Food security	Physical and economic access to enough food of good quality by all people at all times for their active and healthy life
IGAD	Intergovernmental Alliance against Drought and Desertification
Link ProVaMP	A concept about promoting synergy between farmers' production, value adding, marketing, building supportive institutions and infrastructure as well as policy
Marketing	Understanding and using knowledge to create assets, encourage entrepreneurship and business planning, build skills in market contracting and negotiation, manage savings and credit, and handle trade and business



MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
Policy	In this context, policies specifically promulgated for promoting focus on links between farmers' production of selected and economically advantageous market goods, value adding, marketing and supportive infrastructure and institution building
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QQCC	Preferred quantity quality and continuity of supplies by credible suppliers.
SMS	Subject Matter Specialist
Value adding	Understanding and using a set of technologies and approaches, starting from selection and use of improved breeds coupled with improved land and water management and including agroprocessing, preservation, quality grading, standardization, patenting, certification, branding, labelling, packaging, storage, advertising, and transporting farmers' production as market goods
Value-added production	Farmers' production where value-addition effort has been initiated. In the context of this initiative, value-added production includes production on which value addition has been made at the biological production phase and beyond until it is marketed and exchanged by cash. For instance, value-added forest products may include growing timber from improved varieties of tree species, felling the tree, milling it, sectioning it to the required size, grading it, properly dressing, preserving, stacking and drying the lumber, branding, advertising and transporting it to market for sale by farmers. Parallel processing applies to the many products farmers need to make to generate cash effectively



## 1 Problem context and background

### 1.1 Background and rationale

Agrarian systems that are not strongly connected to industry and service sector developments are generally weak and unproductive. Coupled with external setbacks such as climatic uncertainty, these systems have held back the economic growth of households and nations, resulting in poverty. 'The regulatory framework for agriculture must also be taken into account, including ... the involvement of these [local] communities in policy and the provision of services' (NEPAD 2001, para. 129, 130, 133).

Still, the economy of many countries in sub-Saharan Africa is based on self-sufficiency in food from agricultural production and livestock keeping. Unfortunately, this emphasis can no longer guarantee a reliable living for the growing populations in these countries unless value is substantially added and effective and efficient marketing done. Food security in the region continues to decline each year. Increased demand for food and absolute dependence of the majority of the population on its own food-crop production alone has forced farmers to cultivate even marginal lands.

Unlike the farmers in European countries and others in the Western world, who are brought up in a culture of production for marketing, farmers and their development guardians in sub-Saharan Africa have long believed and tried to achieve food security by increasing production for household consumption. All this was under the banner of *self-sufficiency in food crops*, which did not discern the need for the strong connection to value addition and marketing. This has led down a wrong path, ignoring the cash needed for purchasing nutritious food and improving lives, such as for financing schooling and improving shelter and health facilities.

The effort towards securing one's own food crop has focused on *producing* the food crops even at sites where they are not suitable. That route has squandered strategic efforts towards building farmers' competence in producing many other non-food commodities that can strengthen their cash income for food and improve their way of life. It missed out on looking for relatively economically advantageous development possibilities such as focusing on fruits, vegetables, forest products, spices and condiments, medicinal and aromatic plants, livestock and livestock products, eco-beauty and tourism as major ways of life for which sub-Saharan Africa could be most suited and have relative advantage. It obscured strategic efforts to promote value addition in situations and infrastructures and with tools that form an effective link.





*Production of staple food crops for consumption has been an all-time activity for rural men and women. However, unless connected to value addition and marketing, food security is difficult to accomplish.*

Because the food-crop producers themselves have been assumed to be the end consumers in the existing food-security campaign, production efforts have ignored market demands such as adding value through growing improved breeds or cultivar prerequisites for delivering market quality and market quantity.

Equally ignored has been the option of supplying produce with national, regional and global market preferences. Rather, production has been based on the taste preference of the producer itself, and the produce grown has been more varied than the variety of producers. Because this mode of production meant *small in quantity, many in type*, farmers, even in groups, have not been able to turn out produce in economic quantities that would give them access to market opportunities. The market, of course, demands a continuous supply of preferred commodities delivered in great quantity as a matter of economy. Because farmers have failed to gain market opportunities, they have realized no economic success from the food crops that they produce. Their production efforts therefore have not given them food security. Their living standards have remained poor and continue to deteriorate.

Most of the world's poor are rural farmers who produce targeting at only what their family consumes. Small-scale farmers collectively have substantial resources and their potential to help reduce poverty is immense. What rural communities lack is competence in linking farmers' production to national, regional and global consumers and link their product to marketing. But linking product to marketing requires effort in QQCC. Extremely important now are strategies that will involve these communities in the service and industry sectors, rather than strategies that urge them towards greater production targeting family needs. Such competence would enable them to earn more from farmers' produce than they do at present. This will also enable them to generate off-farm job opportunities within the rural community setting itself. Without



strong focus and emphasis on what it takes to promote technological change and commercialization in selected economically advantageous productions by ecoregions and countries, Africa may continue facing difficulties in achieving food security and improved livelihoods.

Alternative opportunities in gaining access to markets and generating income are needed to support the millions of poor families who are no longer able to support themselves solely from their farm production. The focus needs to shift to agricultural commercialization and technological change.

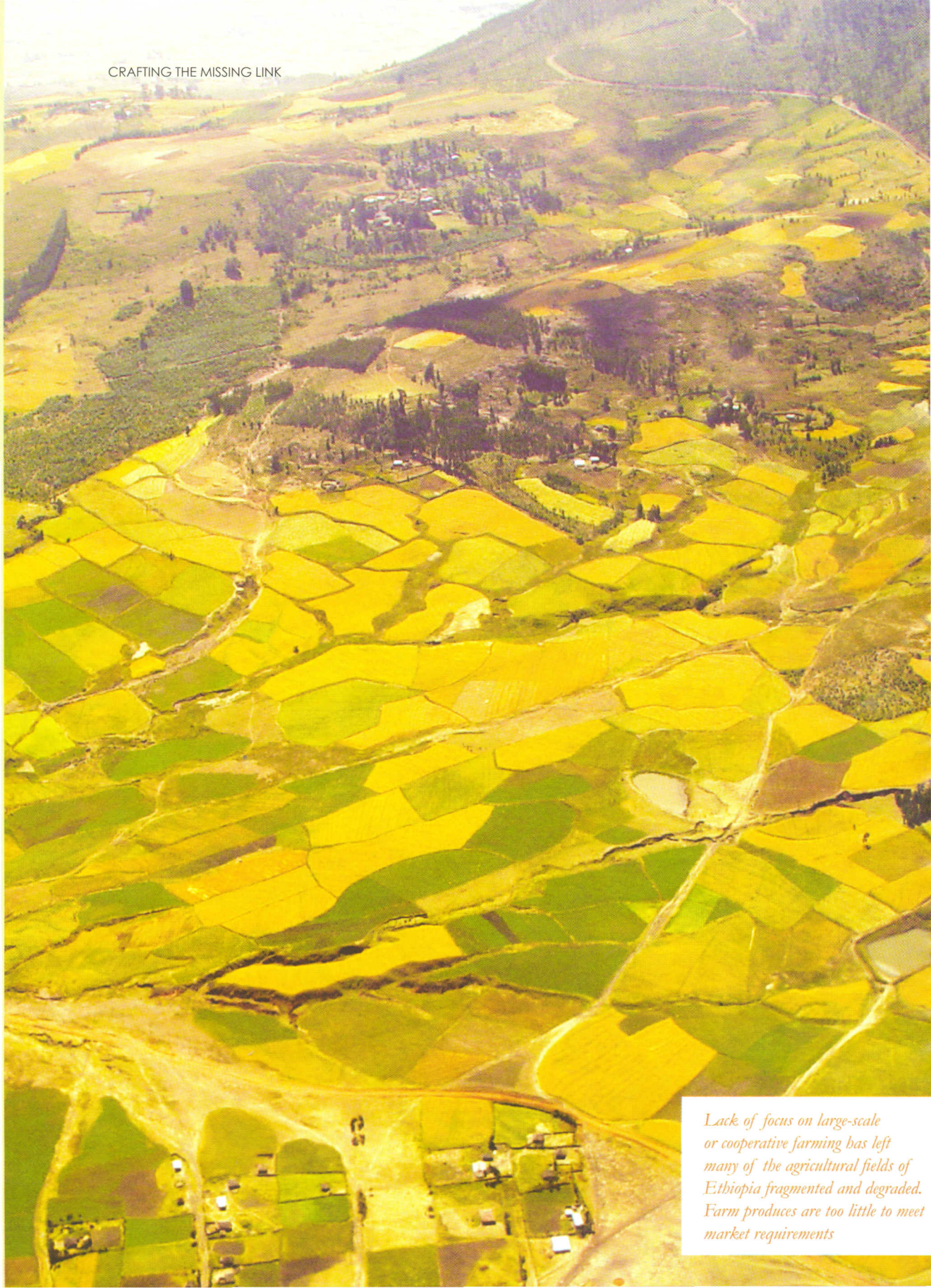
Market-oriented reforms and structural adjustment programs in developing countries have made it possible to gain access to national, regional and world markets. Supermarkets have multiplied, and the market desire for organically produced foods has increased. Farmers therefore now have greater market opportunities at all levels for their produce.

Efforts to increase production of food for consumption by expanding into marginal lands result in environmental degradation that could generate grave consequences for production itself. As an alternative, developing the value-adding and marketing sectors may hold the key to food security. By growing quality produce (from improved breeds and cultivars), adding value that includes agroprocessing (turning farmers' products into other commodities



*Transporting teff harvest to the threshing floor is still a back-breaking responsibility for women. Improving harvesting and transporting systems is another unresolved infrastructural problem in agriculture production.*





*Lack of focus on large-scale or cooperative farming has left many of the agricultural fields of Ethiopia fragmented and degraded. Farm produces are too little to meet market requirements*



for the market), preserving, grading and standardizing quality, certifying, packaging, labelling, branding and storing the products well, small-scale farmers will have wider opportunities for penetrating the national, regional and global markets and earning a better income. Such off-farm job opportunities can make it possible for farm children to move out from overburdened farms.

Linking farm production with adding value to produce and marketing the products will not be easy, however, because the present mindset for gaining food security is too often focused on producing food rather than on having physical and economic access to food. Most governments have concentrated their attention on food-crop production rather than on looking for ways to increase economic access to food. For instance, in areas where weather conditions fluctuate, lands are too steep for cereal crop production, and soils are poor, depending on perennials such as trees would likely be the best option; instead, however, much effort is unfortunately dissipated by trying to grow annual food crops even under such conditions.

What is needed is a change of mindset. Farmers as well as policy-makers and development facilitators must realize that building the capacity of the rural population to add value and market their produce is central to rural development. Because those who facilitate development and those who issue policy give only limited attention to adding value and marketing, farmers do not have either the interest or the capacity to do so themselves. But to build the rural economy farmers must become aware of and appreciate the benefits of linking their production with adding value to their produce and marketing it.

*In summary, the following five major concerns are in focus.*

- Changing the mindset of institutions and staffs from production-for-household consumption to production-for-marketing in the overall economic development strategy of the nations.
- Promoting and assisting in the establishment of mandated institutions that can mainstream FCI ideals in all the relevant NGOs, civil society organizations and private enterprises for synergistic benefits.
- Strengthening farmers' cash-earning possibilities from any relatively economically advantageous production and enabling farmers to purchase food even when there are droughts and other natural and social calamities.
- Strengthening value addition, marketing, infrastructure and other service delivery activities as off-farm job possibilities for farmers' children and gradually disconnecting them from the already overburdened and uneconomical size of land.



*In many tropical African countries the focus on food-crop production has left many of the forest lands exhaustively misused leaving the landscape barren.*



- Effectively linking tertiary-level education and research to problems of rural communities who need to link off-farm skills, methods and approaches to on-farm activities of the farmers.

## 1.2 Prevailing situation

The focus and attention are strong on the part of many international, regional and national institutions to emancipate Africans from their deep poverty. These efforts have been in action for quite some time and may continue for many years to come. However, past achievements have not been encouraging. Most Africans still cannot finance their daily meals and other basic necessities. The proportion of the population in farming is unacceptably high, making working the land an uneconomical way of life. Ethiopia, whose farming population is over 80%, is a good example of this.

The situation calls for action in focusing on comparatively economically advantageous productions and linking these selected productions to value addition and effective marketing. Unfortunately, farmers face several challenges even when they try to add value to their crop and livestock production. These are mainly the need for:

- Efficient support services such as training, provision of appropriate technologies, and advice in selecting and producing economically advantageous products from forestry, horticulture, livestock, fishery, apiculture, floriculture or agronomy developments.
- Improved breed or germplasm supply and management support as well as support in providing knowledge and equipment for adding value to their products.
- Functioning rural energy, market and rural road infrastructure, which are crucially essential for expanding value-adding efforts.
- Strategic focus on perennial crops and livestock as a substitute to focus on drought-prone annual crops especially on marginal lands.



- Supportive and flexible policies in support of establishing credible supplies of farm products in grassroots community organizations tailored to linking farmers' production to value addition, marketing.
- Support facilities in financial and other resources until long-term production enterprises of farmers or rural communities begin to yield.
- Support in acquiring business and entrepreneurial skills.
- Support for acquiring of the necessary technologies and tools needed in both the production and value-addition sectors.
- Professional proactive support in quality grading, certification, branding, patenting, labelling, packaging and advertising farmers' products.

The strategy should be to make economic access to food and other life essentials the centre of overall economic development rather than simply trying to maximize food-crop production. Nations need to act to realize the strategy. It equally calls for economic development strategies that consider value addition and marketing sectors that complement farm production as important areas of job opportunities for farmers' children. These children need to be gradually given the opportunity to move away from the already overburdened land, often held and worked in small, uneconomical sizes. Such moves call for change of vision and direction in the overall economic development strategy of nations. It includes revisiting the overall workforce, budget, training and educational institutions, and policy support arrangements. Then, complementary growth of the industry's service and production sectors may be effectively realized. But this can be possible when rural communities are helped in realizing that income security takes care of food security rather than viewing income (economic) security and food security as two separate entities.

*For many fruits and vegetables with market potential, improving markets and market infrastructure is a huge task awaiting in Africa.*





CRAFTING THE MISSING LINK



*Many tropical trees such as *Antiaris toxicaria* have huge products marketable locally, nationally and globally. This is a bark of the same tree rich in fibre which is locally used for various purposes.*



*Rationale for the prevailing situation*

Primarily, most governments in sub-Saharan Africa have strongly believed that starvation can be overcome by encouraging farmers to maximize food production for the country's domestic consumption. Therefore, government resources and support have been targeted to this basic type of food production, mainly of cereal crops (85% in Ethiopia). Since consumption instead of marketing has led the production target, the following important activities have remained marginalized:

- producing economically advantageous food and non-food commodities for cash at household level
- instituting value-addition technologies for making production competitive at markets
- instituting provision of marketing and market intelligence support to rural farmers
- facilitating support services such as rural energy, roads, and market infrastructure to farming communities

**Misappropriation of efforts as well as budgetary and workforce resources continue.**

There is wishful intention for agribusiness and agricultural production to lead industrialization in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the emphasis on establishing educational institutions and the allocation of budgets and other inputs essential for creating a critical mass of professionals in value-addition expertise is limited. As a result, the number of professionals who can effectively connect production to marketing or agriculture to industry is minimal. There are too few colleges and universities in Africa that produce professionals with the skills to improve germplasm and breeds—and the skills to certify, set and grade quality standards; preserve, package and brand food products; and patent and advertise these products.

Because production has been consumption based, farmers have been advised to produce as much food for consumption as they can, of any kind. One might produce onions while neighbours produce teff, pepper, millet, chickpea, lentil, garlic, maize, and so on. Such fragmented production attracts neither merchants nor industries.

Because the poor do not demand quality food, improving cultivars and germplasm has not been a priority, nor has been grading of quality. Both technologies and improvement of germplasm and cultivars have thus remained inferior. The potential of farmers to penetrate the marketplace remains crippled in sub-saharan Africa.



Because agricultural marketing—globally, regionally or even nationally—is not at the forefront of the economic development strategy in sub-Saharan Africa, developing a common language and an understanding of quality grading and standards has not been included enough in the food security campaign. Therefore, even if the region is now to embark on market-focused food security efforts, it must race at double pace.

The fact that the natural resource base is being depleted rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular is an additional root cause of failure to gain food security. Continuous cultivation of cereals in response to diminishing farm size and deteriorating quality of the land is perhaps the major cause of poverty. Farmers cultivating small plots cannot produce the surplus required for them to invest in improving the land and using new technologies. In their struggle to produce enough food for the table, most farmers have been forced to

- abandon fallowing and crop rotation, the traditional methods of restoring soil fertility
- remove all available organic (cow dung and crop residue) matter from farm plots to meet cash, feed and fuel needs
- plough the mountain slopes and deforest water catchment areas to increase the production area, trying to meet increased demand

They have very little money (often none at all) to purchase inputs for production such as fertilizer, pesticides or improved seeds or breeds.

Studies in Ethiopia have shown that decline in farm size is associated with less-intensified production systems, which do not allow producing economic size in market terms.

Increasing the attention to improving the value-adding and marketing sectors becomes a necessity not a choice. It will create off-farm job opportunities and help farmers generate better income from their various economic source developments, which they may use for other livelihood expenses such as medication, schooling, nutritious food, hygienic clothing and improved shelter.

Targeting at economic strength makes use of diversified economic sources including touristic sites, presently not exploited effectively. For instance, despite a wealth of natural resources and religious sites that could attract tourists, Ethiopia earns little from them.

Another major weakness is the lack of synergy among activities being handled by various ministries. Ministries work independently, with no coordination, resulting in competition and conflict rather than synergy and



*Africa is fortunate to have agroclimates that allow for a multiplicity of crops, like this gluten-free cereal, teff, and niger seed, an oil crop.*



complementarities, which could multiply successes. Experts in farmers' production, foreign and domestic trade, industry, energy, marketing and business, quality standards, education, and environmental concerns, as well as information and communications, do not know one another and have never introduced coordination channels. Ministerial compartmentalization has created territorial sentiments among the professionals in each of these sectors, causing them to blame one another for failing to wage a successful battle against food insecurity at national scale in Africa.

*Major contributors to the failure in rural economies are these:*

- *Mindsets are fixed on equating food security with producing food instead of with maximizing cash income from the sale of economically advantageous productions to gain economic access to food.* Had strengthening farmers' economic access to food been the driving economic development principle, economically advantageous income sources such as industrial wood, medicinal plants, aromatics, spices and condiments, horticultural products, and floricultural plants could have been considered in the food security strategy of African countries—and may have produced even more profit and thus security than the staple food crop.
- Limited attention has been devoted to market-oriented commodities and value-adding enterprises, to market and business principles and requirements.
- Limited policy attention has been given to linking basic skills training in primary and secondary schools or in connecting tertiary-level education to off-farm professions such as germplasm and breed improvement, preservation, quality grading, quality standards, labelling, packaging, certification, small-scale business planning and rural enterprise that build on on-farm activities of rural communities.
- Limited attention has been given to infrastructure such as market, telecommunication, energy, rural roads and service sector developments for rural areas that target food requirements of the producer household.





*If value is added to livestock products, they can be a way for farmers of Africa to gain cash for accessing nutritious food and improved way of life.*

- Forest lands have been misused by deforesting industrial forest lands to allocate them mainly to food-crop production.
- Livestock, fishery, and bees and their products have been mismanaged and only limited use has been made of them.
- Water resources could have been used to bridge the seasonal rainfed production and guarantee the reliability of farmers to supply market produce continuously.
- Search for markets at global, regional and national levels for many of the possible farm products has been weak.
- The focus on rural technology and manufacturing for adding value to farmers' produce in rural areas has been weak.
- It has been difficult or impossible for farmers to obtain initial capital or to mortgage their land to develop enterprises.
- Farmers' children have not been provided with job opportunities in adding value and developing infrastructure, resulting in continued crowding of rural landholdings.

### 1.3 Major production challenges

In many parts of Africa, agricultural extension programs introduce successful production technologies, which increase production significantly. However, the benefit is thinly spread by dwelling broadly on food-crop production without looking at the selected few that have comparative economic advantage for the nations. Production is often hampered by factors such as the following:



- continued production of farmers' produce that is little in quantity, inferior in quality, and intermittent in supply—thus failing to meet market requirements
- absence of quality grading and standards that are accredited by regional and global standardization and certification bodies for much of the farmers' produce
- lack of critical mass of experts who can be deployed in genetic engineering to promote improved and purchaser-conscious products
- effort on production that is not necessarily economically advantageous to either the farmers, the environment or the nations as a whole
- inadequate knowledge of how to increase the shelflife of produce
- produce not sorted by grades or standards that are nationally, regionally or globally recognized
- inability to brand and certify products as market commodities
- poor packaging and storage facilities
- poor knowledge of producers in market dealing
- limited experience in identifying, developing and exporting economically advantageous market commodities
- poor infrastructure such as roads, rural energy, telecommunication, market information centres and storage facilities
- policies that cater for food self-sufficiency but that do not promote or support the connection between production, value addition and marketing of farmers' produce
- lack of awareness or consideration of what can be marketed, what value-adding technologies are needed, and how products can be effectively marketed

The weak performance of agricultural markets, both input and output, is a major impediment to growth in the agricultural sector and in the overall economy. Smallholder farmers in particular face an uncertain production environment and high costs in pursuing market access. They also have to contend with unfavourable international trade regimes and markets. Moreover, if the marketing system is inefficient, the surplus resulting from increased production benefits neither the farmers nor the state.

Institutional building and policy reforms undertaken since 1991 have reduced the role of African states in economic activities. However, recovery of the private sector has been slow to catch up on the new responsibility because of poor infrastructure, terms of trade and an inefficient marketing system, particularly in rural areas. As a result, farmers have little influence over what the market offers them.



## 2 Vision, mission, goals and objectives

The FCI concept was developed by the capacity-building specialist of the RELMA- in-ICRAF project at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). It was first launched at a workshop held 14–17 July 2003 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, out of which also came Link ProVaMP. The workshop brought together participants from organizations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Its aim was to establish the Ethiopian chapter of the initiative and use it as a basis for forming chapters in the other countries represented at the meeting.

The long-term ambition is to form a regional forum where ideas can be shared among professionals of member states in sub-Saharan Africa. This goal is in line with NEPAD's aim towards African ownership of their own economic development strategies, actions and management. It is based on the agenda set by African peoples of their own volition and through their own initiative, to shape their own economic destiny.

Participants at the workshop discussed and developed the vision (the future where Africa needs to be in the foreseeable future), mission (the business the initiative is going to be in), goals (what the initiative hopes to achieve) and strategies (how the goals will be achieved). They also discussed a draft Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association.

### Vision

Rural households and communities will be affluent.

### Mission

Promote farmers' competence for optimally linking their production with value adding and marketing, as well as advocating and lobbying for supportive policies, infrastructure and grassroots institutions to assure that rural communities realize access to food and livelihood effectively.

### Goals

The major goal is to eradicate poverty and hunger by strengthening farmers' economic access to food and improved livelihoods.

The strategy for achieving this goal is to build the competence of farmers and the rural community. This will be realized by capacitating all relevant parties



who capacitate rural communities. A simultaneous strategy is to promote a change in vision and direction from foodcrop *production for self-consumption to production of economically advantageous production-for-marketing*. This will require a lot of effort to promote supportive policies, to reorganize the workforce and the budget and to make institutional rearrangements. Promoting supportive policies and rural infrastructure that encourage such a link is part of the strategy. FCI goals tie in with the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. Ethiopia is one of the pilot countries in the Millennium Project, whose pertinent goals are:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
- Promote gender equality and empower women.
- Ensure environmental sustainability.
- Develop a global partnership for development.

*FCI's goals also tie in with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Strategy for Achieving Sustainable Development in the 21st Century, which has the following expected outcomes:*

- Enhanced economic growth and development, and increased employment.
- A focus on selected economically advantageous production activities.
- Enhanced regional and global competitiveness and an increased quantity of exports.
- Increased African integration.

*To help accomplish the Millennium Project and NEPAD goals, FCI has its complementary facilitation goals in:*

- Instituting Link ProVaMP promotion units within each of the relevant governmental, NGO, civil society and private enterprise institutions for mainstreaming, spreading and implementing FCI ideals effectively.
- Furnishing up-to-date technological and methodical information on how to implement Link ProVaMP, thus generating economic income for gaining access to food and an improved way of life.
- Providing expert support in technologies, information and market intelligence that are useful for synergizing production, value adding, marketing, building grassroots institutions, infrastructure and policy.
- Sensitizing the public and governing bodies on the benefits and sacrifices needed for effectively executing synergy.
- Enhancing farmers' competence in using value-adding inputs, tools and equipment, and techniques for successfully implementing the link.



- Avoiding crowding and direct dependence on the land by creating employment opportunities in value adding, marketing and business, and service subsectors that are outside the production sector but complementary to it.
- Promoting supportive policies to private entrepreneurs and investors who may be important links in the chain between farmers' production, value adding, marketing and building of grassroots institutions.
- Connecting training and educational institutions to value-addition and marketing skills, technologies and approaches that are essential for the overall economic development of countries in Africa.

The ultimate goal is to revolutionize the cash-generating abilities of rural communities in general and small-scale farmers in particular. The inherent belief is that the person who has cash is food sufficient and can afford an improved way of life. However, the short-term objective is to build technical and managerial competencies of the immediate targets by providing documented skills and methodical options to those who are networked through the government, NGOs, civil society organizations, and private entrepreneurs who can reach the small-scale land users.

## Objectives

*The objectives of the initiative are as follows:*

- Increase the knowledge base of government, civil society organizations, NGOs and individuals who can facilitate value-added production in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Contribute to building farmers' competence in linking agricultural production with value adding and marketing through effective training, education, research and information dissemination.
- Prompt creation of jobs in the sectors of value addition, marketing and business, infrastructure and institutions (service), and gradually help farmers' children find opportunity away from the home agricultural land that may already be overcultivated and uneconomical in size.



*These objectives tie in with NEPAD's objectives in its chapter on agriculture. The pertinent objectives:*

- Improve the productivity of agriculture, with particular attention to small-scale farmers and women farmers.
- Ensure food security for all people and increase the access of the poor to adequate food and nutrition.
- Integrate the rural poor into the market economy and provide them with better access to export markets.
- Develop Africa into a net exporter of agricultural products.

To achieve its objectives, FCI promotes value-added production and marketing by promoting and supporting

- studies that will systematically identify gaps in competence to link agricultural production with value adding and marketing
- innovation or discovery of new skills, technologies and approaches that can help realize synergy between production, value adding and marketing
- inventory of technologies available on effective links between agricultural production, value adding and marketing
- establishment of a reliable database on links between value-added production, marketing and supportive infrastructure and policy
- forums for exchanging knowledge and information among major stakeholders, such as professional associations, processing industries, farmer organizations and policymakers
- training and capacity-building initiatives for creating the required mass of professionals in each sector
- establishment of strong, market-focused farmer organizations that will play a significant role in promoting the links between production, marketing, value adding, institution building and policy support



### 3 Issues

#### 3.1 Problem domain

The major issue in the economic development strategy of Africa is what direction to take for addressing food security issues in sub-Saharan Africa. Past efforts were underpinned by the production-for-consumption mindset that emanated from the cultural upbringing of many farmers and policymakers alike. For generations in the past, the consideration and effort made in generating cash was minimal, and food and shelter were obtained by bartering commodities. Times changed and a cash economy took over, but the concept of turning farmers' production into economic gain failed to take hold. Food security, which could have been best achieved by strengthening physical and economic access to food, remains difficult to date. Unless the change in mindset from production-for-consumption to production-for-marketing prevails, the same difficulty may continue.

Unfortunately, many countries in Africa still concentrate on exhausting their material, financial, natural and human resources for increasing production of food for consumption alone. Many still view that food security cannot be achieved by income security and the two are completely separate.

Because production is not geared towards generating cash income, farmers remain short of simple inputs, such as fertilizer and improved breeds, needed to increase their production. The strategy for increasing food production has largely focused on expanding the area under cultivation, including cultivating ecologically fragile and marginal lands. Destruction of the environment, upon which survival for more than the rural community depends, will continue. The need for a change in mindset from production-for-consumption to production-for-marketing among all those involved with development, from top politicians down to grassroots farmers, is still of considerable concern. Revolution in linking farmers' production to marketing through value-addition technologies that can enable their production to meet the quantity, quality, credibility and continuity of value-added supply is needed more than the 'green revolution'. Few argue that Africa has to implement a green revolution before connecting production to industrialization. However, in a situation where the world has enough food to feed us all, what counts is having access to it where it is available—and this is by having infrastructure and cash.

While changing mindset, building competence becomes a relevant task. Farmers do not have the competence that will enable them to integrate their selected productions with value adding, marketing, policy; nor do they have the capability to form strong farmer organizations. This is another important issue to resolve.





*Because little attention is given to approaches for marketing African value-added products, the airlines of African countries offer only a limited number of national goods.*

Another major issue is the fact that efforts are isolated and piecemeal. Often experts in the production sector do not jointly plan with manufacturers, business professionals, experts in standard setting or policy institutions that affect optimal production of the target crop. The type and the quality of farmers' products in many African countries do not fulfil market requirements in quality, quantity, standards, certification. Farmers' production is thus not able to penetrate national, regional and global markets. Professionals in various sectors need to work jointly to bridge this gap between farmers' production and marketing.

*To meaningfully integrate farmers' production to value adding and marketing, knowledge is required. Farmers must be able to cope with these activities:*

- Select which market-relevant varieties to produce in agriculture, forestry, floriculture, apiculture, horticulture, livestock and fisheries.
- Improve germplasm and stock of every selected production.
- Use better methods for preparing the land and scheduling production in line with market opportunities.
- Harvest and use water efficiently for continuous production and supply of farmers' produce as market goods.



*With quality grading, processing packaging and branding, African honey can be an excellent source of cash income for beekeeping farmers.*

*To meaningfully integrate value addition with marketing, knowledge is required in*

- agroprocessing and manufacturing skills for farmers' selected production
- post-harvest storage and preservation inputs, infrastructure and institution building
- national, regional and global factors in quality grading and standards
- certification, branding, labelling the value-added products of farmers in Africa
- packaging and transportation know-how and inputs



This, of course will be difficult unless education at tertiary level addresses these subjects effectively and produces critical mass and educated staffs in these subjects.





*Obvious tasks such as pounding *Rahmnus prenoides* for local beer making remain time consuming for generations because the research agenda seldom tackles them.*

*Once value has been added to the produce, a major step needs to be taken to market the products. When doing so, the following become salient issues:*

- investment and entrepreneurship mentality and market intelligence
- business planning skills
- contractual skills \*
- asset creation methods and possibilities
- management of savings and credit facilities
- establishment of credibility and a legal status for owners of value-added products

*Backing up these processes calls for supportive policy emanating from governments. To influence policy, farmers need strong institutions to give them a voice. They need*

- a collective agenda and action
- organized bodies such as cooperatives that can agree on what to produce and collectively advocate and promote their cause

*Issues in harmonizing farmers' production with value adding and marketing*

The following questions need to be answered by sector professionals and institutions who work in harmony. The list may vary from country to country and between different agroclimatic zones in the same country.



- What trees, shrubs, herbs, livestock, horticultural plants, floricultural and agronomic crops, fishery and apiculture enterprises fetch a comparatively better price in national, regional and global markets?
- What are the breed and germplasm technologies that can make these crops market competitive in quality and quantity?
- What land preparation and fertility maintenance expertise does growing these crops require?
- How best can water be harvested and used to contribute to a continuous flow of products to market?
- How best are control measures for pests and diseases organized for these crops to guarantee an uninterrupted flow of produce to market?

*Questions that determine the success in harmonizing value adding with production and marketing*

In this sector too, the following questions need to be addressed by relevant professionals and institutions. These questions need to be addressed hand in hand with the answers generated to the issues raised just above.

- What primary processing tools are best and how can they be manufactured for processing and adding value to the selected crops? NB: Crops in this brochure includes all plants and their produces that can be marketed to earn cash and improve economic-access to food for farmers.
- What are the national, regional and global market standards for each of the farmers' products identified above?
- How do we get such products certified and branded for market acceptance?
- What skills and technologies must be made available to preserve such products?
- What packaging and storage technologies are appropriate for each of these products?

*Questions that determine our success in harmonizing marketing and business with production and value adding*

The following issues and questions dwell mainly on marketing value-added production to market dealers. Strategic action for implementing the answers to the following questions is essential.

- How can skills in creating assets be instituted to effectively grow, add value and market the value-added products?
- How are entrepreneurial skills specific to each of the commodities built in the rural setting?
- How is market intelligence obtained and disseminated to owners of the value-added products?



- How does the rural community acquire planning skills for small-scale businesses?
- How are negotiation and contractual skills acquired by farmers who have market-competitive products?
- How do we blend savings and credit schemes with production for marketing schemes?
- How do we customize transportation means and storage facilities for selected market goods?

*Salient issues in creating institutions suitable for synergizing production, value adding and marketing*

Answers to the following two issues determine success in various ways. Therefore, professionals and institutions who are setting up organizations and building grassroots institutions need to address them effectively.

- How do we organize various members of a community to undertake the task of generating marketable products, adding value to production, marketing and handling businesses in a way that they complement one other?
- How do we sell the value of organization for ease of acquiring production inputs, value-adding tools and equipment, bulking market goods, maximizing assets and establishing credibility?

*Salient issues in making policies supportive of promoting synergy between production, value adding and marketing*

The issues here are about what strategies and actions are to be taken in identifying, advising and persuading governments to set supportive policies on

- import of value-addition technologies, tools and equipment including breeds and germplasm
- the best land-tenure systems, which encourage value-added production
- policy incentives that connect production to value adding and marketing value-added production that is economically advantageous to each of the investors or entrepreneurs
- legal support to enforcing local contracts among persons or agencies dealing in production, value adding, marketing and business
- instituting Link ProVaMP concepts and production of critical mass of professionals, tools and technologies in all of the value addition subjects
- legally defending farmers and other rural enterprises at national, regional and global markets as an incentive for their effort in embarking on value-added production that offers off-farm job opportunities and connects rural and urban developments
- instituting link ProVaMP promotion units as mandated branch offices within each of the





*The first workshop of this kind was held in Ethiopia to launch the Link ProVaMP-Ethiopia forum.*



*Multisectoral professionals discuss how to link professionals and institutions for concerted support in linking farm produce with VaMP in Kenya*

relevant governmental, NGOs and civil society organizations for implementing planned market economy in Africa

All that is desired may not be implemented if government policies are prohibitive. Therefore, professionals involved with policy need to work with professionals dealing with value-added production, marketing, institution building and infrastructure to realize the policy elements that need to be in place for advancing this initiative in their country's context.

### 3.2 Strategy domain

*Here are the major strategic issues of the initiative:*

- Develop monitoring and impact-assessment tools and systematically conduct targeted assessments of gaps in knowledge and information needed.
- Create and use a hub for assembling, adopting, packaging and releasing knowledge that will serve as source of information relevant for advancing synergy.
- Strengthen staff and institutions that have determinant roles in creating awareness, brokering knowledge and information, and building competence in the production, value-adding, marketing, policy, infrastructural and institutions sectors.
- Establish experiential learning, demonstration and training centres for practical demonstration of transforming landscapes and the community within a watershed.
- Mainstream cross-cutting issues such as HIV and AIDS and gender concerns in implementing the synergy between production, value adding, marketing, institutions and policy.
- Promote and strengthen networks and professional associations that can jointly play effective roles in sharpening scientific understanding, manufacturing tools and equipment, and generating up-to-date approaches to advance the synergy between production, value adding, marketing, institutions and policy.
- Institute Link ProVaMP promotion units in all relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as CBOs and the private sector for promoting FCI ideals from within.

A central strategy, next to instituting FCI as Link ProVaMP promotion units in all relevant ministries and NGOs, is to use professional associations as a knowledge arm. All these issues can be assisted by such a joint professionals' knowledge house.

It is known that many professional societies exist that bring together professionals in these various facets. But they are separate societies, discrete in their membership and concerns. For the most part their agenda has not



included harmonizing their areas of expertise with those of others. To promote synergy among such areas as production, value adding, marketing, institutions, infrastructure, and policy and to strengthen farmers' economic access to food, these professionals need to be brought together and their efforts synergized.

Before Link ProVaMP-Ethiopia was established in July 2003, there were no joint forums where the different professional societies or experts from different line ministries could exchange ideas on how to optimally link production, value adding, marketing, and setting up and using farmers' organizations. A joint forum where professionals discuss how to build this competence has therefore become essential.

Issues of complementarily integrating disciplines are seldom covered in the teaching syllabus of either formal or informal educational institutions where rural development facilitators are trained, although they are supposed to train farmers to promote rural development. The same applies to tertiary-level education that need to conduct research in connection to rural peoples' problems and come up with improved technologies, methods and approaches that can link off-farm enterprises to on-farm production.

Policy and legislation issues that promote and advance the links are not topics of training at basic and tertiary education levels. Yet no fewer than four-fifths of the students who complete high school return to their rural community.

Establishing a Link ProVaMP forum is suggested to transcend professional boundaries and complement their efforts in the overall economic development strategy of their nations. It is suggested for promoting complementarities between professions. It will help small-scale land users generate better incomes and reduce the unacceptably high numbers of people engaged in farming. This will be possible by assisting the rural communities in creating job opportunities for farmers' children in the sectors of value addition, marketing and business. The major emphasis will be to promote connections and synergy between production, value adding and marketing, and to help create supportive policies, infrastructure and farmer institutions.

#### *What Link ProVaMP could do*

If established, Link ProVaMP will serve as a centre of excellence made up of high-level volunteer professionals of each country in four broadly defined thematic areas: 1) production, 2) value adding, 3) marketing 4) infrastructure, institutions and policy. It will be a knowledge house made



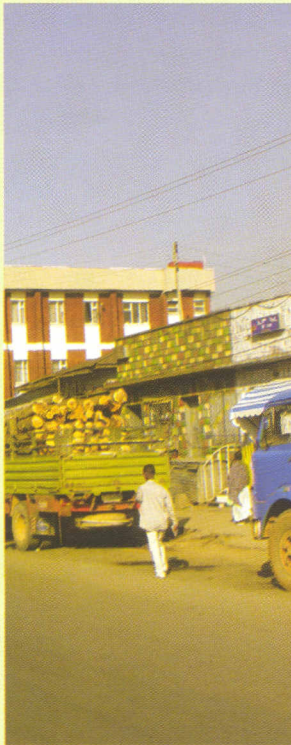
*Many of the Kenyan institutions were represented by their professionals when the interim secretariat of Link ProVaMP-Kenya was established.*



*The executive secretariat of Tanzania is now committed to achieving Link ProVaMP objectives*



*If supported by value addition tools, infrastructure and expertise, forest production may have the best potential for solving the food-security problem by generating cash.*



up of competent professionals willing to devote their time, knowledge and experience to enable policymakers to develop policies that link the farm with agribusiness and agricultural production with value adding and marketing.

Value-addition activities are seldom considered by the production sector in Africa. Efforts are minimal in bridging continuity of production, for instance, by using small-scale irrigation. Even within Africa, the disparity between countries north and south of the Sahara is enormous. For instance, 100% of the



agricultural land area in Egypt is irrigated while in Ethiopia it is less than 2%. Though adding value starts with selecting good seeds coupled with good land and water management, it best addresses marketing concerns when it involves processing, grading, certification, branding and packaging for transport to the ideal market. Unfortunately, these are not given the necessary budget or training focus.

### 3.3 Action domain

The issues are laid out in section 3.2. which deals mainly with strategic issues that require attention. This section identifies the activities and issues to be implemented. Three groups can be involved in the process. Link ProVaMP forums do the clearing house and knowledge-support functions. Government institutions and capacity development NGOs do the actual facilitation and support work. The third important group is the farmers who produce the selected economically advantageous productions and other members of the rural communities who complement them by adding value and marketing value-added produce. Of course, in the long run, the governments and nations as a whole benefit.

Value-added production can integrate agricultural production with industrial production, thus guaranteeing a market for farmers' produce and consequently regular income for the farmers, in addition to reducing losses. This can be accomplished if professionals, who manufacture tools for value addition, improve germplasm, and so on, help in improving the quality, quantity and continuity of production.

Value-added production activities are ideal vehicles for developing rural areas as they can employ local people and thus curb rural-to-urban migration. For such rural agroprocessing to work, one needs to expand sources of energy for rural areas by introducing off-grid energy technologies such as hydropower, solar, geothermal, biomass, solar-thermal and wind. All require due consideration from professionals and policymakers alike.

The value-addition link to farmers' production ensures that food is available all year round by enabling them to have cash. For this to happen, professionals in preservation, packaging and storage technologies need to make concerted efforts to increase agriproduct shelflife.

Linking water harvesting and improved breed technologies to production and value-addition technologies reduces the seasonality of consumption of a range



of processed foods. It increases the viability, profitability and sustainability of production systems for increasing farm incomes, rural employment and foreign exchange earnings, while reducing market risks.

*Issues in the value-addition sector*

Production presently is focused on food crops for consumption that are needed in bulk and to which value-addition technologies do not bring significant financial reward as compared with medicinal products, spices and condiments, or other high-value crops such as industrial forests, fruits, vegetables and flowers. As a result, these economically advantageous economic sources are being mined erroneously. For instance, the change of annual forest destruction in 1990–2000 is minus 330% in Egypt, minus 20% in Tunisia while it is plus 80% for Ethiopia and plus 50% for Kenya (World Bank 2005).

Actually, farmers in Africa are excluded from participating in developing value-addition technologies. Home-grown and consultative technology generation

*Benefits from high-value crop production  
could be high if supported by value-addition  
expertise such as processing, grading,  
certifying, branding and packaging.*





is not common. For almost every processing work, Africa seems to depend on foreign-invented tools and equipment; this tendency needs to change by giving special attention and support to industrial technology education.

Emphasis in training and extension is limited on how to employ value-addition methods and approaches and skills for building up economic strength of farmers. As a result, many of the non-efficient and backward processing tools that have been in use for thousands of years are neither modified nor replaced.

Funds are lacking or limited that are allocated specifically for promoting competence of farmers in innovations that use value-addition technologies and skills for strengthening their economic power.

Research and technology are not used to link farmers' productions to value adding and marketing as much as to maximizing food crop production.

#### *Issues in the direction of the overall economic development*

The direction of the overall economic development is central to food security and improved livelihoods. Often the choices are two. One is to maximize production of crops by every means possible and to meet food demand from within. This is the strategy African countries often follow. The major problem here is that production targets domestic (mainly household) consumption, not the market. They thus fail to provide cash for crucial cash-based expenses such as education, medical care, and improved clothing and housing, use of improved technologies and inputs.

The alternate choice is to maximize selected production that targets national, regional and global markets and that meets the food demand with cash from within and outside the country. Because maximizing cash gain is the major tenet of this direction for economic development, it addresses requirements for both food security and improved livelihood. This is the direction in which the western world has been heading. The same is currently true for countries in East Asia. This development direction necessitates complementary and coordinated effort from the production, value-addition, marketing and policy sectors. It is indeed the way out, however, for it to implemented effectively, the following problems require due consideration.

- policy support for technical, managerial and marketing skills
- effective marketing strategy
- improvement of small-scale and traditional agroprocessing
- food legislation that would control the quality of the food products for effective marketing



- education emphasis, budgetary allocation and portfolio for infrastructure such as rural energy that promotes rural enterprise, market and market facilities, feeder roads to farms, industries and markets
- an effective communications network, which is a necessity in today's world
- initial capital and access to long-term financial services
- availability of foreign exchange and policy incentive for importing new technologies, tools and equipment

### Issues in training and extension of market-based development

*The following problems need to be addressed effectively.*

- Trained personnel are needed, especially in all value-addition technologies such as bio-engineering and genetic manipulation, preservation, processing, packaging, branding, patenting, certifying, and transporting expertise.
- Because of cost implications in the limited purchasing power environment, local consumers are undemanding about quality standards, quality control, packaging and product presentation. Therefore, simultaneous effort is needed in creating assets for rural communities as well as having value-added products for national and regional markets.
- Farmers are traditionally brainwashed to focus on food crop production for domestic consumption instead of producing commodities attractive in market terms.
- Firms that preserve and process foodstuffs and manufacture products from them often use inappropriate or obsolete technologies.
- Appreciation of hygienic food and sanitation practices is limited and an awareness campaign is essential.
- Efforts to create awareness among national, regional and global consumers of the advantages and uniqueness of market goods are limited.

*To overcome these many problems and to build community competence, farmers must have access to various services. Several other factors must also be addressed:*

- training in business management
- formation of partnerships among various stakeholders
- establishment of training schools that teach different marketable basic skills at formal and informal schooling for farmers' children and farmers themselves



### Box 1. In-house discussion on Policy

It is July and parliament is no longer in session. Member of Parliament Zewde has gone back to his home community at Woobit, which he represents. One evening, he paid a visit to his uncle. Everyone greeted him as soon as he set foot in the house. While feasting, the family started exchanging views.

Ato Zewde started by asking how each person was doing and about the way of life in general. He encouraged all, from child to adult, to respond. His uncle, Ato Getenet, informed the MP that life was getting increasingly tough. He added that crop yields were low. 'My educated children did not get job opportunities. Both have come back to farming with no better farming skills than my own. I have unofficially shared my already small piece of land among my adult children who are establishing families. It is the same for all families here. Farmers produce many types of food. But the quantity is small and the quality is not marketable. So we can't attract traders and we can't afford to go to bigger cities where there is more purchasing power. We market our products only at Majete market, where the purchasers are almost like us. We merely barter, exchanging our produce for other goods. Cash for medical expenses, clothing for the family, government taxes, education, improved shelter and electric lighting are as far from us as the sky.'

After pausing for awhile, Ato Zewde asked, 'What do you want me to do to help?'

Ato Getenet said, 'It is all a policy issue. You parliamentarians need to pass legislation that encourages us to grow medicinal plants, aromatics, spices and condiments, stimulants, fruits and vegetables, and improved varieties of other food crops. Many such crops suited to our environment would be marketable nationally, regionally, and even globally. But you also need to get the ministries dealing with agroprocessing, food preservation, quality grading, packaging, certification, labelling, patenting and branding to work actively on these selected and economically advantageous products.'

'The education policy will also have to tailor education to these subjects. It is then, and only then, that at least those who are in school will get off-farm jobs and will not further fragment these ancestral pieces of land, which were already uneconomically small. You may help us at least by bringing these issues up for parliamentary debate. If you do so, our future may be helped.'

Then his aunt, W/o Shitasew, got the chance to voice her views. She said to the MP, 'My husband has raised a number of important policy issues that affect all of us in rural communities. The problem is huge. We cannot be economically liberated unless supportive policies are in place. Leave alone Woobit community—even Majete town does not have any electric energy. All those value-addition possibilities your uncle raised need energy and rural roads. Policies need to be in place that promote supplying energy to off-grid communities like ours from alternative sources such as hydro, wind and solar power. The same is true of promoting and supporting farmer-enterprise associations that can enter into agreements for producing marketable products of marketable quantity and quality.'

'Above all, there needs to be a policy that makes education for farmers' children up through high school mandatory and free. Nephew, you have been here like us. Therefore, you must know and be aware of these and additional issues that can give us better economic strength to improve our access to food and an improved livelihood.'

The MP thanked his uncle and aunt for their resourceful ideas. He admitted that this was thinking in a new way, which would revolutionize economic growth for the nation as a whole. He promised to table their issues plus his own when parliament went into session again.



### 3.4 Critical knowledge gaps in linking production with value adding and marketing

Production must mesh with value adding and marketing, like a jar and its lid. The lid must be exactly the right size and its threads must exactly fit those of the jar or any liquid stored in it will leak out. Likewise, production and value addition need to fit together. Attention must be paid to the following for this to happen.

- Policies are needed that promote and synergize production with value adding and marketing.
- Little awareness exists of the potential of economically advantageous production in achieving food security among professionals and farmers at national scale.
- A legal environment must be put in place for building grassroots community organizations tailored to maximizing labour and other inputs that maximize quality and quantity of production, bulking production as well as guaranteeing reliability.
- Technologies developed on research stations are imposed on farmers and passed over to farmers as blanket recommendations and imposed on them, denying differences in agroclimatic, socio-economic and farming systems. They often deny local priorities and interests. Often there is no research that tries to model and understand optimal combinations and options in linking farmers' production to value adding and marketing. The same is true of research focusing on comparative economic benefits from various non-food and food-based products possible in the different agroclimatic zones of African countries.
- The approach to research is not holistic. The conventional commodity approach to research prevails, at the expense of interdisciplinary broad-based research. Natural resource management, livestock, and fruits and vegetables have not received the attention they deserve.
- The link between research and policy is weak. Research findings are not fed into the policy-decision support system.
- There is no joint forum where experts from production, value addition, marketing and business, infrastructure, and policy sectors come together and devise holistic measures by which each complements and contributes to implementing national economic development. The same is true of monitoring progress being made at national level.





Raw materials of medicinal plants such as *Prunus africanus* (top) are exported raw from and cheaply from Africa while many of the medicinal plants in India (bottom) are processed, packaged and certified for sale at higher value.



## 4 Strategies

The sole tenet of FCI is that strengthening farmers economically assures their food security and improves their livelihoods. Strategic actions thus stem:

- Instituting a synergy desk that promotes continued complementary functioning of all ministries and agencies responsible for farmers' production, value addition, marketing and business, infrastructure, institutions, education and policy in all ministries, agencies and NGOs.
- Giving special attention to market-value productions that can easily be harmonized with value-adding technologies. Marketing selected and value-added products can increase economic gain. These agro-based products will, for the most part, be perennials that cannot be easily affected by seasonal weather fluctuations or inferior soil quality. This is in line with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) document on world agriculture 2015–2030 that indicates that food insecurity is not the result of supply but rather the lack of income necessary for the poor to translate their needs into effective demand.
- Creating strong awareness among the public about the true meaning of food security for the rural poor and changing public mindset towards the concept of production for marketing.
- Harmonizing skills, technologies and approaches in selective and market-centred productions, value adding, marketing and building institutions to increase synergism. This includes generating technologies and skills, and instituting a Link ProVaMP approach in primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions.
- Promoting and supporting structured policy dialogue forums as well as lobbying for policies that promote and support all strategic actions towards strengthening economic access to food for the rural poor.

### 4.1 Strategic support

The Link ProVaMP forum, as a clearinghouse, needs to devise an effective knowledge-support mechanism in the countries in which it operates. Though customizing to the requirements of each country is a must, the following general guides are vital.

- Create a Link ProVaMP forum with professionally committed, able and institutionally representative members. Jointly discuss FCI issues and cross-fertilize knowledge and approaches towards solution for effectively serving as a knowledge house.
- Develop and continually update tools for assessing knowledge gaps.
- Systematically assess knowledge gaps that hinder Linking ProVaMP.



- Create a hub of knowledge, and assemble, adopt, package and release information useful for Link ProVaMP.
- Promote and strengthen Link ProVaMP promotion clubs and networks.
- Use public awareness and capacity-building forums and institutions to change the public mindset from production-for-consumption to production-for-marketing.
- Promote establishment of experiential learning, training and demonstration watersheds in each of the sub-Saharan African countries and demonstrate possibilities in market-focused links between production, value adding, marketing, and institution building at the grassroots for success.
- Advocate for creating a mechanism for effectively mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as HIV and AIDS and gender into the linkage process.
- Institute link ProVaMP promotion units within existing governmental, non-governmental and civic society organizations and institutions of each country in sub-Saharan Africa for mainstreaming FCI ideals in the line activities of the mother institutions.
- Form a regional Link ProVaMP Secretariat that executes FCI ideals and networks within regional initiatives such as NEPAD, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union (AU) for stronger commitment of nations and sped-up FCI implementation.
- Develop the FCI document that clearly indicates issues and strategies as well as time-bound actions and outputs, for presentation to regional and international donor institutions that share FCI visions.

Although each strategy is discrete, each should be undertaken in a way to complement others.

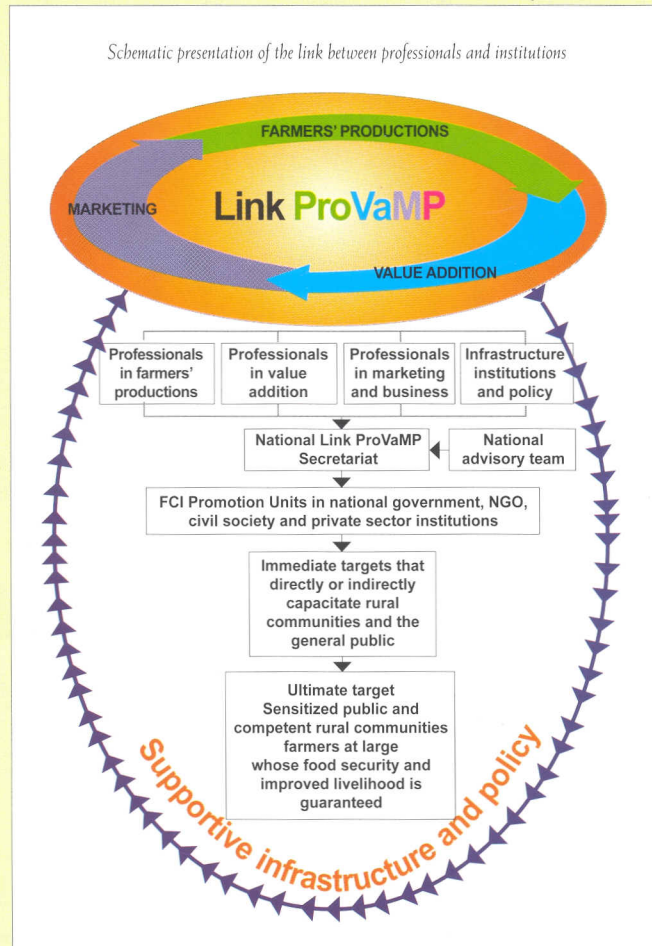
## 4.2 Strategic actions for implementing FCI

To implement FCI ideals, a capacity-building ministry or agency (as appropriate in the different countries of Africa) needs to play a leading role. At the same time, the following actions are important.

FCI may be promoted and supported by Link ProVaMP, which is a professionals' joint association. Members of the association need to represent professions and institutions dealing with production, value addition, marketing, support infrastructures, policy and institutions.

FCI ideals are better executed by coordinating with existing institutions working with these major disciplines. However, it is best networked to these implementing institutions by the establishing Link ProVaMP promotional units that connect Link ProVaMP ideals with the activities of their mother institutions. For ease of enforcement, it is better if the Link ProVaMP





promotion units are headed by members of the national Link ProVaMP secretariat, who are also authorities in such national institutions.

#### *Link ProVaMP—a joint forum of professionals*

The Link ProVaMP forum serves as a clearinghouse for knowledge and expertise in adding competence of its immediate targets. Link ProVaMP has four major professional sectors (see figure 1):

- The *farmers' production sector* works to harmonize production with how to add value to field production and what products are most wanted in the marketplace.
- The *value-addition sector* works to determine such important factors as what technologies and processing tools are best for turning farmers' produce into products and what requirements for preservation and storage, packaging, labelling, certification and other market standards must be met.
- The *marketing and business sector* works to harmonize its area with producing and adding value in such ways as building entrepreneurial, business planning and negotiating skills;



gaining and disseminating market intelligence; and customizing storage and transportation facilities for market goods.

- The *infrastructure, institution building and policy sector* works as a clearing house in promoting and supporting institutions and production issues for synergizing production, value adding and marketing through governmental, NGO, civil society and private sector institutions. The belief is that communities will benefit from rural energy, rural roads, and rural markets, and this sector will promote policies favourable to the production-to-marketing chain.

### *Link ProVaMP Secretariat*

At the national level the secretariat is the executive body of Link ProVaMP. Its mandate is limited to promoting FCI and providing knowledge support to the institutions implementing FCI. It does not function as an NGO or try to create an institution that implements FCI ideals.

The secretariat supports farmer capacity-building institutions as well as governmental ministries in education, industry, trade, tourism, natural resources, forestry, agriculture, horticulture, and livestock on how to optimally link production to value addition and marketing. It does the same to NGOs, private sector organizations, and private entrepreneurs involved in these disciplines.

*Figure 1. Conceptual framework of Farmers' Competence Initiative. Also indicated in adding value, improving capacity, and linking institutions and professions for promoting synergy between farmers' production, value addition and marketing.*

### *What the Link ProVaMP promotion units do*

Every initiative must be organized administratively. Link ProVaMP promotion units are implementation arms of the Link ProVaMP Secretariat. The units are created in the implementing institutions of governments, NGOs, and private enterprise and civil society organizations.

Their activities vary according to the type of institution they are in. Those in production institutions such as ministries of agriculture, livestock and fisheries, forestry, and horticulture differ from those in institutions involved in adding value to produce, developing infrastructure or determining policy. However, all Link ProVaMP promotion units have one thing in common—linking their area of expertise with others in the chain.

- The units in production institutions select which market-relevant and complementarily advantageous forestry, agronomic, horticultural,



apiculture, fishery and livestock varieties to produce; improve cultivars and stock; select technologies for improving breeds; use better methods for managing land and water; and channel these improved Link ProVaMP technologies and approaches to grassroots farmers.

- The units in institutions that add value and promote agroprocessing and manufacturing skills; promote appropriate storage and preservation infrastructure and know-how; mainstream national, regional and global factors in quality grading; set and maintain standards for various market-relevant products and assure that the products are certified and branded; work to improve transportation infrastructure; and pass along skills in packaging and know-how to grassroots farmers.
- The units in marketing and business institutions promote farmer entrepreneurship and market intelligence, small-scale business planning and contractual skills; help small-scale farmers as organized groups, create assets, manage savings and credit facilities, and establish a credible legal status; help them bulk their produce by deciding together on what to produce and how to manage, add value and market their value-added products.

#### *Immediate targets of Link ProVaMP Forum*

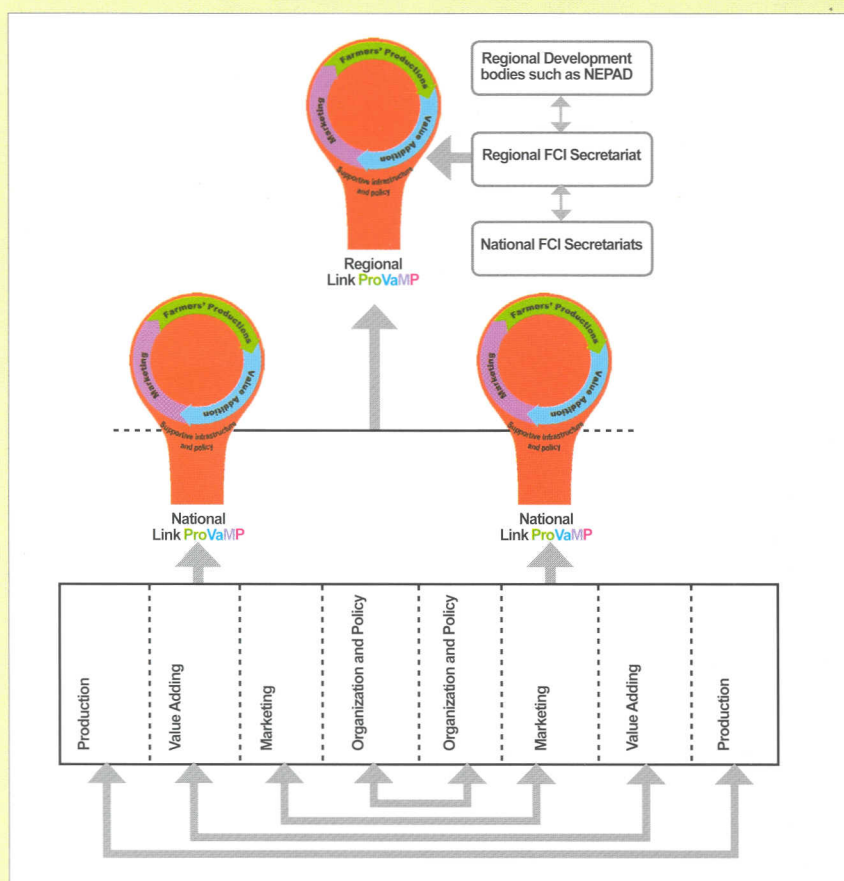
The work of Link ProVaMP Forum starts at changing the mindset and building the capacity of its change agents listed below.

*Policy-makers:* Capacity building is a long-term effort that requires advance and long-term sensitization and planning. It requires dedicated decisionmakers to promote supportive policies. Therefore, the Link ProVaMP Forum focuses on policy-makers, offering them policy and method options for promoting the link between farmers' produce, value additions, infrastructure and marketing as a strategy for food security.

*Subject-matter specialists,* highly qualified in their particular areas, get support from Link ProVaMP Forum elements that help them to harmonize their expertise with that of other complementing disciplines and approaches. Through cross-fertilization of knowledge between such harmonized expertise, they will increase their own capacity, and they will communicate their knowledge to farmers through development agents, whom they will train to harmonize.

*Teaching and training institutions:* Link ProVaMP works with knowledge empowerment bodies to produce updated and complementary curriculum and textbooks in which FCI ideals are contextualized and mainstreamed. Using these updated textbooks and curriculum, primary schoolteachers can be effective in bringing





*National knowledge houses (Link ProVaMP) form a network to create the regional knowledge house.*

change in mindset among communities and marketable basic skill among the trainees, most of whom will become members of the rural community and need to build competence as part of their training and education life.

Tertiary-level education institutions need the same insight in order to link ProVaMP ideals to their education system.

*Media personnel:* The Link ProVaMP Forum can effectively create understanding; bring mindset change if it can first change the mindset of media personnel. Unless this task is well accomplished, media may cause havoc even if the media personnel themselves do not mean to do so. However, once they have the necessary knowledge and understanding, they can effectively communicate all sorts of technologies that Link ProVaMP may make available for a mass audience. They can be an instrumental and reliable conduit for bringing change in mindset towards food security by strengthening economic access to food. Media professionals can make known technologies that add value to products for effective marketing. This is why the forum needs to make them immediate targets.



*Illustrators and cartoonists* are professionals who have the potential to spread knowledge and information. Their well-disposed mindset could effectively promote the links between farmers' produce, value adding, marketing, building farmer institutions and promoting policies favourable to promoting the synergy. Illustrators and cartoonists are experts effective in developing many mass-communication possibilities.

*Development agents* are front-line extension workers who have day-to-day dealings with small-scale farmers and rural communities. Their task is to facilitate the many development initiatives assumed to be relevant for farmers. Their competence needs to be improved for facilitating the implementation of Link ProVaMP ideals.

Unfortunately, development agents are trained and deployed to facilitate improved production but have no skill in value addition, marketing and institutional building.

Link ProVaMP needs to be connected with educated and experienced professionals as well as catalysers of the synergy in the different countries of Africa (figure 2).

The selected professionals generate and provide tools, technologies, approaches and skills while the units tap this knowledge and spread the customized technologies and approaches that make the link function effectively.

For better fertilization of knowledge and expertise in generation of technologies, and approaches, and enforcement of regionally relevant Link ProVaMP actions and strategies, the national Link ProVaMP secretariats may create a joint regional Link ProVaMP secretariat and regional Link ProVaMP bodies. The regional Link ProVaMP secretariat may have representation of senior-most policymakers and enforcers while the regional Link ProVaMP offices may have representation of regionally renowned professionals from each of the member countries.

#### *Ultimate targets*

In general, the ultimate targets are a sensitized public and competent rural communities (farmers at large) whose food security and improved livelihood is guaranteed from their efforts in strengthening their economy intelligently.



Through these are ultimate targets for the Link ProVaMP forum, they are immediate targets of the institutions and personalities listed as immediate targets of Link ProVaMP. These groups may be stratified as follows:

- *Small-scale land users and the rural public.* The national Link ProVaMP promotion units will, from time to time, determine the training needs and subjects in a farmer-participatory approach. A system for identifying competence gaps will be devised. Farmers themselves, common-interest groups, NGOs, CBOs, and relevant governmental offices will be involved in identifying the need.
- *School-leavers residing in rural areas.* These are students who discontinued formal education for various reasons. They are among those who will need assistance to manage their land better and handle their agricultural production. Assistance will include natural resource management, small-scale agroprocessing and petty trading.
- *Petty traders in rural areas.* These are found within the rural setting and small towns. They have close and strong links in marketing the agricultural produce of the farmers. They often are part-time farmers or members of farming communities. Chambers of commerce and NGOs in the relevant field will help identify training needs.

### Actions of Link ProVaMP Forum

The subjects to be addressed in making effective connections between farmers' production, value adding, marketing, institutions and policy are many. The targets are likewise varied. Weakness in one will contribute to reduced results. The strength of a chain is always measured by the strength of its weakest link. Therefore systematic, all-encompassing and continued assessment of knowledge gaps is crucial to planning and implementing an effective capacity-building programme.

An additional issue in implementing FCI through focused capacity building is the difference in the governance and strategic approach to country development programmes of the nations in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the knowledge gap assessment needs to cover many such countries. Indeed, the gap in one country might be answered in the approach of another country.

1. *The first support is in assembling, critiquing and adapting, packaging, and releasing knowledge and information useful for Link ProVaMP implementation. This means creating a knowledge management hub in each country.*

There is a vast amount of knowledge in store in many institutions. Some can be used outright; some may need to be adapted. Other skills are available but are not assembled in such a way that they can be transferred easily. As we see it today, structured transfer of knowledge among African countries is minimal.



As a result, cross-fertilization of knowledge and skills for greater effectiveness is not happening in Africa to the extent that the continent requires it. In implementing FCI, it is vital to refine, assemble and package the knowledge and skills that will enable rural communities to strengthen their economic gain.

Each country should have a centre where knowledge and information useful for implementing FCI can be assembled, refined, packaged and distributed. Such centres will be organized and become networked throughout and between the countries.

*2. The second support will be in promoting and strengthening networks and using public awareness and capacity-building forums.*

FCI is diverse in scope and issues. It requires groups with many skills, such as to empower with knowledge, generate technology, lobby and create awareness as well as educate, advertise and inform beneficiaries on optimal links, the right technologies and products. For the linkage to function effectively, establishing Link ProVaMP promotion units in each of the relevant institutions and horizontal and vertical networking is required. Therefore, creating the networks and networking among the networks is a real task in implementing FCI. FCI is a synergy concept that can effectively function if institutions and professions get networked with sector institutions that will be working on appropriating the different types of expertise for optimal linkage.

Luckily, a number of sector professional networks and associations exist. They need only to be networked to Link ProVaMP ideals to become actively engaged in promoting implementation of FCI ideals at all levels.

*3. The third support dwells on establishing experiential learning, training and demonstration watersheds where Link ProVaMP ideas can be implemented through complimentary efforts the support providers and the watershed community. Such watersheds will be used for practical demonstration of Link ProVaMP possibilities at watershed scale.*

It is true that seeing is believing. Establishing experiential learning, researching and demonstrating synergized production, adding value, and marketing with supportive policies at watershed levels in the various programme countries of Africa will be useful from a number of angles.

- It poses a professional challenge for sharpening thoughts so that technologies, skills and approaches will be in accord with one another in response to the challenge.
- Policymakers and setters of development agenda will get practical evidence to back up the actions they take.



- FCI promoters will have a chance to intervene practically in transforming the land health of particular watersheds and the economic standing of particular communities.
- It presents an opportunity for cross-fertilizing knowledge and experience in actions and strategies, which can lead to strengthening community economic base, the better to achieve food security and improve livelihoods.
- There will be permanent field schools for study tours and experience exchange programmes between parties within and between countries. Watersheds for experiential learning and demonstrating FCI will be established in all programme countries. Watershed size will be small to package technologies and sensitize the communities in FCI effectively. The number of watersheds to be established in each country may differ.
- It gives tertiary-level students a chance to connect their research agenda with problems of rural communities that struggle to link off-farm expertise to on-farm production efforts.

*4. The fourth support and facilitation action is in catalysing to place HIV, AIDS and gender issues in the mainstream.*

There is no doubt that these issues will influence the degree of FCI success. The negative influence of negligence of HIV and AIDS is multidimensional. It affects those involved in production, value adding, marketing and business, institutional building and policy. Cash generated is drained for care and treatment of HIV and AIDS sufferers. FCI processes and results are affected. The issues of gender are no different: FCI actions and strategies that are insensitive to women will miss achieving their targets by half. Therefore, handling cross-cutting issues in each strategic action is essential for FCI success.

Cross-cutting issues need to be addressed in every segment of FCI:

- Likely scenarios of neglect of cross-cutting issues on FCI vision, mission and target objectives need to be documented.
- Awareness should be created in FCI public debate forums on cross-cutting issues.
- Institutions and professionals need to be mobilized to include gender, HIV and AIDS issues when implementing FCI.
- Information should be documented and released on the best approaches towards integrating cross-cutting issues in FCI strategies and actions.

*5. The fifth major support will be in the creation of a mandated institution for mainstreaming Link ProVaMP ideals into the economic development strategy of governments and line activities of institutions of the production, value addition, infrastructure, and marketing sectors.*

If FCI is to make a difference at national and regional levels,



- Link ProVaMP ideals need to be instituted within existing government, non-governmental and civic society organizations and institutions of each sub-Saharan African country.
- The FCI concept will have to be internalized by all and become part of the each nation's economic development strategy. This means instituting it within the existing government structure, NGOs, supporting governments, civil societies and the private sector. For realizing these intentions, it will be good to have national Link ProVaMP secretariat members representative of such institutions and balanced professional competencies in production, value addition, infrastructure, supportive policies and institutions so that they can be instrumental in creating Link ProVaMP promotion units within their own institutions. The promotion units serve as bridges in tapping improved knowledge and expertise from the clearinghouse (national Link ProVaMP forums) and use such knowledge and expertise by mainstreaming into their strategy and action plans.
- Another basic consideration in successfully implementing FCI is having efficient and effective professionals' joint association that serves as a knowledge house for the national secretariats. Existing knowledge needs to be customized to serve nations in their own context. Other new knowledge needs to be generated and fed to the national FCI secretariats for upscaling through their employees (immediate targets of FCI). The professionals' joint forum is to promote critiquing, generating and adapting knowledge useful in implementing synergy. In addition to integrating Link ProVaMP strategies and actions in the existing national food security agendas and institutions, the regional Link ProVaMP secretariat must be linked to the food security agendas of the AU, Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and NEPAD.

6. *The sixth area of support is in forming a regional Link ProVaMP forum.*

Strength comes from networking, sharing and cooperation. Linking farmers' production to value adding, marketing, institutions, infrastructure and policy is heavily multidisciplinary in nature. Thus it requires coordinated contributions of subject-matter experts, governments and practitioners at all levels. Currently, East Asian countries have become familiar with it. However, for African nations, there is no substitute for creating national and regional-level association of professionals and networking within regional initiatives such as the AU, ECA and NEPAD for stronger national commitment and to speed up FCI implementation. The sole purpose of the regional joint professionals' association is to prepare knowledge and skills of all the relevant disciplines for optimal linkage. In addition, the regional FCI secretariat and its knowledge arm (the joint professionals' association) will have the following activities.

- They need to launch and execute strategies and actions for achieving the FCI agenda by strengthening the economic status of rural communities. This requires fostering a knowledge pool. This role can be played by national and regional FCI secretariats, which may be established by selected renowned professionals and authorities from all FCI disciplines. Only after these secretariats endorse the initiative and forge logistic, policy and institutional support from national governments, regional and global bodies can the forum for the initiative be able to execute its functions successfully.



## 5 Actions

Optimal links between production and value adding for meeting market standards require practical action on all fronts. This action ranges from developing scientific theories to manufacturing tools and equipment and developing guidelines that make a difference in adding value to products at the grassroots. FCI focus for action falls in many areas:

- Creating awareness and bringing about a mindset change for promoting FCI ideals as well as generating and promoting technologies, skills and approaches that effectively help implement FCI at all levels.
- Building the competence of immediate target staff and institutions in building the competence of farmers effectively for their contribution to optimally linking their farm productions to value adding and marketing.
- Linking national institutions and professions for coordinated support to the effort in market-centred economic development of countries in Africa.
- Promoting supportive policies for advancing synergy between farm production, value adding and marketing.
- Linking tertiary-level education and research work to problems of rural communities and to opportunities for improving the livelihoods of those living in them.
- Promoting and strengthening rural-enterprise-centred infrastructure and grassroots organizations.
- Enabling immediate target institutions to develop enriched capacity-building and needs-assessment tools in pursuance of profitable value-added production from selected advantageous productions.
- Facilitating competence building for immediate target staffs and institutions for periodically identifying and documenting the capacity-building gaps in promoting profitable value-added products by all countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Enabling value-adding and marketing institutions to link their institutions and professions for optimal promotion of profitable value-added production.
- Enabling immediate target institutions to create Africa–Asia interinstitutional collaboration in sharing knowledge systems and innovations useful for Africa's enhanced national economic development.



- Supporting and enabling partner institutions in identifying, characterizing and using watersheds and watershed communities for experiential learning and demonstration of profitable development interventions.
- Enabling immediate target institutions to periodically produce profitable value-added production models at watershed scale.
- Assisting, guiding and supporting production of training tools in production, value addition, marketing of relatively economically advantageous products suited to various agroclimatic zones and countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Strengthening involvement of governments and relevant NGOs in facilitating and supporting training on value-added products, value-adding skills and technologies, marketing ethics and skills at in-service training, tertiary-level education institutions as well as in teaching at basic schools in Africa.
- Assisting immediate target institutions and staffs to develop, update and use database on profitable and value-added production skills, methods and approaches.
- Encouraging and supporting target institutions to periodically document profitable value-added product interventions in multimedia format and disseminate the information to ultimate targets of the competence-building efforts.
- Strengthening and promoting partners to develop and use monitoring and evaluation tools for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of their competence-building efforts in promoting value-added products for maximizing cash income.
- Encouraging partners to establish, improve and implement a mechanism by which HIV, AIDS, and gender are mainstreamed into profitable value-added production interventions.

All the above actions are needed for any market good to meet consumer-preferred quality, economic quantity, continuity of the supply and credibility of the supplier (legally recognized body), all of which are compulsory for marketing.

The sole purpose of Link ProVaMP associations is to improve the competence of its immediate targets, who are development facilitators and policymakers, and to make available recent advances in skills and methods. Conceptually, Link ProVaMP associations network directly with government agencies and NGOs that have direct contact with farmers through the Link ProVaMP



promotion units. Identifying capacity gaps and finding the appropriate skills and methodical solutions to close those gaps therefore focus on integration tasks and tasks that deal with subject-specific themes. Strategic actions needed are listed in the previous section. This section deals with subject-matter actions.

### 5.1 Getting ready for action: professionals

Policymakers and other professionals need to provide alternatives in implementing synergy and set an example by doing things differently and efficiently. This entails blurring the drawn edges of professional boundaries and getting mentally prepared to play a significant role in the synergy. This takes a lot of effort, especially in bringing together policymakers and other professionals with their own institutions for the same goal. In implementing this,

- Convergence rather than divergence should be the motto.
- Ways need to be sought to synergize experts and professions.
- Public awareness of joint efforts towards linking ProVaMP should be created through effective use of mass media.
- Public awareness campaigns need to be initiated and sustained on how only comparatively advantageous trees, shrubs, herbs, agronomic crops, horticultural and floricultural plants, and livestock should be produced and how value-adding technologies need to be fitted to these productions including what expertise it takes to market them effectively in national, regional and global markets.
- The policy elements that are in support of such a production–value adding–marketing chain need to be articulated and presented to policymakers for action.
- College and university education needs to give special focus to solving the problems of rural communities and creating off-farm jobs for their graduates. At the same time, the off-farm activities created need to add value to the farm products of the rural communities.
- Textbooks and other training materials need to be prepared by such a joint effort for instituting synergy among production, value adding, marketing and policy in all levels of training institutions.
- Development extension packages need to be customized to foster and promote the link between farmers' production and value addition for better market opportunities available at national and regional levels.
- A concerted effort must be made in advocating policies supportive of the synergy.



## 5.2 Joint actions

Professionals who implement FCI will have a number of tasks to perform jointly: the Link ProVaMP joint professionals' association will play a significant role in bringing together institutions and professionals for the synergy agenda. Following are the issues to be dealt with:

- Discuss current technologies and ways to use their expertise to improve the capacity of those who train small-scale farmers in developing managerial skills.
- Compare advantages of various products according to agroclimatic zone, using technical and managerial skills to assess them.
- Continually serve as a centre of excellence for information on the links, skills and methods that promote the production–value adding–marketing continuum.
- Become a forum for exchange of information among policymakers, subject-matter specialists, development agents and farmers on capacity building, know-how and methods by initiating activities such as training courses, workshops, educational tours and advisory forums.
- Serve as a centre of professional opinion, appropriately updated, that will sharpen the competence of farm agribusiness and link it to farmers, who must function within the objective realities of sub-Saharan Africa.
- Establish, through collaborating institutions, watershed-based practical laboratories for cross-fertilization of skills and methods at field level in connecting farm production, value adding, marketing and policies in a rural community setting.
- Compile information that is simplified but up to date in technique and method. Form of presentation will be varied: training guides, posters, pamphlets, curricula, and film and theatre manuscripts to promote links between production, value adding and marketing in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Promote the generation of technologies that advance the synergy and establish a technology database for effective dissemination of the appropriate technologies.
- Lobby for ease in obtaining credit services.
- Conduct research and surveys on skills, methods, approaches that are lacking and consequently hindering proper functioning of the synergy between production, value adding, marketing, institution building and policy. Recommend mitigating actions for the appropriate target group to consider.

## 5.3 Sector-specific actions

The major tenet of FCI rests on real action taken to synergize production, value adding and marketing, one with the other, by effectively tailoring the technologies, skills and approaches in each of them. It means keeping all parts



of the continuum in mind while carrying out any one activity. It is analogous to keep in mind the model of an entire automobile while manufacturing its separate parts, making sure that each fits into the whole: production, value adding and marketing, institutions and policy components of FCI. Each can be undertaken separately by sector-specific professionals.

#### *Fitting production to value adding and marketing*

Many African countries have quite a number of production possibilities. Cereal crops, spices and condiments, fruits and vegetables, root and tuber crops, flowers, medicinal herbs and shrubs, livestock and livestock products, and industrial forest products such as construction poles, veneer, lumber, roof shingles are just some that could be produced. The question is which ones of these products are comparatively economically advantageous, where and what value additions could readily make these marketable products competitive in national, regional and global markets. Therefore, one needs to

- Provide a list of economically ranked, comparatively advantageous specific trees, shrubs, herbs; agronomic, horticultural, floricultural crops; as well as apiculture, fishery and livestock products to be developed in the various agroclimatic zones.



*Policymakers visiting green-coloured flamingo flowers modified from red-coloured types by Thailand professionals in their efforts towards owning the variety that fetches better market attention.*



*In isolated instances, Ethiopian farmers grow quality niger seed crop for better cash income. Many professionals help in processing and marketing various products from it for even better income.*



*Improved livestock breeds developed from local disease-resistant varieties bred with cows known for their superior milk quantity and others known for their preferred fat content in the milk have played significant role in improving farmers' economic access to food in India*

- Select appropriate technologies for continued flow of production.
- Select appropriate technologies for producing goods of market-sensitive quality.
- Sensitize on marketing ethics benefits of supplying economic size of production.
- Devise a system of scheduling production for continuous supply.
- Develop inputs and facilities for continued production.
- Support through contractual and negotiation skills the making of deals between producers and suppliers of value-adding and marketing inputs.
- Produce different textbooks and reference materials to be used by educational institutions at various levels on fitting production technologies, approaches and principles for promoting synergy between production, value adding and marketing.
- Provide packages for mainstreaming gender, HIV and AIDS into market-focused production interventions.
- Provide policies and elements of good policies that promote producing comparatively advantageous products.
- Document job opportunities created in the market-focused production sector at the rural setting that can help move farm children from already-burdened land into that sector.



## Box 2. Farmers addressing the production challenge

Ato Arega and Ato Demissew, who are members of an innovative farmer group of Tiquurso subwatershed in Amhara Region, are holding a serious discussion. Each is puzzled about what to produce on their farm that can bring them food security and an improved livelihood.

Ato Arega says that to him, food security means more than having food to eat. It means having a number of things such as salt, pepper and other spices, textbooks and school fees for his children's education, clothing for the family, fees for land tax, money for medical expenses, at least rubber shoes for the family, and money for energy for lighting, cooking and heating.

Ato Arega also adds that it includes having some cash for covering social obligations such as visits to the sick, to relatives, especially on occasions of births or deaths, and to those who may be in prison. It may also include visits and contributions to his church. Having a corrugated iron sheeting roof that doesn't leak for the house is equally essential. 'All these expenses have to be met from what we produce. To us farmers, livelihood and food security are inseparable. Is this not all true?' Arega asks Demissew.

Ato Demissew confirms that it is all true. But he poses a question common to them both. 'What should we produce to earn cash on our fragmented and small landholding to meet all these needs? Is it not a challenge, especially when our market goods are only cereals and livestock that almost all of us produce and bring to market at the same time? They are too low in quality to take to distant markets where they might fetch a better price.'

This is a question that bothers all our fellow farmers,' he adds. Silence settles between them for quite some time. After awhile, Ato Demissew says, 'Common to us all is the need for cash. If we have cash, we can have all that you mentioned and much more that you didn't mention. The problem is that we do not produce for cash.'

'Why not?' Ato Arega says.

Ato Demissew replies, 'Culturally, it is shameful for a farmer to purchase food.'

Ato Arega says, 'You are right. But community attitudes must change. If we two believe in producing and bulking our products for the distant market and work towards that end, many will follow us. Let the two of us be role models for this new way of thinking. I am sure others will follow if you and I demonstrate workable strategies.'

Ato Demissew says, 'Count on me. I will be at the forefront in pursuing this initiative. It is the only way out. If we do it, we strengthen our economic access to food and improved livelihoods. But, what can we produce on our farms? Couldn't it be only one commodity for both of us? Our land is still too small for more than one kind of produce in economic quantity.'

Ato Arega says, 'The sad fact is that there is not any guidance on what products are marketable. Many development agents repeatedly tell us to produce more food for us to eat ourselves. We have cultivated all the land we possess including marginal lands. We have all been growing a little of everything that we can consume at home.'

'I am afraid, though, that even if we take that produce to market, the quantities are small and inferior in quality. We target only local consumers and we fetch ourselves little money per unit volume. What matters is to produce crops that are economically advantageous and of high quality—produce that can fetch better prices at national markets, preferably for export.'



Ato Demissew: 'Are you saying that we cannot be helped by our development agents?'

Ato Arega: 'No, that's not what I mean. I hope they can help. We now know our task. We aim to produce quality commodities that effectively target national, regional and if possible global markets. I hope knowledge exists about different economically advantageous and high-quality produce. Our products may be from livestock, fruits and vegetables, flowers, medicinal or aromatic plants, or even food crops. Development agents are the only link we have to knowledgeable people and to government. They will have to help us also in how to meet the market requirements such as how we address quality demands, produce in commercial quantity, and assure continuity of our production as well as on how we establish and maintain trust with those who market our production. How to access the right market is indeed another obstacle for us. But the government will have to help us in this. We shall challenge them all.'

#### *Fitting value addition to production and marketing*

In FCI context, value adding is any treatment given to agronomic, horticulture, floriculture, forestry, apiculture, fishery and livestock productions starting from land preparation or breed selection to harvest and marketing it. It includes land preparation, production scheduling, germplasm and breed improvement, processing, preservation, quality grading, standardization, certification, branding, labelling, patenting, packaging, storage, right up to safe transport to



*Patented and certified wood carving has significant potential for earning hard currency for Africa.*



markets. It involves the use of tools and equipment extensively and requires energy and policy support.

Unfortunately, value addition expertise used to have a low profile in Africa. Therefore, education institutions that produce experts in these fields are very few in sub-Saharan Africa. Even those few are not enjoying appreciation and support both at community and government levels (Bekele-Tesemma 2004). A few of the roles of value addition professionals in linking value addition to production are the following.

- Advice on what inputs (fertilizer, improved seed, improved breed, and improved germ-plasm) can add quality and quantity of production per unit of cash, labour and land area on those comparatively economically advantageous production entities.
- Play knowledge-support role to help obtain the suggested inputs.
- Advise on what and how primary processing helps in adding market price and consumer attraction to products.
- Advise and educate on the benefits of production quality and price standardization for marketing.
- Assist in certifying, branding, patenting and labelling products to address market requirements.
- Play knowledge-support role in fabricating and providing tools, equipment and quality measures for producers.

#### *Critical gaps in value addition*

- Knowledge of value-adding technologies among farmers, extension agents, policymakers, researchers, educators is limited.
- Interaction among professionals involved in various agricultural systems is limited.
- Links between farmers and agroprocessors are poor.
- Appropriate post-harvest technologies are lacking.
- Research and information dissemination on marketing is limited.
- Capital is lacking.
- Due to their economical status, majority of in-country purchasers do not bother with the value of graded, packaged and more hygienic products.
- Market, road, telecommunication and IT infrastructure is poor.
- Entrepreneurial skills are limited.
- Although women are major players in adding value they have limited access to knowledge, technology and credit.



- Policies that encourage value adding are lacking.
- Production and value adding need to be coordinated with marketing and business.
- Updated market surveys and dissemination of market information are needed on what sells better in local, national, regional and global markets.

#### *Policy changes needed*

- Private land ownership must be guaranteed to assure long-term production and ability to mortgage.
- Bureaucratic requirements for establishing credible cooperatives and other farmers' organizations need to be eased.
- Policies and regulations that govern proactive quality and standards need to be issued and enforced.
- Policies are needed that give priority to rural energy and road infrastructure for rural towns and villages that are to be centres of value addition to farmers' products.
- Expertise on value adding, quality grading, standards, certification, branding and patenting needs to be integrated into the curricula of educational and research institutions to fill the present gaps in such kinds of knowledge and technologies.
- Kick-off help is needed to create markets for producers.
- Policy is needed to organize farmers and traders effectively.
- Facilitation of access to rural finance is needed.
- Detrimental multiple taxation needs to be removed from farmers.
- Stakeholders in value addition, production and marketing need to be involved in designing policy links.
- Farmer-owned and farmer-serving institutions need to be promoted.



**Box 3. Letter to a subject matter specialist from a development agent**

*Dear specialist,*

As I informed you earlier, quite a number of farmers in my work station have been puzzled as to what they can produce on their farms to solve the problem of their own food security and improve their livelihoods. They have adamantly argued for market-based production and have consistently requested guidance on selecting economically advantageous crops that can make their produce suitable for national and regional markets. Though they have convinced me that it is good to follow this alternative path to food security, you know that there is nothing on this subject in my extension package. I am afraid I cannot be of help to them unless I get the necessary support from your end.

They themselves have suggested a few products such as honey, paprika, *Rhamnus prenoides*, which is used widely for brewing beer locally and known as 'gesho' in Amharic, garlic and a woodlot of commercial species. They have refused to grow cereals that are useful for their staple food. They insist they will buy it from the returns they obtain by selling the high-value commodities.

I know that all the commodities they have named give good yield in the area. I also have learned that these innovative farmers have convinced all the neighbourhood farmers to grow such crops next to each other. Though the farmers have small holdings, the adjacent individual land preparation now looks like a large cooperative farm. The challenge is that they have asked me for value-added seed; improved bee stock and improved germplasm for the medicinal and aromatic plants they have identified. Do we have these improved versions for distribution? They are planning to buy them on credit. Do we have credit facilities for such developments?

Dear SMS, I know they are committed to planting similar stock and consider similar land and plant care measures. They strictly aim at marketing the paprika, garlic, *rhamnus* and commercial timber in national, regional and global markets. They aim at using the honey to produce tej and to market the tej instead of the honey itself. They believe tej production will economically empower women in their community. From their woodlots they plan to produce fencing staves, roof shingles, transmission poles, and floorboards and construction planks and to market these wood products in our neighbouring Arabian countries.

*In this regard, additional issues that bother me very much are the following:*

Immediately after they produce their crops, they will ask me for skills and technologies on how to preserve their paprika, garlic and logs.

I will not be able to help them grade their products. What are the national, regional and global quality standards for garlic, paprika, tej and various kinds of timber? How do we grade them? How do we certify and brand these products?

The way local communities process *rhamnus* is extremely wasteful, laborious and tiring, especially for women. If it is transported to national markets (mainly Addis Ababa) before it is processed, it is bulky and voluminous, and all the farmers' profit will be wasted in financing the transport. Though the product has been in markets for centuries, manufacturers have not produced processing tools and equipment that can be used in rural settings. I do not know if there are any processing facilities in the big cities either. What kind of support can I give them on this issue?

It looks like these farmers are determined to be involved in market-focused agriculture. As I am the only change agent in the locality, they count on me to link them with all the higher authorities and professionals who can help in this. If I do not help them in these issues they will not consider me a credible development agent, and this will definitely affect all the other duties that the government wants me to perform. Then I will not be needed by the community and they will not recommend me for promotion. I am really frustrated. I believe we need to change the whole extension package for rural development agents such as myself. May I get your advice on all such issues?

None of the professionals in preservation, quality grading, standardization, certification, branding, packing and storage back up such remote development agent stations. Can you do something about this?

Waiting for your response, I remain your obedient agent.

*Yours truly,*



*Fitting marketing and business to production and value addition*

As much as the link between production and value addition is necessary, developing the marketing sector is also critical. Certain sections of the communities need to be trained in small-scale business planning, business ethics and management, as well as contract negotiation and business dealings. The following need major consideration and action.

- Determine what factors are inferior or absent in market infrastructure that need to be improved to promote national, regional and global marketing.
- Promote continuous provision of market information to farmers.
- Provide advisory services to routinely re-examine pricing of products and motivate farmers to compete in production, value adding and marketing.
- Facilitate grouping to bulk agricultural products and enable farmers to provide an economic supply to the market.
- Demonstrate the negative outcome of the tendency of farmers to renege on their responsibility to supply products in line with market principles.
- Promote establishment of support institutions such as facilities that provide credit and encourage self-help and saving.
- Promote training for farmers on how to appraise costs and benefits, set priorities, negotiate contracts, carry out simplified bookkeeping, create possibilities for assets, and so on.
- Promote establishment of market intelligence and information centres for farmers.
- Organize and sensitize farmers, as players in the agricultural market, to raise a collective voice on market policies that affect their right to sell their products and purchase inputs that are useful in linking their production to marketing.

*Problems to be considered*

- Knowledge and information gap exists between what the market demands and what producers can supply.
- Producers have limited access to the market because their production is either inferior in quality, small in size of supply, has interrupted flow to the market, or comes from individuals who are not organized and therefore have no legal standing.





*Grading and neatly stacking would add value to many agriculture products being marketed.*

- Producers lack business orientation about which type of production pays, and development facilitators lack awareness as to what type of production is economically advantageous in targeting cash income other than food.
- Standardized qualities and grades for products have not been established.
- Contractual agreements between producers and buyers do not ensure a sustainable market.
- There are no producer and trader associations that would encourage bargaining and minimize risk.
- Remoteness of the producers adversely affects expenses and production prices.
- Cultural aspects, not the market, dominate production.
- Poor infrastructure affects the link between producer and market.
- The private sector is not adequately developed to enhance links.
- Schooling at all levels is specialized. The concept of adding value to farm productions is never taught, even in high schools, yet more than 80% of school leavers from primary and secondary schools join farming as a way of life in sub-saharan Africa.

#### *Existing hindrances to fitting production to value adding and marketing*

- Affordable and suitable agroindustrial processing equipment is lacking. African professionals need to solve these problems.
- Technological facilities are concentrated in only a few areas.
- No small-scale facilities are available to encourage catering for local markets.



- Technologies for processing agricultural products are low in level and scope. Governments need to give special recognition to the spread of rural technologies and production of critical mass of technologists from competent technology schools. Value adding technologies that fit to small-scale farming need to be devised
- Skilled personnel are lacking, and there are no technical institutions for training them.
- The relationship between producers, traders and manufacturers is loose. Supportive action is needed for them to function complementarily.
- There is no outgrower scheme for different types of farmers' production. Provision of incentives and rewards are required to encourage farmers who produce economically advantageous items for the nation.

#### 5.4 Linking mechanism options

- Organize forums to provide information and expertise support.
- Create awareness among producers to become business-oriented producers.
- Form grassroots organizations of producers, value-addition actors, and market dealers at communities, districts and regions.
- Make available rural energy, telecommunication, roads and markets to potential rural areas where market-oriented development can expand.
- Form institutions to train, consult and enhance creativity and profitability of producers.
- Create rural credit access including private financial institutions.
- Create access to small-scale technology.
- Change public attitude towards cooperatives from negative to positive.

#### *Commitment by the thematic group*

- Work together and link expertise by softening and merging professional boundaries.
- Create policy dialogue, advocacy, and lobbying and advisory groups for issuance of supportive policies in linking production to value additions and marketing.
- Provide the forum for identifying gaps and promoting participatory development and for debating other policy issues.
- Establish Link ProVaMP promotion units in each of the sector institutions for continued and up-scaled actions.



*Preliminary actions*

- Conduct an inventory and establish a database.
- Conduct research to promote the link between farmers and producers. How do they link? What role should each play?
- Analyse policy matters that promote synergy.
- Lobby and advocate for planned and economic-based development.
- Promote a holistic approach to economic-based development.

*Second-level actions*

- Collect information and documents.
- Develop software to establish databases on synergy.
- Establish studies and research groups.
- Organize policy dialogue forums, conferences, workshops to publicize issues, best practices and marketable produce.
- Organize experience-sharing visits and product display sites.



## 6 Relevance to national, regional and global efforts

### 6.1 Relevance to national efforts

Many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa give strong attention to agricultural production and productivity. For instance the major national efforts in food security for Ethiopia are reflected in the pillar development theme known as 'Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization' (ADLI), the strategy paper for promoting development and poverty reduction PRSP (PRSP-Ethiopia 2002) and the rural development policy of Ethiopia (RDP-Ethiopia 2001). In all three approaches, poverty reduction is the core objective. ADLI opts to connect agricultural development and industrialization. Here, industry has to fit to agriculture instead of agriculture being shaped in line with what is to be produced for industry. It sets the general framework, but industry could not follow the fragmented supply of agricultural products—too diverse in kind and too small in quantity.

In the same line, PRSP suggests establishing industrial training institutes, supporting the development of chambers of commerce and industrial associations, strengthening the financial sector and improving the setting of product standardization. The same paper indicates the relevance of formal education institutions such as universities and colleges, vocational training institutes, research and consultancy service enterprises, and other similar institutions. It opts for the synergy between production, value adding (including industrial processing, certification and standards), marketing and institutions. The problem here is only in that there is no mandated institution encompassing all levels to professionally improve capacity, link institutions and professions, critique and reform the strategy, and mainstream the links into the activities of the line ministries to make this complementary connection happen. The same is true for almost every country in Africa.

FCI can add value to the PRSP agenda of African countries by making optimal connections and creating synergy through the joint efforts of national Link ProVaMP secretariats constituted from existing governmental agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector. Use of updated knowledge in effectively synergizing the efforts in value addition, marketing and business, policy and infrastructure is basic and essential. This up-to-date knowledge is supposed to be generated, assembled, critiqued, and repackaged for use by the knowledge house (Link ProVaMP) of the national Link ProVaMP secretariat for the implementers, which are connected via member institutions of the National Link-ProVaMP secretariat. For this to happen, it may be necessary to establish an FCI desk in each of the institutions dealing with production, value addition, marketing and business, infrastructure and policy.



PRSP-Ethiopia (2002) suggests that progress be made in commercialization with more intensive farming, an increased proportion of marketable outputs, and a correspondingly decreasing proportion of production for personal consumption. The need for change in mindset from production-for-consumption to production-for-marketing is the major tenet of Link ProVaMP. The need for the solid connection between production and marketing becomes a common intersection between Link ProVaMP–Ethiopia and PRSP of Ethiopia. Link ProVaMP adds value to PRSP by harmonizing each part—production, value adding, marketing, infrastructure and policy—with the others for increasing farmers’ economic access to food and livelihood.

The rural development policy of Ethiopia stresses agriculture and rural-centred development. Similarly, the Farmers’ Competence Initiative and the concept of Link ProVaMP put rural and small-scale farmers at the centre. But they add value to the rural development policy by linking production to value adding and marketing to generate economic wealth (capital)—a link that is lacking in the policy document. Link ProVaMP would also add value by demonstrating landscape and community transformation, creating new and additional job opportunities in value adding, and linking marketing and business effectively to rural production, which is mainly in the form of trees, herbs, shrubs and livestock. It will add value and generate marketing and business skills, methods and approaches that provide additional job opportunities. A substantial percentage of farm children will find work off the land in the areas of value adding, marketing and business. There will be no need for farm subsidies.

## 6.2 Relevance to regional efforts

Among the priority areas of NEPAD, establishing the conditions for sustainable development by ensuring capacity building is in the first category. NEPAD also indicates that policy reform and increased investment are required for a number of interventions. The following are very much in line with the focus areas and strategies of FCI.

- Encouraging human development with a focus on health, education, science and technology, and skills development.
- Building and improving infrastructure, including information and communication technology (ICT), energy, transport, water and sanitation.
- Promoting diversification of products and exports, particularly with respect to agro-industries, manufacturing, mining and minerals, and tourism.
- Accelerating intra-African trade and improving access to markets of developed countries.



It is certain that many of the above-listed interventions are vital ingredients of the promotional work in integrating forestry, livestock, horticulture, floriculture and agricultural productions to marketing by value-adding interventions and supportive policy actions. But this can be implemented successfully if one aims at generating cash.

### 6.3 Relevance to global efforts

The very first Millennium Development Goal is to eradicate poverty and hunger, which is also the very reason for promoting economic access to food under FCI. Three other important MDGs—promoting gender equality and empowering women, promoting environmental sustainability, and combating HIV and AIDS—are also considered in the implementation strategies of FCI. Forging partnerships, which is one of the MDGs, is the very essence of Link ProVaMP under FCI. In this regard, it is important to realize the supportive role that FCI can play in implementing MDG.

At the centre of FCI are rural communities in general and farmers in particular whose economic income needs to be strengthened for better access to food and improved livelihoods. It is believed that the battle for winning food security would be won more easily if fought through concerted efforts of governments and professionals in promoting optimal links between farmers' production, value adding, marketing and business. This calls for refreshed global strategy and emphasis in rearranging workforce and budget, emphasizing education, establishing and using institutions, and developing supportive policies for complementary and effective functioning of the value addition, marketing and business, infrastructure institutions and professionals.

The national Link ProVaMP secretariats may come together to form the regional Link ProVaMP to address regional-level issues and play its share in implementing the MDGs.



## 7 Recommendations

Experts in many international forums inform us that food production in the world has grown by 40% within the last 20 years alone. The same professionals indicate that the major problem is continuously falling price of these food items. This clearly suggests that it is cash which prevents Africans from having food.

Ironically, food-deficient Africa has unique and vast resources in floriculture, apiculture, spices and condiments, aromatic and medicinal plants, horticultural plants, and natural attractions and historic heritages to which it can add value and trade with countries with food surplus. If so, why is that Africa neglects its relatively economically advantageous produce and tries to produce food that is already abundant in the world or even in some portions of its own country? Why is it also that developed countries continue to invest their resources in trying to maximize food production in Africa, even at the expense of the environment while they could have helped Africa add value to products for which it would have an economic advantage? Africa could then sell them these products and become economically strong enough to purchase from them the surplus food it needs.

I do not have good answers to these 'why' questions. How we can change the situation is more important. Farmers' Competence Initiative is a new direction in response to these basic issues. It is about achieving food security and an improved way of life for sub-Saharan Africa from its resources. It provides a new front for achieving food security by focusing on products. The initiative stresses that support in the form of value-addition skills and technologies is needed to meet market requirements and generate cash income for rural communities. It centres on products that are specific to ecozones, countries and the continent and that can be produced in accordance with environmental limitations and potentials such as seasonal weather fluctuations, soil fertility and land configuration. Such products have the potential to create job opportunities for farmers' children and can earn a cash income in national, regional and global markets.

FCI centres on facilitating and coordinating value addition and marketing expertise and principles for the selected farm products. This again requires setting up and using effective organizations throughout the production, value-adding and marketing chains. Ideally, it deals with optimally joining these links to form an economic development chain within countries in sub-Saharan Africa. For this new front to be successful, it is crucial that governments revisit their budgetary allocation, workforce arrangement, and educational institution set-up for balanced and complementary successes in production, value addition, infrastructure, and marketing.



*The following broadly grouped interventions are major priorities.*

- Urge governments in Africa to aim at giving farmers' children the chance to move out from overburdened land by creating job opportunities in the value-addition, marketing and business, and infrastructure and service sectors. This means well-thought-out budget allocations, setting up education institutions that will cater for them, and initiating supporting policy.
- Set up Link ProVaMP promotion units in each of the government organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, and private sector institutions for knowledge-based promotion of synergy between farmers' products, value addition, marketing and business, infrastructure, and policy interventions. This also requires effective partnerships and good will between institutions operating in each country and beyond.
- Create, support and strengthen professionals' joint forums that can serve as a knowledge house to help farmers add value to their products and market them. These forums would help institute favourable policy and infrastructure and help build grassroots institutions.
- Support generation and provision of technologies, tools and equipments that are necessary for value-added production suited to small-scale farming.
- Make available saving and credit facilities and support intentionally tailored to rural enterprise at subsidized interest rates.
- Invest heavily in training rural communities in basic education and in marketable basic skills that are relevant for adding value to farmers' products.
- Initiate a massive campaign to change the mindset of experts as well as urban and rural communities to production-for-marketing orientation instead of production-for-consumption alone.
- Select economically advantageous resources by ecoregions and countries in Africa for value-added production efforts and generating cash income from the produce, value addition and marketing chains. This effort assures that cash is obtained from the sale of the value-added products as well as from jobs created throughout the chain.
- Make a massive investment in constructing rural roads, markets, and telecommunication and IT facilities as well as rural energy supply in support of linking production–value addition–marketing chains effectively.



- Promote investment ventures by creating conducive policy environment and supporting private investors in the production, value addition and marketing chain.
- Promote, support and institute synergistic efforts in linking production, value addition, marketing and business, grassroots organizations, and supportive policies.
- Boost professional morale and promote all stakeholders to come together to form units that will enhance value-added production from relatively economically advantageous resources of various ecoregions countries and the continent as a whole.
- Institute policies intentionally made to support and promote the link between farmers' products and adding value for marketing them effectively at local, national, regional and global levels.
- Initiate task-based community organizations for improved economic gain.
- Have an in-built monitoring and evaluation of efforts for successes in Link ProVaMP ideals.
- Prepare multilateral and bilateral agreements to be made with donors and other organizations of the developed nations to be supportive of developing in-country capacity for handling this production-value addition and marketing chain.

### Selected references for further reading

Aksoy, M. Ataman, Beghin, John, eds. 2004. *Global agricultural trade and developing countries*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Bekele-Tesemma, A. 2004. Training-needs assessment in marketable basic skills: a pathfinder step for development of policies in marketable basic skills, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia. In: Temu, A.B., Chakeredza, S., Mogotisi, K., Munthali, D., and Mulinge, R., eds., *Rebuilding Africa's capacity for agricultural development: the role of tertiary education*. Nairobi: ICRAF. p. 464–476.

Bekele-Tesemma, A. 2005. Adding Value: improving capacity and linking institutions and professions for promoting synergy between farmers' production, value addition and marketing. World Agroforestry Centre, Eastern Africa's Regional Land Management Unit (RELMA in ICRAF) and Link ProVaMP Ethiopia. Jacaranda Designs Ltd. Nairobi Kenya.



International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). 2004. *Assuring food and nutrition security in Africa by 2020: prioritizing actions, strengthening actors, and facilitating partnerships*. Proceedings of an All Africa Conference, Kampala, Uganda, 1–3 April 2004. Washington, DC: IFPRI.

Millennium Development Goals (MDG). 2004. *Proceedings of the 5 July 2004 high-level Seminar, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, convened by the government of Ethiopia and the United Nations Millennium Project*. Nairobi: MDG Technical Support Centre.

Millennium Development Goals. 2005. *Health, dignity and development: what will it take?* UN Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation, final report, abridged edition. New York: Stockholm International Water Institute and United Nations Millennium Project.

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ethiopia. 2002. Ethiopia: sustain-able development and poverty reduction. Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Ministry of Information, Ethiopia. 2001. *Rural development policies, strategies and instruments*. Addis Ababa: Press and Audiovisual Department, Ministry of Information.

Webb, Patrick, and von Braun, J. 1994. *Famine and food security in Ethiopia: lessons for Africa*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons for International Food Policy Research Institute.

World Bank. 2003. *Making services work for poor people*. World Development report. New York: World Bank and Oxford University Press.

World Bank. 2005. *Little green book*. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



ICRAF LIBRARY  
P.O. BOX 30677  
Nairobi

This book/periodical/document is due for return to the  
library on the last date stamped below.

--	--	--