RAISE-FS two pager

Agricultural Sector Development for Food System Transformation

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RAISE-FS has demonstrated expertise in supporting agricultural sector development, emphasizing the significance of systematic documentation and preserving institutional knowledge.. This brief highlights the experience of RAISE-FS in supporting agricultural value chain development in Ethiopia.

Importance of sector development in Ethiopian food system

Over the past few decades, Ethiopia's agricultural sector has seen significant efforts aimed at boosting production and productivity. However, limited investment has been directed toward strengthening value chains and agricultural sub-sectors. This gap has slowed the development of the broader food system, as efficient supply chains and competitive sub-sectors are essential to ensure the smooth flow of inputs and outputs across the sector.

Well-developed sub-sectors connect farmers to better markets, modern technologies, and financing opportunities, while fostering stronger linkages among producers, processors, and consumers and improves the overall quality, accessibility, and affordability of food—key to addressing Ethiopia's food security and nutrition challenges.

Furthermore, a robust value chain attracts investment, generates employment, and drives sustainable economic growth. Recognizing this, RAISE-FS focussed on advancing the development of agricultural value chains across the country to create inclusive and resilient food systems.

Our experience in sector development

RAISE-FS has been working on developing value chains in various subsectors such as oilseeds, pulses, spices, poultry, small ruminants, fruits and vegetable, by facilitating stakeholders' discussion, demonstrating market linkage, piloting business models, and documenting the opportunities and challenges in the various sub-sectors. In doing so, the main challenges faced are the spread of mandates between various public institutes and the trend of working in silos of these organizations, hindering the introduction of coordinated efforts to put systemic solutions in place. The lack of federal and regional regulations and infrastructural setups also slow down proposed solutions for value chain improvement such as standardization or traceability.

Various leverage points that hinder sector development were identified, the most urgent were post-harvest loss management, and producing safe and quality food. To this extent we undertook the following activities:

POST-HARVEST LOSSES

assessments of post-harvest losses and business opportunities for postharvest processing; and commodity assessment for commercial food system

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

assessment of business opportunities for spices, orange fleshed sweet potato and cocoa

EUDR

implications of the EU deforestation regulation (EUDR)

GUIDELINES

Guidelines were developed for sesame (GAP, GHP), hot pepper (GAP, GHP, GMP), and poultry (biosecurity and quality manuals) to enhance product quality and safety.

MSP PLATFORM

A multi-stakeholder platform in the poultry sector aims to address challenges in feed, breeds, health, and product marketing.

RAISE-FS implemented innovation bundles which, amongst others have focused on facilitating coordination among mandated public institutions and key public and private sub-sector stakeholders to identify opportunities, address challenges, and define actionable priorities within various agricultural sub-sectors. Through these structured dialogues, stakeholders have been able to align efforts, establish regulatory and operational mechanisms, and foster collaborative initiatives that strengthen value chain development. This coordinated approach has been contributing to a more integrated and efficient agricultural system, driving sector-wide growth and sustainability.

Impact of our work: the initiatives led to improved coordination between the public and private sectors, particularly in formulating regulatory frameworks and addressing sectoral challenges. Sub-sector actors have established stronger networks that enhance business operations and promote more efficient linkages across the different nodes of the value chain. In addition, private sector associations for specific commodities are now better positioned to lobby and advocate for their sub-sector priorities, engage effectively with relevant ministries, and communicate new policy directions to their members. These advancements have strengthened institutional collaboration, improved policy responsiveness, and contributed to a more enabling environment for agricultural growth.

RAISE-FS's experiences, supporting agricultural value chain development, highlight **the importance of systematic documentation and institutional memory**. High staff turnover across stakeholder organizations often results in the loss of progress and continuity; therefore, maintaining clear records of processes, decisions, and communications is essential. Additionally, ensuring inclusive participation of all relevant sub-sector stakeholders in solution-design helps to balance interests and integrate diverse perspectives. Broad-based engagement also enhances coordination among actors, minimizes duplication of efforts, and promotes alignment of initiatives across the sector.

Through a variety of financial mechanisms, an innovation fund, youth challenge fund and access to finance through bank, SMES have been supported to test innovation, develop new products and markets and as such contribute to food system transformation. Supporting development, testing and demonstration of low-cost but efficient technologies enhanced technological innovations and product development and diversity, yield loss minimization, processing efficiency of micro-enterprises, product shelf life, communication and marketing, and monitoring. Some examples of these activities are shown in the visual on the right.

SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS IN NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
sliced and dehydrated fruits and vegetables, egg incubators, rice shellers, organic packaging, cosmetics, waste briquettes, omega-rich eggs, potato diggers, high-protein biscuits, soya bean shiro, and plumpy nuts.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS
especially youngsters and women: production of black soldier fly, vermicomposting, poultry and sheep farming

IMPROVE PROCESSING EFFICIENCY
Mahder foods for processing soya bean into shiro; Benu for processing oats meals and biscuits

REDUCE POST-HARVEST LOSSES
solar drier is fabricated and tested and a moisture tester has been developed to prevent mycotoxin development

INCREASING PRODUCT SHELF LIFE
diffuse light storage for seed and ware potato and hermetic bags for for storage of cereals and pulses

MARKET LINKAGES
established call centres for poultry products, feed, medicaments, and veterinary services

Key publications

- Designing optimal (M)SME business models for the provision of postharvest processing services to smallholder farmers in Ethiopia - Scoping and landscape analysis
- Feasibility study: Black soldier fly production for animal feed in Ethiopia
- Cocoa sector development in Ethiopia: Potential for impact and provisional road map
- Exploring the growth potential of Ethiopia's spices industry: Opportunities for development
- Business opportunities for Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato processing in Ethiopia
- EU Deforestation Regulation: Implications for Ethiopian agricultural export sector and the need for timely preparedness

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