



Empowering smallholder farmers in markets through collaborative demand-driven research

Assessment ESFIM Research Support Fund

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Photo's: C. Plaisier and participants

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RENDEMENT APPROVISIONNEMENT
 $30 \times 4 = 120$
 VENTE MOYENNE =
 $130.000 \times 120 = 15.600.000$
 CHARGES

LES CHARGES
 30HA DE MAÏS DE CONSOMMATION SUR LES

DESIGNATION	PU	QUANTITE	PRE TOTAL
LABOUR	150.000		150.000
SEMENCES	500	500 kg	250.000
ENGRAIS NPK	327.000	4,5 tonnes	1.471.000
ENGRAIS URÉE	291.000	2 tonnes	582.000
HERBICIDE PRELEVÉ NICO MAÏS	130.000		130.000
HERBICIDE TOTAUX			90.000
FIANTE DE POULE	12000	30	360.000
PRESTATION DE SERVICE			500.000
TOTAL			3.533.000

NOMBRE D'ACTIF = 10
 05 H, 04 F
 EQUIPEMENTS: TRACTEURS
 SEMOTRE
 PULVERISATEUR
 EGRATNEUSE
 CHARENTE
 INFRASTRUCTURES: 02 POULAILLES

PRESENTATION DE L'EXPLOITATION
 LOCALISATION: DEPARTEMENT DE PENI
 VILLAGE: DOGOTALAMA DODOUGOU
 SUPERFICIE MISE EN VALEUR: 30 HA DE MAÏS DE CONSOMMATION
 VARIÉTÉ: SR21
 DATE DE SEMIS: 21 au 24 JUIN 2015
 RENDEMENT MOYEN: 4 tonnes/Ha
 QUANTITE DE SEMENCES CERTIFIEES: 500 kg
 VARIÉTÉ: MASSONGO
 DATE DE SEMIS: 14 JUILLET 2015

Preface

This report concerns the ‘Empowering smallholder farmers in markets’ (ESFIM) programme, a research support fund implemented from 2015 till 2018. It provides a detailed overview of the implementation, the process and the main outcomes. ESFIM 2015-2018 (phase II) is a follow-up of ESFIM support activities implemented between 2007 and 2013 (phase I) aiming to support national farmers’ organisations to strengthen their advocacy capacities.

The fund supported 15 research proposals from 13 farmers’ organisations in the AgriCord network of agri-agencies. ESFIM was embedded in the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme of AgriCord and supported by Dutch donor funding.

In the ESFIM programme, farmers’ organisations were supported through collaborative research in a farmer-driven process. The FO’s agency and capacity are the central focus of the research partnership. ESFIM therefore supported activities that FOs see as priorities for smallholder empowerment in markets, rather than researchers’ preferences. By doing so, ESFIM linked global knowledge systems at national, regional and international research institutes with the knowledge and practices of farmers’ organisations in developing countries.

The collaborative research covers a rich variety of themes, sectors and regions and as such provide highly relevant information for policy makers and practitioners. Through the ESFIM programme, FOs learnt to articulate and address their needs, to work effectively with research organisations and to improve their advocacy for change.

The participating farmers’ organisations have not only benefited from the actual outcomes of the research, but they have also built research capacity and established strategic partnerships. We are very happy and proud to conclude that the ESFIM Research Support Fund has been able to strengthen the

position of farmers, particularly smallholders, in resolving problems related with the marketing of their produce. We strongly advocate the importance of research and continued research to play a role in supporting the position of smallholder farmers with information and analysis.

We kindly acknowledge the support of AgriCord and the agri-agencies. We highly appreciate the collaboration with all parties involved. The serious challenges were overcome due to a high level of commitment and perseverance of the FOs and their research counterparts. A special thanks goes to Melike Hemmami and Jur Schuurman for their valuable contribution and great commitment. We sincerely hope that ESFIM provides relevant input for the farmers’ organisations, their members and for parties supporting them.



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Summary

The research support fund, launched in 2015, contributes to the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme of AgriCord

The 'Empowering smallholder farmers in markets' (ESFIM) programme is a research support fund implemented between 2015 and 2018 and produced several outcomes that help farmers' organisations (FOs) to prepare for change through advocacy and access to markets. It follows previous ESFIM support activities implemented between 2007 and 2013 (phase I). ESFIM is embedded in the Farmers Fighting Poverty (FFP) programme of AgriCord and supported with Dutch donor funding.

Strengthening the position of farmers in resolving marketing-related problems

The goal of the ESFIM Research Support Fund is to strengthen the position of farmers, particularly smallholders, in resolving problems related with the marketing of their produce. The belief is that research support to farmers' organisations will strengthen their members' capacities to formulate feasible, evidence-based propositions to improve the institutional environment that empowers smallholder farmers in markets. ESFIM aimed to do so through the facilitation of demand-driven research resulting from a farmer-led process of formulating local research assignments. By doing so, it linked global knowledge systems at national, regional and international research institutes with the knowledge and practices of farmers' organisations in developing countries.

Four calls for research proposals have been distributed among the farmers' organisations supported by agri-agencies in the AgriCord network. WUR

With the results, two interesting new variety of rice are identified which are very much appreciated by our member farmers

managed the process of proposal selection and backstopping. The fund supported 15 research proposals of approximately €25,000 from 13 different farmers' organisations. Research was done alongside the following

topics: i) Inclusive value chain development, ii) Input supply improvement, iii) Access to finance and iv) Lobby and Advocacy. At the end of 2018 all research projects were finalised and a closing write and dissemination workshop with all participants took place in November 2018. This workshop created a platform for all participants to exchange knowledge, to share insights and to verify and discuss policies to strengthen the capacities of smallholder farmers in their respective countries.

ESFIM Phase II integrates the learnings from phase I which started in 2007

The ESFIM Research Support fund is preceded by the so called ESFIM phase I which officially started in 2007 at the initiative of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Agrinatura, the European network of research institutes and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Farmers' organisations elaborated a research-for-advocacy proposal geared to influence key policies or institutional arrangement that affected smallholder market access. This research was supported by Agrinatura and funded by IFAD and the Dutch government. Based on the evaluation and learnings of this phase an improved research support set up and structure was introduced in 2015: the Research Support Fund.

Farmers' organisations and collective action are key drivers for sustainable change and improving the situation for smallholder farmers

Organised farmers in developing countries can strongly influence society and the wider economy. The Farmers Fighting Poverty (FFP) theory of change – the context in which ESFIM has been initiated - sees strong farmers' organisations and cooperatives as active contributors to economic, social and political development. With the aim of reducing poverty and hunger, FFP supports smallholder family farms and their business ambitions in terms of access to markets, technical assistance, credit and quality inputs. According to the FFP theory, collective action through farmers' organisations can reduce costs,

encourage innovation and improve access to land. It also gives bargaining power and access to market information, and helps to overcome inequalities faced by young and female farmers. Productivity is boosted by better technology at all stages of production. All activities under the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme are designed to ensure financial, environmental and social sustainability (AgriCord 2018).

Strengthening FO and smallholder members by evidence based policies

Many countries do have an agricultural policy and poverty reduction strategy that explicitly supports the inclusion of smallholders in markets. However, smallholders often have limited power even when they are represented in the policy arena. Often farmer representatives and smallholders lack the information and capacity to play a role in a pro-active manner. The agricultural policies therefore often fall short or lack a positive impact at smallholder level (Ton 2008 and Ton and Procter 2014). Evidence and creative thinking is needed in the policy design of effective rules and regulations and effective institutional arrangement to empower smallholders in markets.

Research to bridge the gap between the research community and FO

Research and discussions about enabling policies and innovative institutional mechanisms for smallholder market access can and should also take place at FO level. However, reality shows that there is still a gap between the research community, FOs and smallholders. ESFIM aims to bridge this gap by creating an interface to support FOs in obtaining more accurate and timely evidence on policy proposals and topics that matter most to them and their members.

Outputs

The FOs now have a pro-active lobby agenda related with smallholder farmers in markets, and a set of written technically sound propositions for changes in specific key elements in the institutional environment. And the final result is that FOs are capable to more effectively voice their specific research requirements and link up with researchers that can support them in executing their research activities. Results can be generic summarised as follows:

- Information and evidence is now available (previously 'black box').
- FO has a profound analyses marketing issues.
- FO has clear recommendations for policy and practice.
- Input for policy of FO and lobby agenda.

It allowed us to know the internal weaknesses of the PO, that hamper better access to markets. The research gives an overview of markets that are possible for farmers to access. We now know our problems and can propose alternatives, so that our members can enter the market under more equal conditions.

- Research capacity of FO has been built (agenda, partnerships).

The outcome of the research projects supported under are visible

With the research projects FO's and member gained insights in and knowledge of:

- Consumer preferences in the specific commodity (ies).
- Value addition to products with minimal technical investments.
- The dominant role of middlemen hampering any progress.
- The motives for youth to migrate and how to include them
- How to conduct a market assessment.
- The difficulties national and regional funds face in agricultural finance.
- Demand driven production and value chain thinking.
- The importance and added value of cooperation and collective action.
- Sector, market and value chain information.
- New good varieties.
- Improving the chain and collective marketing options.
- The possibilities for mobilisation of financial resources.
- How to process and disseminate information to members.
- How to set up an evidence based pro-active lobby brief.

Various dissemination activities were conducted to reach out to the stakeholders involved and members experience concrete benefits

All FOs developed dissemination strategies and conducted appropriate and activities applicable to their situation. The farmer members and farmer cooperatives joined validation and dissemination workshops, others were reached via leaflets and brochures, a movie and even a broadcast on the radio. Based on the research findings, some FOs also developed curricula for training their farmer members. In the cases of lobby and advocacy it is too soon to see concrete

member benefits, (e.g. the pro-active lobby of AVA although the research outcomes currently under consideration by the pertinent authorities). In other cases the concrete members benefits are more visible as they have access to:

1. information: sector, market and value chain information available;
2. improved seed varieties: new good varieties available of potato, rice, beans;
3. knowledge and facilities for value addition to produce;
4. trainings on production, marketing and branding;
5. and collective marketing infrastructure;
6. finance (MoU bank);
7. an information infrastructure.

The impact of ESFIM: a narrative

All participating FOs have backgrounds, target groups, challenges and visions, and they all have in common that they have conducted an action research with the support of AgriCord and WUR. They all have experienced the added value of doing research as an FO. It is a different way of working and thinking than executing development projects. They focused on challenges the FOs and its members face in accessing the markets and increasing their income. The outcomes provided the FO with crucial information and an understanding of the problems faced in their own contexts. According to one FO: "The black box has become smaller and less black." The know-how of producers is safeguarded and improved and this in turn has improved (future) access to markets and income of the FO members. The FO is now able to make evidence-based policies fed by the outcomes of the research.

ESFIM has made it possible to establish a working relationship between producers and researchers

The research has been useful for the organisations in different ways. First of all, ESFIM has made it possible to establish a working relationship between producers and researchers. Also, existing partnership frameworks have been strengthened. Moreover, researchers have started to adapt their work to the needs of producers. Thanks to ESFIM the FOs have been able to formulate their research topics as well as their expectations and research needs. The farmers'

ESFIM has made it possible to acquaint ourselves with collaborative research

organisations are in a better position now to negotiate research activities with the pertinent institutes and universities. In general, in their countries there is not much budget for research that serves the needs of farmers' organisations, but they are now better positioned to introduce the topics that are relevant to them in the research agendas of the institutions (example: ROPPA, CORAF, CGIAR). Research will help the farmers' organisations in their task to develop evidence-based strategies. Research can also be important in discovering and showing new and unexpected mechanisms, and generating new knowledge, so that the organisation can go forward in a more autonomous way.

Definition of a research agenda at FO level

The FOs have identified several research needs that will help them in achieving the desired changes which can best be realised via research (instead of donor grants for example). These envisioned changes need a research approach similar to ESFIM, i.e. action research with a participatory approach. The FOs strongly believe in the added value of doing research and the role research plays and can play in improving their capacity and performance.

Mobilising partnerships to respond to the FO research needs

These topics can be addressed in different ways, through the mobilisation and/or strengthening of partnerships (agri-agencies, researchers, extension offices, technical and financial agencies, development agencies). ESFIM could support the FOs in the development of their research projects by i) mobilising local experts, ii) strengthening exchanges between farmers organisations, iii) linking FOs to other actors, and iv) mobilising financial resources. It will be important to focus on the relevant actors and research topics and to reinforce the linkages between them in order to come up with, and support, joint action-research proposals.

Enabling factors for success of follow up of ESFIM

ESFIM generated many insights and has already some concrete examples of impact for its members, but there are several conditions for success. The following list provides for the enabling environment and the factors to take into account in a follow up of ESFIM:

- Face-to-face contact is required.
- Sufficient research time for all parties involved.
- More backstopping and Management is needed.

-
- Alignment with and more participation of agri-agencies supporting the FO involved.
 - Capable and eligible FO committed to the research.
 - Well experienced local researcher with focus on FO context.
 - Interdisciplinary and multi-methods experience of the researchers involved.
 - Pro-active creative attitude all stakeholders involved.

Improved ESFIM for maximum impact

Through action-research, researchers and producers each fulfil their role in research processes. It is a process of learning and sharing between both parties – but also for other actors in the value chains – and a starting point for continued collaboration in the future, and/or for replication in other regions with similar opportunities. This kind of programme makes it possible to respond to several topics at different links in the value chain, for the benefit of smallholders that often are marginalised. The different research projects realised in the context of this process have allowed the FOs and their members to identify voices of change. Some of these changes are already being made reality. There is still work to do for the strengthening of the position of smallholders. But now links have been established to reinforce the partnership between researchers and producers. ESFIM phase 2 provides crucial insights for improving the research support fund as a tool. When taking into account these lessons, an improved ESFIM can play a significant role in contributing to these processes of change.

Table S.1 Overview ESFIM research projects 2015-2018

#	Country FO	Research topic	Agri-agency	Local research party	WUR researcher
1	Albania Adad Malore	Assessment of farmers' know-how, increase of awareness for local products in the region of Kukes, and support the strategic orientation of the organisation of smallholders	Fert	Independent researcher	Melike Hemmami
2	Bolivia AOPEB	Fair and equitable taxation for smallholders in Bolivia	Agriterra	Independent researcher	Giel Ton
3	Burkina Faso FEPAB	Improving the economic information system of the farmers' organisation to support members with information for decision-making	Afdi	Institut de Développement Rural/Université Polytechnique de Bobo Dioulasso	Cor Wattel
4	El Salvador CCA	Market and value chain analysis of the national sugarcane sector	Upadi	Independent researchers	Giel Ton
5	Indonesia SPPQT	Value chain analysis for coffee to improve the market position of members of the farmers' organisation	Agriterra (until 2018)	Universitas Sebelas Maret	Christine Plaisier
6	Nepal DACF	Investigating the barriers of local and national marketing of potatoes, and development of effective marketing strategies	Agriterra	Independent researcher	Christine Plaisier
7	Nepal SUNDARDEEP	Value chain analysis of carp supply chain in Nepal	FFD	Agriculture and Forestry University, Chitwan District	Rik Beukers Christine Plaisier
8	Madagascar CRAM	Improvement of regional seed production systems for rice and beans Madagascar	Afdi	FOFIFA	Peter Gildemacher
9	Madagascar CEFFEL	Optimisation of potato seed systems in Madagascar	Fert	FIFAMANOR	Peter Gildemacher
10	Peru AVA (1)	Legal assessment on how to transfer property rights of physical infrastructure situated on the land of the cooperatives/associations but that is not properly registered (followed by a second phase)	Agriterra	Marka Asociados & Consultores and independent researchers	Giel Ton
11	Peru - AVA (2)				Giel Ton
12	Uganda NUCAFE (1)	Investigating current and future drivers and barriers to youth participation in the coffee value chain in Uganda (followed by a second phase)	Agriterra	Independent researcher	Fedes van Rijn
13	Uganda NUCAFE (2)				
14	Vietnam TTHCA	Value chain analysis of acacia products, and financial assessment of FSC and PEFC certification	FFD	Centre for Climate Change Study in Central Vietnam (CCCSC)	Verina Ingram
15	West Africa ROPPA	Regional Fund for the Financing of Family Farms and Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers in West Africa	Afdi	Independent researcher	Géke Appeldoorn

Table S.2 Overview ESFIM research results

#	Country FO	Research topic	Main outcomes
1	Albania Adad Malore	Assessment of farmers' know-how, increase of awareness for local products in the region of Kukes, and support the strategic orientation of the organisation of smallholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer members have learnt to conduct a market assessment of specific agricultural products in the Kukes region. Sensitisation took place of different actors on market potential for specific products in the Kukes region. Clear strategic directions have been created on the basis of joint work with the forward-looking strategic document to increase market access for local products to combat poverty. Increased awareness of consumer preferences and customer preferred types of attributes and sensitisation on how to increase consumer information by compiling a list of farmers who can produce typical products for the market. Members learnt to showcase these attributes in product preparation and promotion. Direct sales opportunities were considered in the fairs. Exhibition preparations have taught ADAD members how to cooperate in preparing their products for the market
2	Bolivia AOPEB	Fair and equitable taxation for smallholders in Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main outcome is that the proposal for differential fiscal treatment of small and medium producers has been considered in the conclusions of the economic section, in the national meeting of smallholders convened by president Evo Morales. There now are data that can support an efficient proposal for improving the tax system of OECAs and OPEs, based on empirical analysis and the advice of experts in tax law and implementation of tax rulings. Four proposals of differential fiscal treatment have been generated, one for each sector. Nonetheless, the RAU proposal has had priority, since it will benefit all sectors and is not a structural change; rather, it will promote the recognition of the work of the associations and their marketing. Validation of a SMART proposal that reflects the interests and needs of OECAs and OPEs in terms of tax burdens and fiscal procedures, generating improvements in the situation. Generation of a plan of advocacy and communication, based on a systematic stakeholder analysis and the strategies were elaborated by the members.
3	Burkina Faso FEPAB	Improving the economic information system of the farmers' organisation to support members with information for decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We now have a thorough and in-depth synthesis of information needs and related strategies based on two types of information: those of an economic or commercial nature and those of a technical nature.
4	El Salvador CCA	Market and value chain analysis of the national sugarcane sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugar production is an activity that has functioned for a long time in El Salvador and, it would seem, will continue to do so. Sugar production is an economically profitable activity that makes an important contribution to the resilience of the cooperatives. The sugar sector has to look for a sustainable production path in order to stay competitive. The demands of the international market show that there is a tendency towards buying inputs produced under internationally accepted norms. A production-oriented mentality prevails with technical advisors and producers, focusing on cost reduction rather than on awareness of damage to the environmental balance. The agricultural workforce prefers, for reasons of ease in harvesting, to keep using traditional harvest methods. Certification should be realised within a context of entrepreneurial production with social responsibility.

#	Country FO	Research topic	Main outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government has to strengthen the producers and raise their consciousness, and should help to design strategies that make it possible to make progress in the "green harvest" programme that recently has been initiated, but still lacks wide acceptance.
5	Indonesia SPPQT	Value chain analysis for coffee to improve the market position of members of the farmers' organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are still plenty of coffee smallholders who do not have adequate knowledge on post-harvest handling including processing their coffee product to add its value As the result the price they get is much lower compared to the price at potential buyer level. Therefore, the role of cooperative is really essential in helping coffee smallholders to improve their income by facilitating training programmes to improve the product quality as well as connecting farmers to the potential markets. Furthermore, the results of this research have given a clear description about a series of characteristics of the coffee business actors starting from the farmers to the final consumers. All of this information has helped us to consider what steps we should take in order to be able to improve the welfare of our farmers as well as the coffee business atmosphere.
6	Nepal DACF	Investigating the barriers of local and national marketing of potatoes, and development of effective marketing strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An evidence-based understanding of the whole chain and flow of products including power issues and relevant input for the strategy of the cooperatives and the supporting role of DACF. The academic background of farmer is not good, so relevant trainings and programmes must be conducted. The instable market, price fluctuations, middle man's role has made adverse impact on farmer's return. The government policy is not applicable for the marketing. The barrier from fields to market and involvement of complex value chain were determined. A simple value chain involving cooperative for collection and supply must be initiated. The government policy on farmer's price, availability of seed/ manure need to be address out and make suitable change.
7	Nepal SUNDARDEEP	Value chain analysis of carp supply chain in Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the insights and information gathered, Sundardeep and the other women cooperatives and groups can now better plan their fish production. Further, market and price information is used to develop the marketing and sales efforts of all the beneficiaries. Fish farming is the one of the fastest growing agriculture sector in Nepal. Due to increasing demand of fish, fish farming has a great prospects in Nepal. Cooperatives can adopt both grow out and seed production venture. However, due to less physical work and time requirement, women are more attracted toward fish farming. Unlike grow out farming hatchery and nursery operations are more technical and requires a bit physical work. Nevertheless, seed supply chain is shorter than carp supply chain and is more profitable.
8	Madagascar CRAM	Improvement of regional seed production systems for rice and beans Madagascar	<p>The ESFIM study has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tested the local adaptability of newly (pre-)released rice and bean varieties; Tried out business models for local cost-effective and sustainable production of early generation seed; Tested seed value chain organisation opportunities to professionalise the bean and rice seed production and marketing system. Testing has released two varieties (FOFIFA 160 and FOFIFA 183) appreciated by producers because of their performance related to productivity, early maturity (short cycle), a good reaction in early season with the

#	Country FO	Research topic	Main outcomes
			<p>possibility of production growth by two harvests a year and their post-harvest behaviour, including threshing and cooking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has enabled CRAM and Apdip to: i) further strengthen the technical capacities in seed production, ii) produce within CRAM and ensure a seed volume required for the production of certified seeds, for specialised seed producers / CRAM and for other seed operators. • For the production of bean seeds, testing of new varieties was unsatisfactory due to weather conditions in 2017. Yield was low compared to forecast. The tests will have to be redone to be able to further analyze the results of the experiment (project duration was twelve months)
9	Madagascar CEFFEL	Optimisation of potato seed systems in Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing of fungicides: among six products that are available in the market, three of which are contact products and three are systemic, it has been established what the most effective ones in fighting mildew are. • Testing of haulm-stripping with the aim of obtaining as much seeds as possible in the 28-35mm range. Three potato varieties among the biggest ones, and most appreciated by consumers, have been tested. • It has now become possible for CEFFEL to produce reliable potato seeds of good quality (the right size, resistant to diseases, known origin) and, above all, suited to the needs of potato farmers. Nonetheless, one big task remains ahead: the creation of a seed label, in order to improve the marketing of the product on the domestic market, which is still being flooded by counterfeit seeds.
10 11	Peru AVA (1&2)	Legal assessment on how to transfer property rights of physical infrastructure situated on the land of the cooperatives/associations but that is not properly registered (followed by a second phase)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description of 32 plots in eight cooperatives that had problems. • Based on this analysis AVA started the administrative process of legalisation of the infrastructure and land in eight of these cooperatives. • In preparation for face-to-face meetings of the board with the officials that decide on property legalisation ESFIM research findings to compile a lobby document • The regional authorities reacted positively to this lobby, and started a process to accelerate the legalisation of the plots and infrastructure that they had supported in earlier projects. • It has been presented in different platforms (unions, municipalities, sector workshops) as an example to be replicated by other farmers' organisations in their specific areas of advocacy.
12 13	Uganda NUCAFE (1 & 2)	Investigating current and future drivers and barriers to youth participation in the coffee value chain in Uganda (followed by a second phase)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study found that the desire to make money and the need to be self-employed are strong factors that drove youth to participate in coffee. • First, access to credit was observed to influence youth participation. In fact a unit increase in credit to the youth would result in 0.95 units of youth participation in the value chain. • Second, increased access to land and belonging to farmers associations would also positively affect youth participation in the value chain
14	Vietnam TTHCA	Value chain analysis of acacia products, and financial assessment of FSC and PEFC certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been assessed if group certification by different forest certification schemes (Forest Stewardship Council, FSC, and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, PEFC) are financially viable and the outcomes are positive. • The results of the research are used to improve the awareness of TTHCA members and other actors in the value chain to understand their own role and to identify potential bottlenecks in improved production and certification. • The feasibility assessment is used as input for the decision-making by TTHCA about whether to apply for group certification and if so, which certification scheme is the most advantageous. The results also served as an example for other cooperatives and groups of small scale forest owners.

#	Country FO	Research topic	Main outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acacia is the most common and preferred species for smallholder land owners, producers and traders. • Intensive cultivated plantations can get higher benefit than extensive model. • With the cooperation inside the chain, forest owners can get more profit because of the higher price received. • It became clear there are various channels with different cm diameter (required for export for example).
15	West Africa ROPPA	Regional Fund for the Financing of Family Farms and Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers in West Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the ESFIM study ROPPA collected sufficient relevant data on how the existing national and regional funds, the way they are actually conceived, would be able to foster the modernisation of the family farms and respond to their ambition to be better integrated in the markets in order to 'feed the African towns'. • The difficulties national and regional funds for agricultural finance face came to the surface by the outcomes of the research, i.e. the demand for agricultural finance is not well-structured and there is an incoherent dialogue between supply and demand. • The recommendations of the study have been used by ROPPA to dialogue and lobby with the policy makers and the people in charge of the funding institutions so as to incite for innovative strategies and mechanisms that help to realise this ambition

Introduction

1

A photograph of a herd of brown goats with long, shaggy hair and curved horns. The goats are in a lush green field with trees in the background. A white circle is drawn around two goats in the center-right of the frame. The number '1' is overlaid in white text within this circle.

Introduction

This report concerns the ESFIM programme implemented from 2015 till 2018. It provides a detailed overview of the implementation, the process and the main outcomes. Target groups are AgriCord and the agri-agencies of its' network, the ministry of Foreign affairs and other research institutes supporting FO and promoting collaborative research in the context of FO. In addition to accountability goal, the report aims to share the learnings on the process of ESFIM to improve the research support fund as a tool in facilitating demand-driven action research.

ESFIM Research Support Fund was launched in 2015 and was part of the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Empowering Smallholder Farmers in Markets (ESFIM) programme supports farmer organisations through collaborative research in a farmer-driven process. This report reflects the outputs and implementation process of the ESFIM Research Support Fund implemented in the period 2015-2018. The ESFIM Research Support Fund is part of the Farmer Fighting Poverty (FFP)¹ programme of AgriCord² which is financed by the Government of Netherlands. The general objective of the FFP is to contribute to poverty reduction, strengthening the capacities and enhancing the operations of the organisations of smallholder' farmers in developing countries.

ESFIM aims to strengthen the position of smallholder farmers in marketing their produce

The goal of the ESFIM Research Support Fund is to strengthen the position of farmers, particularly smallholders, in resolving problems related with the marketing of their produce. Farmers' organisations are the key social actor that is supported. Its agency and capacity is the central focus of the research

partnership. ESFIM used the term 'Collaborative Research' for this approach of demand-driven research, through a farmers' organisation led process of formulating, selecting and backstopping of local research assignments for activities that they see as priorities for smallholder empowerment in markets.

The final objective is to strengthen their members' capacities to formulate feasible, evidence-based propositions for changes in key elements in the institutional environment that empower smallholder farmers in markets.

Four calls for research proposals have been distributed among the supported farmers' organisations in the AgriCord network

Four calls for proposals were distributed among the supported farmers' organisations in the AgriCord network. WUR managed the process of proposal selection and backstopping. The submitted draft research profiles were reviewed by the ESFIM Evaluation Committee. Farmers' organisations with an approved draft research proposal were requested to develop a more comprehensive and detailed final research proposal. In the stage of developing the final research proposal, the farmers' organisations received support from WUR researchers to improve and fine-tune the specific research questions and methodologies. Subsequently, WUR researchers also supported the implementation of the research and analysis of the data. The proposals submitted by the farmers' organisations were rarely completely new but usually reflected a longer term effort of the farmers' organisation embedded in the local market and political dynamics.

¹ See the online short version of FFP:
https://www.agricord.org/sites/default/files/013585_farmersfightingpoverty_8p_eng_lowres.pdf

² Agricord is a non-profit development alliance that has official development assistance (ODA) status with the OECD. As an alliance, AgriCord operates via its members, the agri-agencies, and supports on average more than 200 farmers' organisations per year in more than 50 developing countries.

15 Research projects have been implemented among 13 farmers' organisations in 11 countries

Following the four calls for proposals a total number of 15 research projects from 11 countries and 13 FOs have been implemented. The research projects were finalised by December 2018. Research projects were done alongside the following topics:

- Inclusive value chain development,
- Input supply improvement,
- Access to finance and
- Lobby and Advocacy.

ESFIM Research Support Fund integrated lessons from an earlier ESFIM (Phase I) which started in 2017

The ESFIM Research Support fund implemented between 2015 and 2018 followed from an earlier ESFIM (phase I) which officially started in 2007 at the initiative of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Agrinatura, the European network of research institutes and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Farmers' organisations elaborated a research-for-advocacy proposal geared to influence key policies or institutional arrangement that affected smallholder market access. ESFIM aimed to create a broad collaboration among farmers' organisations, research institutes and local experts that would feed the advocacy activities of IFAP at the global level and the national farmers' organisations (NFOs) in developing countries. Based on participatory definition of research priorities, collaborative and comparative research was set up. This research was supported by Agrinatura and funded by IFAD and the Dutch government. Based on the evaluation and learnings of this phase an improved research support set-up and structure was introduced in 2015: the Research Support Fund.

Smallholder farmer households account for 60% of global agriculture but face many challenges related to market access

According to Poole (FAO 2017) smallholder agriculture is one of the principal economic occupations in the world - smallholder households account for 70% of global agriculture - and is the main source of income and employment for the world's poor who live in rural areas. It is often more than an economic activity, for many it's a way of life. However, smallholders face many challenges in reaching their potential and accessing markets. One of the key

challenges is the lack of access to markets. Smallholder agriculture is characterised by small volumes of variable quality that reflect limited access to inputs and finance, low levels of investment and limited access to, and knowledge of, improved agricultural technologies and practices. Inadequate infrastructure, high costs of storage and transportation and non-competitive markets also militate against production of a marketable surplus (Arias et al., 2013:6).

Farmers' organisations and collective action are key drivers for sustainable change and improving the situation for smallholder farmers

Organised farmers in developing countries can strongly influence society and the wider economy. The Farmers Fighting Poverty (FFP) theory of change – the context in which ESFIM has been initiated - sees strong farmers' organisations and cooperatives as active contributors to economic, social and political development. With the aim of reducing poverty and hunger, FFP supports smallholder family farms and their business ambitions in terms of access to markets, technical assistance, credit and quality inputs. Collective action through farmers' organisations can reduce costs, encourage innovation and improve access to land. It also gives bargaining power and access to market information, and helps to overcome inequalities faced by young and female farmers. All activities under the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme are designed to ensure financial, environmental and social sustainability (AgriCord 2018).

Strengthening FO and smallholder members by evidence based policies

Many countries do have an agricultural policy and poverty reduction strategy that explicitly supports the inclusion of smallholders in markets. However, smallholders often have limited power even when they are represented in the policy arena. Often farmer representatives and smallholders lack the information and capacity to play a role in a pro-active manner. The agricultural policies therefore often fall short or lack a positive impact at smallholder level (Ton 2008 and Ton and Procter 2014). Evidence and creative thinking is needed in the policy design of effective rules and regulations and effective institutional arrangement to empower smallholders in markets.

Research to bridge the gap between the research community and FO

Research plays a role in feeding this thinking to provide smallholders and FOs with information and analysis. Research and discussions about enabling policies and innovative institutional mechanisms for smallholder market access can and should also take place at FO level. However, there is a gap between the research community, FOs and smallholders. ESFIM aims to bridge this gap by creating an interface to support FOs in obtaining more accurate and timely evidence on policy proposals and topics that matter most to them and their members.

Collaborative research to ensure a demand-driven process and local research capacity building

ESFIM is convinced of the power and effectiveness of a demand-driven nature of research. As such it not only prevents the imposition of research preferences by researchers on the FO but it also creates ownership of the research and enables to build research capacity within the FOs and their local research counterparty.

ESFIM provided input for policy to improve the performance of FOs

The research projects cover a rich variety of research themes, sectors and regions and as such provide highly relevant information for policy makers and practitioners. Through the ESFIM programme, the power of FOs themselves to articulate and address their needs, to work effectively with research organisations and to advocate for change has become more clear.

Research capacity has been built among FOs and their local counterparts

The participating farmers' organisations have not only benefited from the actual outcomes of the research, but have also built research capacity and established strategic partnerships. We are very happy and proud to conclude that the ESFIM Research Support Fund has been able to strengthen the position of farmers, particularly smallholders, in resolving problems related with the marketing of their produce. We strongly advocate the importance of research and continued research to play a role in supporting the position of smallholder farmers with information and analysis.

ESFIM adds value but an improved modality is needed in the near future

We are convinced of the need for a follow-up on ESFIM Phase 2 which integrates our insights for improvements. The main concern about the current modality was the limited scope for interacting with the local researchers contracted by the FO after input in the design of the research methodology and terms of references had been given. The budget assigned to the backstopping function did not allow international travel and face-to-face meetings, and was therefore largely done by Skype conferences and email. The local researcher/consultant was subcontracted by the FO with a detailed planning and budget, not by WUR. This extra layer made it difficult for the backstopping WUR researcher, not in the least because the research often took more than a year, especially when the contact person in the FO had changed during this period.

Reading guide

Chapter 2 starts with a short context and background description and is followed by a description of and reflection on the ESFIM process (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 and 5 provide the research overview and main results. Chapter 6 shortly reflects the write workshop that took place in November 2018 and is followed by Chapter 7 reflecting satisfaction and appreciation of ESFIM. The final concluding remarks and recommendations are presented in Chapter 8. All research outputs are available upon request. Please see the ESFIM website for more information and background (www.esfim.org).



2

Context
and background

Context and Background

2.1 The birth of ESFIM in 2007

ESFIM started in 2007 at the initiative of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Agrinatura, the European network of research institutes and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). In the ESFIM programme, farmers' organisations elaborated a research-for-advocacy proposal geared to influence key policies or institutional arrangement that affected smallholder market access. ESFIM aimed to create a broad collaboration among farmers' organisations, research institutes and local experts that would feed the advocacy activities of IFAP at the global level and the national farmers' organisations (NFOs) in developing countries. By doing so, it would strengthen the voice of smallholder farmers in developing countries within IFAP and feed its advocacy agenda. IFAP's membership in developing countries was dominated by organisations of large farmers, partly due to the high membership fees, and partly by the lack of smallholder specific and pro-active proposals for change that would encourage smallholder organisations to join. Alternative platforms had emerged (especially VIA CAMPESINA) that challenged IFAP's role as farmer representative at global level (Borras Jr 2010). This process of reform and inclusion of smallholder farmers' organisations in IFAP was a priority of the IFAP presidency and supported by Dutch donor funding through the various agri-agencies of AgriCord.

NFOs defined research priorities in participatory national workshops

ESFIM organised a round of participatory national workshops with farmers' organisations and other stakeholders in the prioritised countries to identify issues and policies that would improve market access of smallholders, and develop an advocacy agenda to influence related policies and institutions.

Collaborative and comparative research was set up, supported by Agrinatura and funded by IFAD and the Dutch government

Based on these prioritised and articulated research-for-advocacy needs, collaborative research started both at IFAP-level (comparative research) and in each country (collaborative research). Table 2.1 gives an overview of the countries and NFOs involved. Local researchers were contracted by the NFOs and research support was given by Agrinatura. The research was funded by IFAD and the Dutch Government. For more information on this phase and the research outcomes we refer to the website (www.esfim.org) and the publication of Ton and Proctor 2013.

Table 2.1 Thematic focus of ESFIM Phase 1 (2007-2013)

Country – FO	Thematic focus
Benin – FUPRO	Maize sector policy; Value chain development
Bolivia – CIOEC	Preferential policies for collective marketing
Costa Rica – CMC	Farmers' markets; Food sovereignty legislation
India - FFA	Innovative market linkages; collective marketing
Kenya – KENFAP	Input vouchers; Warehouse Receipt System
Madagascar – CPM	Rural service provisioning
Malawi – NASFAM	Seed supply; Market information system
Peru – JNC	Taxation of cooperatives; Government procurement
Philippines – FFF	Electronic Commodity Trade
Uganda – UNFFE	NAADS rural advisory system
Uruguay – CAF	Cooperatives in national innovation policy
South Africa - Agri SA	Farmer mobilisation for collective action & Business Partnerships between farmers and agribusiness

2.2 Phase 2: the ESFIM Research Support Fund

ESFIM I articulated FOs to engage more pro-actively with the regional and national governments on issues that benefit smallholders' empowerment in markets. However, the quality of the research process differed widely between countries. A recurrent challenge was the decision making on budget allocation between contracted research support and member consultation processes. Because the NFOs were budget holder, in some countries the budget was used to fund activities that were important for strengthening the organisation (e.g. regional meetings that improved the communication and visibility of the NFO at grassroots level) but only marginally contributed to answering the research questions related to the advocacy strategy.

With the Research Support Fund an improved governance structure was set up with FOs in the drivers' seat

Based on the above-mentioned experience, in 2014 a follow-up programme was developed with a governance structure that harnessed the research-advocacy interface. This set-up would prevent or anticipate the tensions that resulted from the internal funding needs of NFOs (which could jeopardise the budget available for external research support) and at the same time would respect the demand-driven nature of the collaborative research and prevent the imposition of research preferences by researchers on the farmers' organisations (Ton, Grip et al. 2014). The Research Support Fund was born with earmarked funding including separate funding lines for externally contracted research assignments and for the participatory processes and advocacy. By doing so, the fund would reinforce the capacities of farmers' organisations to use external researchers or consultants to help them resolve problems experienced in their daily activities related with market access for smallholders.

Calls for research proposals were distributed among the AgriCord network of supported FOs

The ESFIM Research Support Fund started in 2015 aiming to fund around 17 research proposals with a budget of approximately EUR 25,000 per research. A call for research proposals was distributed among the farmers' organisations supported by agri-agencies in the AgriCord network. WUR managed the process of proposal selection and backstopping. The submitted

draft research proposals were reviewed by the ESFIM Evaluation Committee. Farmers' organisations with an approved draft research proposal were requested to develop a more comprehensive and detailed final research proposal. In the stage of developing the final research proposal, the farmers' organisations received support from WUR researchers to improve and fine-tune the specific research methodologies and research questions. Subsequently, WUR researchers also supported the implementation of the research and analysis of the data. The proposals submitted by the farmers' organisations were rarely completely new, but usually reflected a longer-term effort of the farmers' organisation embedded in the local market and political dynamics. Table 2.2 gives an overview of the range of research priorities that received ESFIM funding in this phase. A comparison between Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 shows that the farmers' organisations in this second phase are more often sub-national or commodity-specific farmers' organisations, while the first phase was directed to more broadly representative national farmers' organisations.

Table 2.2 Thematic focus of ESFIM Phase 2 (2015-2018)

#	Country – FO	Research topic
1	Albania - Adad Malore	Assessment of farmers' know-how, increase of awareness for local products in the region of Kukes, and support the strategic orientation of the organisation of smallholders
2	Bolivia - AOPEB	Fair and equitable taxation for smallholders in Bolivia
3	Burkina Faso - FEPAB	Improving the economic information system of the farmers' organisation to support members with information for decision-making
4	El Salvador - CCA	Market and value chain analysis of the national sugarcane sector
5	Indonesia - SPPQT	Value chain analysis for coffee to improve the market position of members of the farmers' organisation
6	Madagascar - CRAM	Improvement of regional seed production systems for rice and beans Madagascar
7	Madagascar - CEFFEL	Optimisation of potato seed systems in Madagascar
8	Nepal - DACF	Investigating the barriers of local and national marketing of potatoes, and development of effective marketing strategies
9	Nepal - SUNDARDEEP	Value chain analysis of carp supply chain in Nepal
10	Peru – AVA (+ second phase)	Legal assessment on how to transfer property rights of physical infrastructure situated on the land of the cooperatives/associations but that is not properly registered
11	Uganda – NUCAFE (+ second phase)	Investigating current and future drivers and barriers to youth participation in the coffee value chain in Uganda (followed by a second phase)
12	Vietnam - TTHCA	Value chain analysis of acacia products, and financial assessment of FSC and PEFC certification
13	West Africa - ROPPA	Regional Fund for the Financing of Family Farms and Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers in West Africa



3

The ESFIM Process

The ESFIM Process

Collaborative research: a participatory approach and set up

As explained earlier in the introduction section, the point of departure is collaborative research i.e. a participatory set-up based on a demand (FO) driven research question and operationalisation. Triangulation was created between the FO, the local researcher and the WUR researcher involved. The FO defined the research priority and methodology and proposed the local research party.

Action research is used to focus on practical problem-solving, knowledge expansion and enhancing competences

ESFIM is characterised by action research. Action research assists in practical problem-solving. Simultaneously, it also expands scientific knowledge and enhances the competencies of the respective actors. In action research, the ultimate objective is in the perceived functionality of chosen actions to produce desirable consequences for an organisation (Gupta 2019).

Four calls for proposals launched and 43 research proposals submitted

In 2015 the first call for proposals was distributed to the farmers' organisations through the network of Agri-Agencies (AAs) of AgriCord. In 2016 a 2nd, 3rd and 4th call for proposals have been distributed. All submitted proposals were formally evaluated by the evaluation committee consisting of four senior WUR researchers. By the end of 2016, the maximum amount of 17 proposals was selected and FOs were invited for submitting a final proposal. FOs whose proposals were rejected received extensive feedback and argumentation on the reasons for not being eligible. Of the 17 proposals, 8 proposals have been accepted and started with implementation in 2016. See Appendix 1 for the realised planning. The remainder of this chapter presents the process of and a reflection on the implementation of ESFIM.

Lean research proposals were completed by stakeholder information to select proposals with most potential

The research proposals were set up in a format that was made simple and lean enough to suit the needs of farmers' organisations without highly-skilled staff (see Appendix 3). This information was used to select the proposals with most potential to empowering smallholder farmers in markets through collaborative demand-driven research. FOs were requested to share more details, especially on the specific research questions, proposed methods and related budget needs. The forms were not the only information available to the ESFIM Evaluation Committee. The AAs of AgriCord often had a multi-year relation with these farmer groups and functioned as a filter that separated proposals written by consultants for weak or non-existent organisations that only activate in response to donor opportunities, a torny problem faced by other funds in the past (Llorenti, Espejo et al. 2005, Ton 2007). Several of the research proposals included support for grassroots participation and deliberation through AgriCord's FACT methodology, the Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool (Gouët 2013), which nicely complemented ESFIM's focus on the external research and consultancy support. WUR researchers were selected with the right thematic knowledge and language skills for backstopping each full proposal; in total 9 'northern' researchers were involved in the backstopping of the 15 funded proposals.

FOs faced difficulties in writing research proposal

For many FOs developing and managing a research project requires a different approach than managing projects with funding from Agri-Agencies or NGOs. Most FOs are involved in many day-to-day activities and for some FOs it has been difficult to allocate time to work on a research proposal or to be actively involved in research activities. More time and efforts were therefore required that foresaw to guide the FOs through the process of developing a research proposal. Also much time was spent on supporting the FOs in dealing with administrative and financial issues in the contracting stage. Matching and managing experts is the third time consuming challenge. For each research

proposal WUR contracted a (Northern) expert with competences (sector expertise, type of research, type of FO and language skills) that matched with the needs of the FO.

Evaluation committee scored and ranked all proposals

The submitted draft research proposals were reviewed by the ESFIM Evaluation Committee based on an evaluation form. The four committee members individually filled in the scores (0-10 scale with 10 being the highest) and argumentation per research (Appendix 4). The evaluations were combined and led to a final score per proposal. The highest average given to a proposal was 8.1 while the lowest score was 3.1. The proposals with a score of 5.5 and higher were considered eligible for submitting a final proposal. The other factors which were taken into consideration in the final decision were: i) Contribution to improve the market access of the FO-members; ii) Previous activities conducted to solve a particular problem before submitting a research proposal; iii) Perceived commitment and ownership of the FO.

Selected FO were requested to submit a full proposal incorporating the feedback of the evaluation committee

FOs with an approved draft research proposal were requested to develop a more comprehensive and detailed final research proposal. In the stage of developing the final research proposal, the farmers organisations received support from WUR researchers to improve and fine-tune the specific research methodologies and research questions.

Proposal covered a wide range of topics From improving understanding of market structures to opportunities for improved production systems

The 17 final research proposals covered a variety of topics and objectives. In general the following themes can be distinguished:

- Better understanding of market structures and perspectives of stakeholders within the supply chain (e.g. of a value chain including the market/consumer demands);
- Optimisation of production systems;
- Strengthening capacity within the FO for stronger positioning internally (towards members) or externally (e.g. towards private sector and government);

- Opportunities for (collective) marketing strategies and a potential strategy for the FO.

Output indicators defined by the ESFIM project management and approved by AgriCord

At the start of ESFIM output indicators have been defined to monitor the progress of the project. Examples of indicators are number calls distributed, the number of proposals received and approved, research outputs and total outreach. of Appendix 6 presents the indicators and the status per 31 March 2019.

Local research parties selected by FOs had to meet several requirements

The FOs selected a local research party who was subcontracted by the FO. The research entities differed between FOs and was either an independent consultant, a local research institute or a university. The suggested local research party had to meet several requirements. See Appendix 5 for the format to be filled in by the FO and the local research party. Below a shortlist of the requirements.

1. Track record with research activities in the domain of small holder farmers organisations and cooperatives.
2. Formally registered entity.
3. Fluency in speaking and writing in local languages.
4. Fluency in writing in English, French or Spanish.
5. Earlier engagement with collaborative research with farmers' organisations.
6. Show at least two examples of written research output.
7. Show indication of staff rates (should be reasonable in context).

Nine WUR researchers involved for backstopping FO research

The evaluation committee approached (WUR) researchers for the eligible research proposal. The WUR researcher had to meet several criteria. The main criteria were i) experience in working with FOs in another context ii) expertise of the research theme and iii) managing the language of the country involved. In total nine researchers were involved of which six from WUR and three on a consultancy basis. One researcher had to be replaced as he left WUR. In some cases, the researcher had previously worked in the country and with the farmers' organisations that were supported (e.g. on the proposals of the

Bolivian policy to economic farmers' organisations), in other cases it was the thematic focus of the research that attracted them (e.g. on the systems of potato seed production).

Unfortunately four research projects had to be stopped

In 2017 it was decided – in collaboration with AgriCord and supporting AA - to stop four preliminary accepted and approved ESFIM proposals/research projects, FUPRO, URCPA, FCU and Baabahuu Jici. Before taking the final decision, there has been clear and transparent communication with AgriCord and the agri-agencies involved. The selection process took a lot of effort. Much time was spent coaching and supporting the final proposals and making all planning, budgeting and contractual arrangements. The FUPRO and URCPA proposals and relationships have been stopped due to lack of commitment and communication issues. Based on this situation the ESFIM Evaluation Committee was not confident that the implementation phase of these proposals would be a success. The project team, together with the involved Agri-Agency, has tried its best to find a solution. However, after several discussions and consultations, cancellation was considered as the only option. For FCU Ethiopia it appeared that the topic proposed by the FO to conduct research on (comparison of fertiliser distribution systems) was too sensitive to continue with. The situation deteriorated, tensions increased among stakeholders involved and the study could jeopardise the reputation and position of the FO and the local researcher involved. For Baabahuu Jici in Mali, communication took a lot of time and very sadly the FO officer responsible for the ESFIM study deceased in 2017, which also hampered progress and made the FO prioritise other issues.

A follow up phase for AVA and Nucafe

Budget allowed for two new research projects. Because the remaining time was limited, WUR and AgriCord jointly decided to invite FOs who had finalised a research for a follow up phase. AVA (Peru) and Nucafe (Uganda) – AVA finalised in 2017 and Nucafe early 2018- reacted spontaneously in implementing a second phase alongside the same research questions and theme. This enabled them to follow up on the results of the first research. Table 4.1 (next chapter) provides an overview of the research projects including topic, country, sector of study and methods applied.

Research overview

4

A photograph showing a community kitchen in a rural setting. Several people are cooking in large metal pots over open fires. The scene is outdoors, with a dirt wall on the left and a building in the background. A large white number '4' is overlaid on the image.

Research overview

A total number of 15 research projects have been successfully implemented and finalised by the end of 2018

Table 4.1 gives a more detailed overview of the research projects implemented. The subsequent sections dive into the characteristics of the different researches implemented (e.g. themes, methods applied) and of the participating FOs (e.g. regions, level of operation).

Table 4.1 Overview of the research projects

#	FO	Country	Sector	Study	Methods
1	ADAD	Albania	Local products	VC-Analysis	Mixed
2	AOPEB	Bolivia	Advocacy Financial efficiency	Tax regulations & financial efficiency	FACT
3	FEPA/B	Burkina Faso	Cereals, fruits and vegetables	Information needs and tools	Interviews Workshops
4	CCA	EI Salvador	Sugarcane	VC-analysis	
5	SPPQT	Indonesia	Coffee	VC-analysis	Mixed
6	CRAM/ Apdip	Madagascar	Rice/ beans	Varieties and VC-analysis	On-farm tests Production
7	CEFFEL	Madagascar	Potato	Varieties and VC-analysis	On-station tests On-farm tests Reflection workshop (traceability, production)
8	Sundardeep	Nepal	Carp	VC-analysis	Mixed
9	DACF	Nepal	Potato	VC-Analysis	Mixed
10-11	AVA	Peru	Advocacy	Legalisation of land titles	FACT
12-13	Nucafe	Uganda	Coffee and youth	VC-Analysis	Mixed
14	TTHCA	Vietnam	Acacia	VC-Analysis	Mixed
15	ROPPA	West Africa	Agriculture	Funds study	Mixed

Majority of research projects focussed on inclusive value chain development

Clustering the research projects per topic shows that inclusive value chain development has been the research theme of the majority of organisations. Other areas of interest were to improve input supply, access to finance and lobby and advocacy. See below a list of the research themes.

Inclusive value chain development

- Market and value chain analysis of the national sugar cane sector, C.C.A., EI Salvador
- Investigating current and future drivers and barriers to youth participation in the coffee value chain in Uganda - two phases, NUCAFE; Uganda
- Value chain analysis of acacia products, and financial assessment of FSC and PEFC certification, TTHCA, Vietnam
- Assessment of farmers' know-how, increase of awareness for local products in the region of Kukes, and support the strategic orientation of the organisation of smallholders, Adad Malore, Albania
- Value chain analysis for coffee to improve the market position of members of the farmers' organisation, SPPQT, Indonesia
- Value chain analysis of carp supply chain in Nepal, Sundardeep, Nepal
- Investigating the barriers of local and national marketing of potatoes, and development of effective marketing strategies DACF; Nepal

Input supply improvement

- Improvement of regional seed production systems for rice and beans, CRAM, Madagascar
- Optimisation of potato seed systems, CEFFEL, Madagascar

Access to finance

- Regional Fund for the Financing of Family Farms and Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers, ROPPA, West Africa

Lobby and Advocacy

- Legal assessment on how to transfer property rights of physical infrastructure that is situated on the land of farmers but that is not registered on their names followed by a second phase. (AVA; Peru)
- Fair and equitable taxation for smallholders in Bolivia (AOPEB; Bolivia)
- Improving the economic information system of the farmers' organisation to support members in their decision-making, FepaB, Burkina Faso

A variety of methods have been used to answer research questions.

A variety of methods has been applied corresponding to the variety in topics and objectives of the research projects. Following Table 4.1 earlier presented, below we elaborate a bit further on the methods used.

FACT: Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool (AVA and AOPEB)

The main method used during the research of AVA and AOPEB is FACT (Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool). FACT is a method of policy advocacy used with farmers' organisations where the members (cooperatives) are actively involved from the start. The research work focused on finding solutions and building arguments for the presentation of a proposal for solutions. Using FACT, they have started a process of analysis of the situation. The participatory research consisted of an exhaustive recollection of data from the organisations by a group of expert consultants in order to guarantee the relevance of the proposal that was formulated. After this, the proposals were socialised and validated.

Production site & demonstration plots (CRAM and CEFFEL)

For the technical research topics (fungicides and haulm-stripping) field tests took place on research stations, test plots and on farmers.

Qualitative methods

In the research with only qualitative methods applied, often the study started with a desk study on existing literature and documents. In many cases primary data was collected with in-depth interviews with the stakeholders involved (e.g. the value chain actors, farmer members and key-experts). Also focus group discussions were held to discuss certain themes more in-depth, to gather new information and/or to interpret or validate findings from the interviews. Many researches finalised with the organisation of participatory workshops either internally (with members and FO board members) and/or externally (e.g. with government officials).

Mixing of methods

Other research projects implemented a mixed method approach, i.e. combining quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. Most often applied are structured surveys among producers (members and non-members) and other value chain actors. The surveys were complemented with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

Participation from ten different countries with FOs operating at either local, national or regional levels and in various commodities

FOs from ten different countries participated when we consider ROPPA from Burkina Faso (Figure 4.1). Four continents were represented: Africa (Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Uganda) and even West Africa as a region (e.g. ROPPA), Latin America (Bolivia, El Salvador, Peru), Asia (Indonesia, Nepal, Vietnam and Europe (Albania). The FOs operate at different levels with the majority at national level (ten) (Figure 4.2). The majority has lobby and advocacy as main activity in addition to capacity building and technical support (e.g. training farmer members) and marketing of produce (Figure 4.3). There is a huge variety among the commodities FOs are active in. Figure 4.4 presents the commodities at stake. Three FOs have a sector focus on potato (seed) and fruit. Cereals and rice are commodities that two other FOs focus on. The other FOs are active in different sectors varying from acacia to cocoa to apiculture (Figure 4.4). The total outreach of the participating FOs in members is 1,333,401. This figure is somewhat biased by the outreach of ROPPA (i.e. 1,000,000). A total number of 280 member cooperatives are reached by the research.

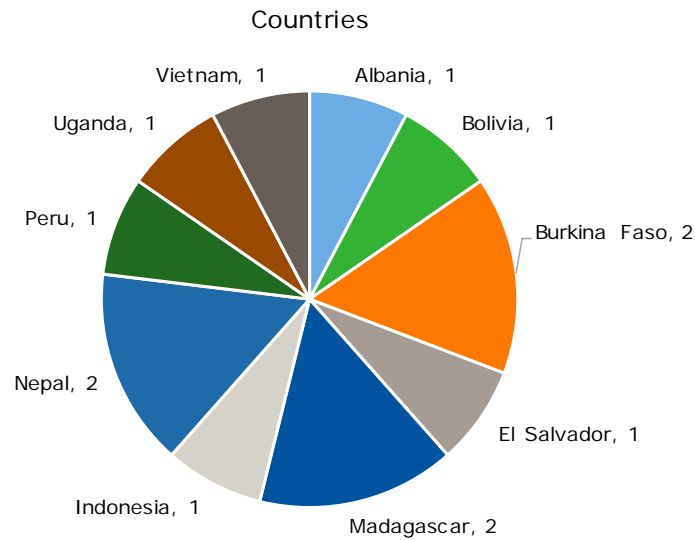


Figure 4.1 ESFIM countries participating FOs

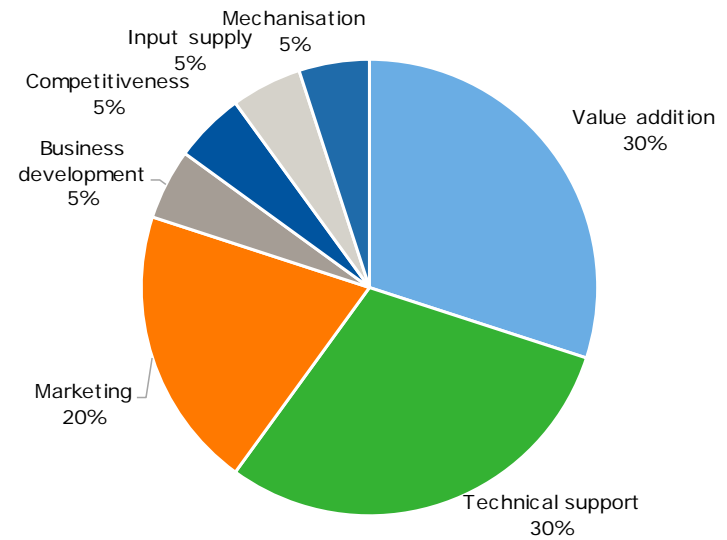


Figure 4.3 ESFIM main activities participating FOs

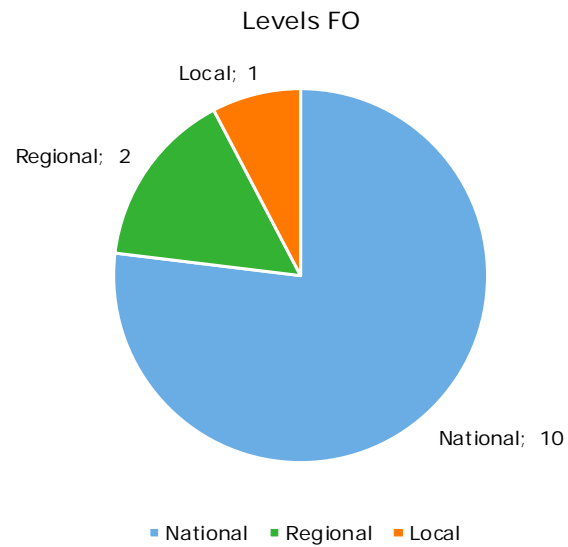


Figure 4.2 ESFIM levels participating FOs

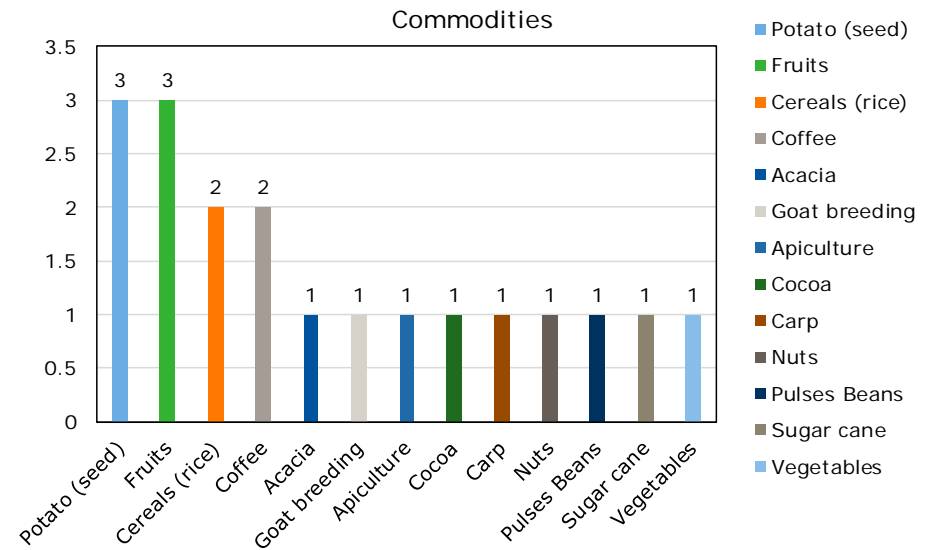


Figure 4.4 ESFIM commodities participating FOs



5

Research
results

Research Results

This chapter presents the main results of all research projects. The research results are aggregated for all research projects into the following subsections of Section 5.1:

- Main outcomes
- Contribution to FO policy
- Member benefits
- Research agenda FO
- Lessons learnt

The subsequent Section (5.2) gives a narrative description of the ESFIM process and its relevance. In Section 5.3 per case, a more detailed description is given of all research projects including research question(s), methodology applied and main outcomes. All research outcomes are available upon request.

5.1 An overview of 15 supported research projects

Main outcomes

The research has been useful for the organisations in different ways. First of all, ESFIM has made it possible to establish a working relationship between FOs and researchers. Also, existing partnership frameworks have been strengthened. Moreover, researchers have started to adapt their work closely to the needs of FOs. The FOs are now in a better position to negotiate research activities with the pertinent institutes and universities.

Through action-research, researchers and producers each fulfil their role during the research processes, for instance when studying consumer demand. It is a process of learning and sharing between both parties – but also for other actors in the value chains – and a starting point for continued collaboration in the future, and/or for replication in other regions with similar opportunities. ESFIM made it possible to respond to several topics at different links in the

value chain, for the benefit of smallholders that often are marginalised. The different research projects realised in the context of this process have allowed the FOs and their members to identify voices of change. Some of these changes are already being made reality. There is still work to do for the strengthening of the position of smallholders. But now leads have been established for reinforcing the partnership between researchers and producers.

Specific outcomes and insights as distilled from the final reporting are listed below. The research projects offer insights in and knowledge on:³

1. The potential for basic seeds production by and the potential for participatory research on varieties of rice and beans. With the results, two interesting new variety of rice are identified which are very much appreciated by our member farmers.
2. The best fungicides and best timing for haulm stripping including traceability regulation.
3. The potential for increased production and productivity of the members and for the added value and profitability.
4. The high training need among member farmers (*either production, post-harvest handling or value addition*).
5. The strong need for disaster risk reduction plans and strategy and training of fish farmers.
6. That farmers can learn about consumer preferences and are able to prepare modern value chain products with minimal equipment.
7. The importance of cooperation and collective action along the value chain and of strong farmer (groups) (*governance and coordination important - fragmentation and informal chains*).
8. The dominant role of middlemen hampers any progress. Member producers have little to no power at all.
9. The reasons behind youth migration and the possibilities for including them (e.g. credit access).

³ All outputs are available upon request

10. How to conduct a market assessment and actors were sensitised about the market potential of local products (goat meat, honey, chestnut, potato, plum).
11. The information needs of different target groups which were mapped and tools were developed to regularly collect, process and disseminate this information.
12. The difficulties national and regional funds for agricultural finance face came to the surface by the outcomes of the research.

Contribution to FO policy was challenging for some FOs, others have very concrete examples of improved policies based on the research outcomes

The study provided for important information, i.e. evidence-based input for policy. Knowledge that is needed for change has been generated and the FO is in the process of driving that change. Also contacts and alliances outside the organisation (public authorities, researchers, private enterprise) were generated. Although the concrete translation of the research findings into an FO strategy and operations seems challenging for some FOs there are some concrete examples:

1. CRAM has decided to add two new rice varieties to its catalogue, and to continue the production of basic seeds. Apdip has decided to continue testing of new bean varieties.
2. The CEFFEL study increased capabilities to prevent diseases in the potato production chain and resulted in a training curriculum and agreements on production regions.
3. The ADAD study contributed to its triennial plan for the Kukes region, and is used for future advocacy.
4. FEPA/B used the results to improve its services to the members, to improve its M&E, and to contribute to FEPA/B's strategy, and to feed its advocacy.
5. ROPPA used the study results for advocacy about the functionality of agricultural finance funds, and for its five-year plan.

Lobby and Advocacy impact at smallholder level cannot be measured yet, but members benefitted from training, improved varieties, information access and awareness raising

The final purpose of the research is that the members, the smallholder farmers, benefit from the outcomes. The impact of the research projects at

member level cannot be measured for all studies, especially the outcome used for lobby and advocacy. Although various policy briefs and lobby documents are available now and widely used in dialogue and discussion, it often needs a considerable amount of time before members actually feel the benefits. The FOs mentioned concrete member benefits:

1. There is now sector, market and value chain information available at member, cooperative and FO level.
2. For all members and member cooperatives, evidence based policy briefs / lobby documents are available now.
3. There has been a mobilisation of resources and other initiatives to access finance (MoU with bank for credit / loans).
4. There is awareness now on value chain dynamics, position of farmers and what they can do to improve their situation.
5. The local products of the farmer members are officially and formally marketed now. There is a brochure for interested parties, a list of farmers with local products, publicity through workshop, website and local media.
6. Concrete trainings and knowledge provision has been provided on
 1. Production and increased production
 2. On technical implementations and improving the supply chain
 3. On value added of produce (e.g. coffee, potato)
 4. On improved varieties (e.g. potato, rice, beans)
 5. On integrated pest management (e.g. how to fight mildew)

Research is now more prominent on the FO agenda

The capacity on research has increased at the FOs. FOs know the difference of research and a traditional NGO project. They are able to formulate research questions. They practiced in formulating recommendations and give concrete meaning to the research outcomes. There is smoother contact with researchers. Some FOs continue research or intend to do so. Others reinforced linkages or created partnerships between research centres or decided to do joint research. For some the research also raised new research topics and they formulated a research agenda.

Several delays were faced in the implementation and finalisation of the research projects

Overall, the collaboration between the FO, local researcher and the WUR expert was positive. However, the process of finalising proposals, contracting and implementation have taken considerably more time than expected.

AgriCord approved a formal extension of the ESFIM programme until 2018. Two research projects were finalised in 2017 and 13 mid or end 2018.

The challenges faced and balancing acts were needed

The current set-up indeed resulted in a demand-driven process, ownership and a research theme which has priority for the FO and its members. At the same time, this set up also resulted in managerial challenges, delays in communication, difficulties in aligning parties and interests. There was also the risk of a trade-off between quality and research based on scientific principles and the local FO being in the lead in combination with the limited time available for WUR backstopping.

The challenges all relate to finding a common process, understanding each others way of working and bridging cultural and geographical distances:

- Different approach: for many FOs developing and managing a research project requires a different approach than managing projects with funding from Agri-Agencies or NGOs. This different approach resulted in more time and efforts to guide the FOs in developing a good research proposal.
 - Distant communication: for some FOs and research partners it has been quite challenging to communicate only at a distance. Skype and email were the communication means used but overall it is recommended to have personal face to face contact at the start or mid-term of the project or when issues arise. In some cases it seemed necessary to have the possibility for further relation and trust building.
 - Local researcher/research institution: for the majority of FOs it is quite new to collaborate with a local research partner (and vice versa) either an individual or institute. It appears to be a challenge to balance between ownership of the FO and expertise, skills and requirements of the researcher.
 - Administration: much time was spent on supporting the FOs in dealing with administrative and financial issues. Financial transfers could only be done upon receipt and approval of the deliverables agreed upon in the contract, the financial reporting and the receipts of expenses.
- Commitment: For some FOs it related to a lack of commitment and priority. It took a long time before reactions were given, feedback of the researcher had been dealt with and before deliverables were submitted. This is understandable, yet something to be addressed in the future, given the day-to-day business FOs are involved in.
 - Unexpected local events: In other cases delays were faced due to external influences which cannot be controlled, e.g. floods, riots and tensions, elections, capacity of staff (turn-over, illness and even decease).

Lessons learnt

The main lesson for all is that research is not the same as running a project. It requires a different way of working and thinking. and Research should fulfil a specific need which cannot be met by the FO alone and/or by regular funding (e.g. from the government, AA or NGOs). Other lessons learnt can be summarised as follows:

1. Sufficient time and resources necessary --> the current projects' time frame is too short (e.g. variety testing period should last various years and consulting all member countries requires a lot time).
2. Face to face contact and regular visits of WUR backstopping researchers to FO, the local researcher on the spot.
3. Frequent meetings with the team / face to face or skype are prerequisite for success.
4. Enough capacity at FO to execute research --> do not underestimate research. An FO should be capable and assign human and financial resources and commitment in the long run.

5.2 Case descriptions

Assessment of the market potential for local agriculture products in the Kukes region, to strengthen the market position of smallholder farmers, Albania

ADAD Malore is a Producers' Organization focused on the mountainous areas of Albania, established in 1996. ADAD Malore has 600 members, and represents about 7,000 households. The PO focuses on capacity building including technical assistance and trainings, project support, consultation with governments and lobbying.

The Kukes region is known for several local products such as goat and sheep meat, plums and blueberries. The majority of farms in the Kukes region are small-scale, with limited production volumes. Collective action is limited due to a stigma towards cooperatives, low awareness on fruitful ways of cooperation and high barriers of communication between villages in the region. Identification of the market potential and promotion of these products is necessary to enhance the image and association with the Kukes region in the perception of consumers. With the support from ESFIM, ADAD Malore assessed the market potentials for particular agricultural products in the Kukes region, in order to strengthen the market position of smallholders. The outcomes were used to provide problem-solving recommendations for the members of ADAD Malore and producers groups.

A participatory (collaborative) strategy has been developed aiming to have a pathway that enhances the Kukes farmers' access to the market but also to create an environment to discuss policy related issues. The strategy has been developed in collaboration with the actors along the value chain as well as representatives of policy makers.

Main outcomes

- Farmer members have learned to conduct a market assessment of specific agricultural products in the Kukes region.
- Sensitisation took place of different actors on market potential for specific products in the Kukes region.

- Clear strategic directions have been created on the basis of joint work with the forward-looking strategic document to increase market access for local products to combat poverty.
- Increased awareness of consumer preferences and customer preferred types of attributes and sensitisation on how to increase consumer information by compiling a list of farmers who can produce typical products for the market.
- Members learned to showcase these attributes in product preparation and promotion.
- Direct sales opportunities were considered in the fairs. Exhibition preparations have taught ADAD members how to cooperate in preparing their products for the market.

Lessons learnt

- Farmers work from consumer demands in guiding their production.
- Farmers understand that the preparation of modern value chain products is not cutting-edge science, but a process that needs care and information.
- The close link between agricultural products and heritage in the broadest sense (environmental, traditional, cultural, ...).
- Important to build the capacity of women farmers to earn money through direct selling and to sell their products with their experience.



Photo 5.1 Fair on local agricultural products of the Kukes region (Source ADAD)

Fair and equitable taxation for smallholders in Bolivia

AOPEB (Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Bolivia) has 85 member organisations and represents about 70,000 households in Bolivia. AOPEB was founded in 1991 and focuses on the organic production, processing, marketing and capacity building to improve self-sufficiency and food sovereignty of farmers and indigenous communities in Bolivia.

Formally registered economic farmers' organisations need to pay value-added taxes on their sales, while they cannot get invoices from their suppliers (smallholder farmers) to lower this tax burden.

ESFIM supported research to analyse the tax regulations, reviewing past initiatives and new possibilities to create a mechanism (such as an improved Régimen Agrario Unificado – RAU) that reduces the tax burden of farmers organisations. This will finally improve their economic position compared with competing traders, who often work in the informal economy and pay no value-added tax.

Outcomes

- There now are data that can support an efficient proposal for improving the tax system of OECAs and OPEs, based on empirical analysis and the advice of experts in tax law and implementation of tax rulings.
- Four proposals of differential fiscal treatment have been generated, one for each sector. Nonetheless, the RAU proposal has had priority, since it will benefit all sectors and is not a structural change; rather, it will promote the recognition of the work of the associations and their marketing.
- Validation of a SMART proposal that reflects the interests and needs of OECAs and OPEs in terms of tax burdens and fiscal procedures, generating improvements in the situation.
- Generation of a plan of advocacy and communication, based on a systematic stakeholder analysis and the strategies were elaborated by the members.

The main outcome is that the proposal for differential fiscal treatment of small and medium producers has been considered in the conclusions of the economic section, in the national meeting of smallholders convened by president Evo Morales.

Some lessons learnt

- Socialise more amply the proposals (to more organisations) in order to achieve general representativeness in the relation with the decision-makers.
- Look for strategic alliances in government.
- Collect more information about the size of the population that can be taxed, their contribution to the Treasury and the potential to increase the number of taxpayers.

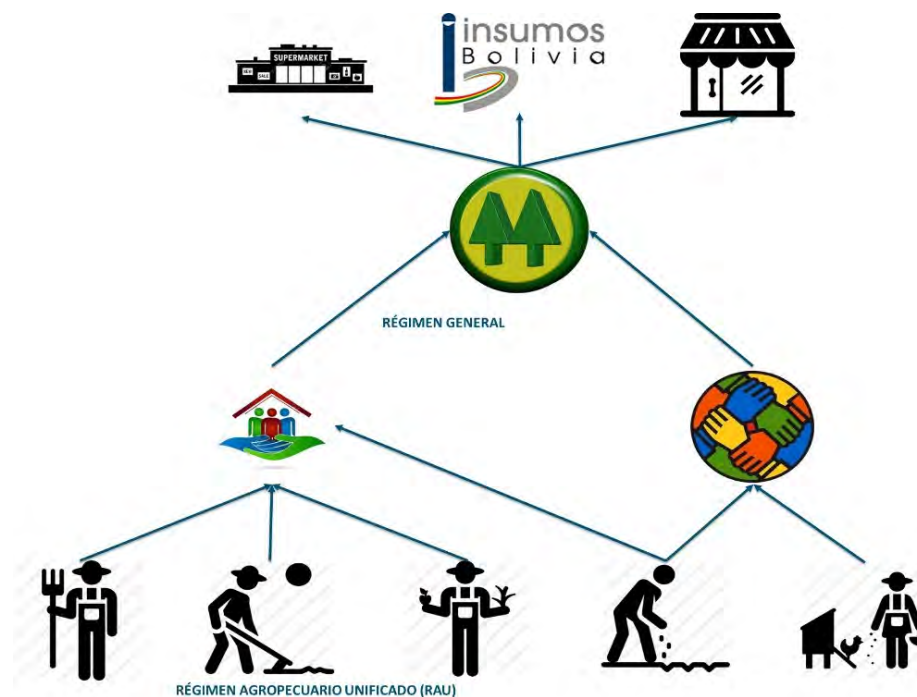


Photo 5.2 Visualisation of the process (Source AOPEB)

Improved economic information for FEPA/B in Burkina Faso

The national Federation of Agricultural Producers of Burkina Faso (FEPA/B) constitutes of 37 provincial unions, representing a total of 241,261 group members in 6,133 base groups (a little over 50% of them women). FEPA/B aims to reinforce the economic services for its members and has created two sectoral unions, one for “fruits and vegetables”, the other for “dry cereals”. It runs programmes on business advisory services for family farms, collective purchase of inputs and group marketing of agricultural products (including warehousing).

FEPA/B has access to a variety of economic data about markets, prices, production, farm economics. However, it experienced difficulties in organising this variety of data in an accessible way and in turning it into useful information. FEPA/B wanted to better exploit its data to improve its economic services to members and to strengthen its economic advocacy. Therefore, the research project first assessed the current use of data and information within FEPA/B. Subsequently, it proposed tools for data processing and presentation that FEPA/B can use for its services to members and for its economic advocacy.

Main outcomes

A thorough and in-depth synthesis of information needs and related strategies based on two types of information: those of an economic or commercial nature and those of a technical nature.

Main conclusions

- The discovery an information system for the FO including its achievements, its potential and its weaknesses.
- The discovery of a diversity of information needs related to the plurality of actors involved.
- The need for a multidisciplinary team.

FEPA/B is proud of

- To have experience with collaborative Research.
- Discovery of an information (monitoring) tool applicable to the FEPA/B context.
- Established dialogue between field (practice) and research
- The constant concern for the sustainability of the monitoring(tool).

Lessons learnt

- to never conduct action research with producers during the rainy season.
- Not to select members of the research team who are too busy.



Photo 5.3 Fruits and vegetables and storage (Source FEPA/B)

Market and value chain analysis of the sugar cane sector in El Salvador

The Central Cooperativa Agropecuaria is a cooperative society with limited liability (Spanish acronym: CCA de RL), legally established on April 27th, 1994. It is a second-tier organisation with eleven member cooperatives that are situated in six different municipalities along the coastal area of the La Paz department. Nine of them are agricultural cooperatives, and two are savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCOs). Eight agricultural cooperatives produce sugar cane and one produces grains; all of them consist of family farmers. Seven have collective management of a small herd of dairy cows. The aggregate affiliation to the cooperatives amounts to 1,120 households.

ESFIM supported CCA in its research about the way the sugar cane value chain works, focusing on the identification of competitive and sustainable strategies that in time will strengthen egalitarian production and marketing. This has been done from the perspective of the development of a joint marketing strategy, enabling the CCA to set up processes of integration for the formulation and achievement of common goals.

Since sugar cane production is being internationally questioned because of its environmental consequences, the study included an environmental impact assessment of conventional production systems compared with an assessment of an alternative system of production that is certified by (one of) the main certification labels that exist in the country. The conditions were evaluated under which three production models can reduce their environmental impact: conventional production, certified non-organic production and organic production.

In view of the present conditions of the agricultural sector in El Salvador, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Sugar production is an activity that has functioned for a long time in El Salvador and, it would seem, will continue to do so.
- Sugar production is an economically profitable activity that makes an important contribution to the resilience of the cooperatives.
- The sugar sector has to look for a sustainable production path in order to stay competitive.
- The demands of the international market show that there is a tendency towards buying inputs produced under internationally accepted norms.

- A production-oriented mentality prevails with technical advisors and producers, focusing on cost reduction rather than on awareness of damage to the environmental balance.
- The agricultural workforce prefers, for reasons of ease in harvesting, to keep using traditional harvest methods.
- Certification should be realised within a context of entrepreneurial production with social responsibility.
- The government has to strengthen the producers and raise their consciousness, and should help to design strategies that make it possible to make progress in the “green harvest” programme that recently has been initiated, but still lacks wide acceptance.



Photo 5.4 Sugar cane, harvesting, burning and (Source CCA)

Analysis of the coffee market and supply chain in Indonesia

Serikat Paguyuban Petani Qaryah Thayyibah (SPPQT) is an Indonesian cooperative established in 1999 with the aim to improve the situation of the farmers in Central Java. SPPQT currently represents approximately 18,000 members.

Coffee production is an important source of income for many farmers in this region. Over 8,000 farmers from 13 districts in Central Java supply approximately 4 tons of coffee annually. However, the coffee producers sell their coffee to middlemen who define the (relatively low) coffee price. Farmers are not capacitated to access the market directly and perceive a power imbalance. In addition, they do not add value to their coffee. No sorting or grading is done and knowledge of the market and consumer demands is lacking.

SPPQT does currently not play an active role in supporting its coffee farmer members and in collective marketing. It lacks up to date knowledge on the coffee value chain its members are part of. They would like to explore the possibilities for a viable business plan for collective marketing, meeting the demand of the consumers and for improving the livelihoods of the farmers by providing them with more expertise, skills and, therefore, power.

With ESFIM a clear understanding of the coffee value chain a profound value chain analysis has been generated, incorporating the current position of the farmers, the consumer demands and the potential role of SPPQT in supporting its members and in defining a strategy to improve the livelihoods of the coffee producers in the region.

Main outcomes

It is learnt that there are still plenty of coffee smallholders who do not have adequate knowledge on post-harvest handling including processing their coffee product to add its value, as the result the price they get is much lower compared to the price at potential buyer level. Therefore, the role of cooperative is really essential in helping coffee smallholders to improve their income by facilitating training programmes to improve the product quality as well as connecting farmers to the potential markets.

Furthermore, the results of this research have given a clear description about a series of characteristics of the coffee business actors starting from the farmers to the final consumers. All of this information has helped us to consider what steps we should take in order to be able to improve the welfare of our farmers as well as the coffee business atmosphere.



Photo 5.5 Buyer Interview in Kopi Bejo, Temanggung (Source SPPQT-UNS)

Optimisation of potato seed systems in Madagascar

CEFFEL (Conseil – Expérimentation – Formation en Fruits et Légumes) in Madagascar consists of 11 members, that represent 170,000 families. CEFFEL provides training sessions about production techniques and has a centre for trials and experiments. Furthermore, CEFFEL also trains agricultural advisors, and supports its members with economic information.

Potato productivity on Madagascar is on the decline as a result of bacterial wilt (*Ralstonia solanacearum*) and late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*). This affects the income of potato producers, threatens their livelihoods and negatively impacts on food security in the country. With ESFIM, CEFFEL together with researchers and its members, conducted parallel tests on the research station (3) and on farms (34), in three regions of Madagascar and found solutions to manage the diseases and to mitigate their impact on potato productivity and the corresponding income of potato producers. They explored and communicated:

- effective strategies for integrated late blight management, by combining minimal pesticides regimes with varietal resistance;
- a professionalisation of seed potato sector through piloting of pragmatic seed potato traceability and market organisation;
- locally tailored decision making tools for the timing of planting and harvesting of seed potatoes.

The goal of CEFFEL is to increase the income of the producers. The research results contributed to the strategy needed to achieve this. The results of the fight against the mildew have been disseminated among the producers of potatoes for consumption; choosing the right fungicide product enables them to reduce incidence. And using the systemic product allows them to reduce costs.

For the seed producers, the implementation of a functional traceability system provided certainty about the produced seeds; and the possibility to produce seeds of the size sought by potato producers will have a positive impact on quality. The presence of internal regulations that govern the multiplication of seed within CEFFEL makes it possible to better manage their network of seed producers.

Main outcomes

- Testing of fungicides: among six products that are available in the market, three of which are contact products and three are systemic, it has been established what the most effective ones in fighting mildew are.
- Testing of haulm-stripping with the aim of obtaining as much seeds as possible in the 28-35mm range. Three potato varieties among the biggest ones, and most appreciated by consumers, have been tested.

Conclusions

It has now become possible for CEFFEL to produce reliable potato seeds of good quality (the right size, resistant to diseases, known origin) and, above all, suited to the needs of potato farmers. Nonetheless, one big task remains ahead: the creation of a seed label, in order to improve the marketing of the product on the domestic market, which is still being flooded by counterfeit seeds.



Photo 5.6 Potato seed systems in Madagascar (Source CEFFEL)

Improvement of regional seed production systems for rice and beans in Madagascar

CRAM (Cercle Régional des Agriculteurs Malagasy Fianarantsoa) was established in 1996 and has 250 members. CRAM focuses on the production of quality seeds for rice. CRAM collaborates closely with a sister farmers' organisation APDIP, which is specialising in the production of quality bean seed. The farmers' organisations support their seed producers with advice on production technology, organisation of quality assurance, and the planning and marketing of the seed. For both rice and beans, improved varieties are being released by international and national agricultural research.

To assure that Malagasy farmers can benefit from this potential, local adaptation of varieties needs to be understood, effective mechanisms for variety in quality seed use promotion needs to be developed and business models for the economically sustainable production and marketing of quality seed are required. The ESFIM study has:

- tested the local adaptability of newly (pre-)released rice and bean varieties;
- Tried out business models for local cost-effective and sustainable production of early generation seed;
- Tested seed value chain organisation opportunities to professionalise the bean and rice seed production and marketing system.

Conclusions

- Testing in partnership with researchers has released two varieties (FOFIFA 160 and FOFIFA 183) appreciated by producers because of their performance related to productivity, early maturity (short cycle), a good reaction in early season with the possibility of production growth by two harvests a year and their post-harvest behaviour, including threshing and cooking.
- The project has enabled CRAM and Apdip to: i) further strengthen the technical capacities in seed production, ii) produce within CRAM and ensure a seed volume required for the production of certified seeds, for specialised seed producers / CRAM and for other seed operators.
- For the production of bean seeds, testing of new varieties was unsatisfactory due to weather conditions in 2017. Yield was low compared to forecast. The tests will have to be redone to be able to further analyze the results of the experiment (project duration was twelve months).

Proud of

- CRAM has been accredited by Fofifa to produce basic seeds which is also a recognition of the farmers' know-how. The catalogue has been improved with two new varieties: F160 and F183.
- Recognition of the quality of seeds produced vis-à-vis customers.
- Increased demand in relation to supply.
- Basic seed provider to other seed producers in the region / other regions.

Lessons learnt

The duration of the project was too short to test new bean varieties in a farming environment and to view the climate conditions. The test was unsatisfactory. It would be necessary to negotiate a period of three years minimum.



Photo 5.7 Testing of the varieties (Source CRAM)

Market and value chain analysis of potato in Nepal

The District Agriculture Cooperative Federation (DACF) in Makawanpur was established in 2010 and represents 17,000 household members in Nepal via a number of member cooperatives.

Potato is one of the main crops in this vegetable production area and a major part is produced for the market. The cooperatives do not have their own collection center and cooperative marketing shop. Besides, there are no storage facilities at the farm or at the community level and no collective marketing system is in place. Therefore, members are forced to sell individually through middlemen who determine the agreements, among which the potato market price. The members are unaware of market prices and demand of customers. Currently, they are not able to have a viable collective marketing strategy, which is what is needed to face these challenges. The cooperatives could play an important lead role in improving the position of the potato farmer members. Via the ESFIM project, a profound value chain analysis on the potato production and marketing has been conducted. Outcomes are an evidence-based understanding of the whole chain and flow of products including power issues and relevant input for the strategy of the cooperatives and the supporting role of DACF.

Results and conclusions

- The academic background of farmer is not good, so relevant trainings and programmes must be conducted.
- The instable market, price fluctuations, middle man's role has made adverse impact on farmer's return. The government policy is not applicable for the marketing.
- The barrier from fields to market and involvement of complex value chain were determined.
- A simple value chain involving cooperative for collection and supply must be initiated.
- The government policy on farmer's price, availability of seed/ manure need to be address out and make suitable change.

Proud of

The entire team of ESFIM research unit specially the WUR researcher for all this happenings for her passion and trust towards us. After competing this research paper different stakeholder from District were there to support in

various fields i.e; cold storage, potato grading machine, collection centre, providing JTA service. From the side of Bjrabarahi they were able to sale 150 tons of potato on their own brand name, as well as the bargaining power with the traders is enhanced in the case of Namtar farmer as a good sign of outcome of this research.

Lessons learnt

During the research period it is very tough to enter into the potato market for asking detailed questions about potato business. Conflict arise as the entered into the market research as the prevailed market actors were not very willing to share the bitter reality of potato margins and black marketing. it was a difficult situation.



Photo 5.8 Potato grading machine start up and below Potato elevator machine for facilitating grading of potato (Source DACF)

Market and value chain analysis of carp supply chain in Nepal

Sundardeep Women Fish Farmer Cooperative in the Chitwan district in Nepal, is engaged in carp farming integrated with vegetable production. Sundardeep was founded in 2012 and unites 25 female fish farmers. Sundardeep closely cooperates with other women fish farmer cooperatives in the region: Kapia Women Cooperative and Sri Churiya Cooperative. 297 women fish farmers and their families benefit from the activities from Sundardeep.

Fish production in Nepal is dominated by semi-intensive small-scale farming of carp. Sundardeep provides inputs to its members and organises trainings to women fish farmers and nursery owners on leadership management, integrated fish farming and nursery management. An important challenge for fish farmers in Nepal is the unstable and unpredictable supply chain of inputs. Farmers are unable to source fry and fingerlings timely, and at affordable costs either from government or from private hatcheries. As a result, proper planning of fish farming activities becomes very difficult. Weak transportation networks are a logistical constraint over the whole chain: for both delivery of fingerlings from nursery to farms, as well as for delivery of fish from farms to consumer markets. Most woman fish farmers lack economies of scale, financial resources and knowledge that can be utilised in marketing and product promotion. As a consequence they are limited to production aspects. Locally produced fish often has to compete with imported Indian fish available at lower prices.

With the support of ESFIM, the Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) in Nepal and Sundardeep partnered in 2016 to conduct a fish market and value chain analysis for carp. The ESFIM project built further upon strengthening capacity development projects from the Finnish agri-agency for Food and Forest Development (FFD). These projects have supported the initiation of small-scale commercial ponds and integrated production of carp with vegetable farming. Economic research on improvement of the sourcing of fingerlings and insights in consumer demand however was needed to improve the market position of women fish farmers of Sundardeep. The results showed that there is an urgent need to adopt a strategy and action plan for disaster-risk reduction and to build resilience along the entire carp value chain. Further, there is a need to develop technical capacities, especially among hatcheries and nurseries in order to meet the demands for fish seed. Technical capacity development (water quality management, disease management and processing techniques) along the entire supply chain is important for sustainable and

climate-smart aquaculture activities and to ensure good, healthy fish products availability on the market. In this respect, regulatory policies should be better implemented and introduced where they are lacking. With the insights and information gathered, Sundardeep and the other women cooperatives and groups can now better plan their fish production. Further, market and price information is used to develop the marketing and sales efforts of all the beneficiaries. The results have been shared with different relevant stakeholders and provide necessary input to promote evidence-based policy making.

Conclusions

Fish farming is the one of the fastest growing agriculture sector in Nepal. Due to increasing demand of fish, fish farming has a great prospects in Nepal. Cooperatives can adopt both grow out and seed production venture. However, due to less physical work and time requirement, women are more attracted toward fish farming. Unlike grow out farming hatchery and nursery operations are more technical and requires a bit physical work. Nevertheless, seed supply chain is shorter than carp supply chain and is more profitable.

Proud of

- Gathering of all actors involved in carp supply chain from two districts in the same platform and listening their voice for policy brief
- Having women in key positions of the project conceptualisation to implementation
- Having a policy brief
- Impressive team work



Photo 5.9 Women fish farmer members of the cooperative, Nepal (Source Sundardeep)

Legal clearance of property rights to enhance access to credit in Peru

AVA (Asociación Verde Amazónico) consists of 15 Associations and Cooperatives who represent about 6,000 cocoa and coffee producers in the San Martín region of Peru. The objective of AVA is to represent its members and provide strategic services to grassroots organisations: education and training of producers, advice on organic and sustainable production programmes, commercial advice and promotion of responsible management and the conservation of the natural resources.

Most cooperatives have constructed infrastructure on lands that has no defined property status, and cannot be used as a guarantee for loans. Local and regional governments are willing to resolve this issue whenever the cooperatives prepare the legal documents. ESFIM funds the work of (a team of) specialised lawyers who investigate the legal status of the infrastructure with the board of the cooperative. In each of the 15 member cooperatives of AVA, they compile a folder with all documents required and assists the board to start the legal clearance process.

This resulted in the description of 32 plots in eight cooperatives that had problems. Based on this analysis, in 2018, AVA started the administrative process of legalisation of the infrastructure and land in eight of these cooperatives.

In preparation for face-to-face meetings of the board with the officials that decide on property legalisation, and supported by Agritererra, AVA used the ESFIM research findings to compile a lobby document in which they explain the importance of the legalisation process and the economic benefits for the sector. The regional authorities reacted positively to this lobby, and started a process to accelerate the legalisation of the plots and infrastructure that they had supported in earlier projects. This structured process of successful, proactive lobbying with an evidence-based policy document (FACT methodology) has been presented in different platforms (unions, municipalities, sector workshops) as an example to be replicated by other farmers' organisations in their specific areas of advocacy.

Conclusions

- The FACT policy advocacy proposal, "Legal regulation of property rights in order to improve access to credit" has helped to reinforce the role of AVA.

- The managers, members of the technical team and research company (*Marka y Asociados*) empowered the proposed regulation.
- The representatives of the member organisations stated that they will contribute in the process to achieve the objectives.

Proud of

- The development of the research project contributed to reinforcement of the role of AVA with its member cooperatives and in turn positioned itself among and against governmental and non-governmental institutions, mainly from the San Martín Region.
- Developed approaches to the national cacao and coffee institutes (APPCACAO and JNC).

Lessons Learnt

- Empower the board of directors, both in the investigation stage and in the negotiation before the decision takes place (San Martín Regional Government).
- Initially AVA, did not take into account a possible delay in the political advocacy process and a such in achieving a political change.
- Another lesson is that AVA neglected the consequences of delayed activities in the beginning for the follow up activities and project planning.



Photo 5.10 Photos of the field (Source AVA)

Understanding young people's engagement with the coffee value chain in Uganda

The National Union of Coffee Agribusiness and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE) was established in 1995 and has 175 members that altogether represent 170,000 households in Uganda. NUCAFE represents the interests of coffee farmers in Uganda and aims at farmer empowerment by focusing on social development and business development. The Government of Uganda regards coffee as a strategic commodity, and has the ambition to produce 20 million bags of coffee in 2020. Youth unemployment in Uganda is high with 64%. Involvement of youth in the coffee sector is regarded as important to achieve the ambitions of the Ugandan Government.

In the first round of research, NUCAFE carried out a survey with 312 people to understand young people's engagement with the coffee value chain in Uganda. The survey revealed interesting results, such as the fact that 90% of those participating in the coffee value chain were involved in production, and that the main reason for their engagement in coffee farming was their belief that there is money to be made in coffee farming. However, the research found that young people involved in coffee production face several challenges. The three main challenges faced are i) lack of access to land and ii) to credit and iii) drought. We found a positive relationship between membership of a coffee association and income generated from coffee production, i.e. the higher the income from coffee, the more likely people are organised within an association.

While the first round of the research provided us with an interesting glimpse into "what" is happening with young people's engagement with the coffee value chain, the second round of research was initiated to further understand "why" young people are engaging in the coffee sector the way they are, and "how" they feel that engagement and success can be increased. These questions have been explored using primarily qualitative methods, i.e. interviews and focus-group discussions, and possibly participatory methods as well.

Conclusions

The study found that the desire to make money and the need to be self-employed are strong factors that drove youth to participate in coffee. Specifically, access to credit was observed to influence youth participation. In fact a unit increase in credit to the youth would result in 0.95 units of youth participation in the value chain. Secondly, increased access to land and

belonging to farmers associations would also positively affect youth participation in the value chain.

Proud of

- Key barriers that need to be addressed are clear – land, affordable credit and knowledge.
- Willingness of the strategic partners/sector actors to address these informed by the research findings and presentation.
- Amount of data collected.
- Times series data collection established in NUCAFE to use ODK.
- Increased research capacity and appreciation of research given technical support from Wageningen University, IDS (Institute of Development Studies).

Lessons learnt

- Length of the survey questionnaire and data collected was too much.
- Underestimated the amount of time required for the research, good quality research requires time.
- Use of hard copy questionnaires delayed the process and was challenging for data quality control.
- Tools for qualitative data should have been shorter and more tailored.



Photo 5.11 Young coffee female farmer (Source Nucafe)

Value chain analysis for acacia products and feasibility assessment of PEFC and FSC group certification in Vietnam

The Thua Thien Hue Cooperative Alliance (TTHCA) provides marketing and production services and manages the development of 256 cooperatives. 128 of the cooperatives own mainly acacia forests and produce woodchip, which is mainly sold on the domestic market after which it is exported to China, Taiwan or other Asian countries. TTHCA and its members risk a reduction in income because of the increasing sustainability requirements of the international market for forest products. However, the cost of accessing forest management certification is a big financial barrier for small forest owners (on average owning 1-3 ha of plantation forest). Group plantation forest management certification could be a potential solution for forest owners to improve their market position. To be able to assess the benefits of group certification, TTHCA and its members first want to gain insights in the current value chain of acacia products.

ESFIM supported TTHCA with a value chain analysis of acacia products. Based on its results, it has been assessed if group certification by different forest certification schemes (Forest Stewardship Council, FSC, and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, PEFC) are financially viable. The research activities were conducted by the Centre for Climate Change Study in Central Vietnam (CCCSC Vietnam). The results of the research are used to improve the awareness of TTHCA members and other actors in the value chain to understand their own role and to identify potential bottlenecks. The feasibility assessment is used as input for the decision-making by TTHCA about whether to apply for group certification and if so, which certification scheme is the most advantageous. The results also served as an example for other cooperatives and groups of small scale forest owners.

Conclusions

- Acacia is the most common and preferred species for smallholder land owners, producers and traders.
- Intensive cultivated plantations can get higher benefit than extensive model.
- With the cooperation inside the chain, forest owners can get more profit because of higher price.
- The acacia value chain has many actors and traders play an important role linking producers and processors.
- There are 3 channels: Channel 1 and 2 both start with acacia logs with a diameter greater than 13 cm, same actors but different end users (local

users or exported). Channel 3 commences with acacia wood of less than 13 cm diameter.

Proud of

- Acacia timbers with larger diameters of over 13 cm have higher added value. However, long rotation also brings more exposure risks for farmers.
- Group CoC certification are necessary to strengthen the cooperation and improve profit for actors in the chain.
- Trees are grown for at least 6 years to take advantage of the log volume.

Lessons learnt

- Conduct more research in future to assess exposure risks relating to long rotation combining with thinning practice, and how beneficial the certification is to evaluate the efficiency of this plantation model and certification.
- Determine the demand of 4 groups of actors for CoC certificate, and which system of certificate they want to involve in (FSC or PEFC) and also analyse and compare what would be the case if these products have been certified against the no-certification scenario.

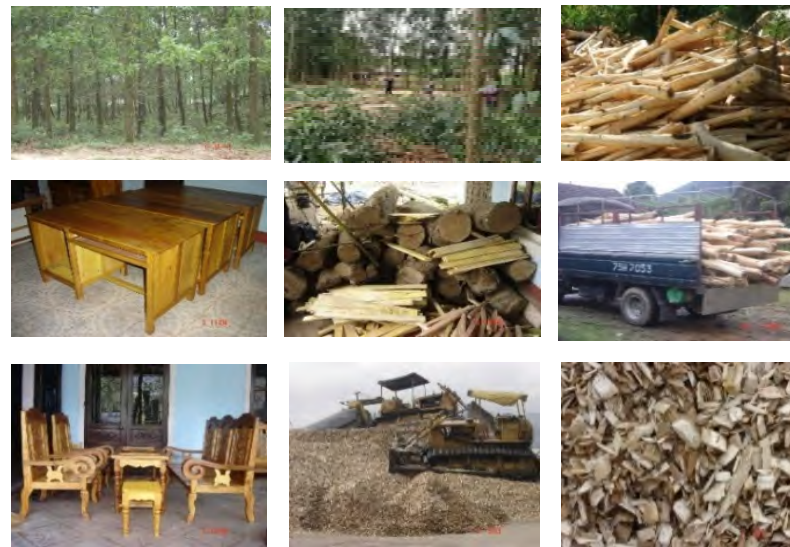


Photo 5.12 Acacia trees, wood processing and manufacturing (Source TTHCA)

Regional Fund for the Financing of Family Farms and Farmers' Organisations in West Africa

ROPPO (Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) is a regional initiative from farmers' organisations and agricultural producers in 13 West African countries. Approximately 1 million farmers benefit from the activities of ROPPO. Founded in 2000, ROPPO represents the interests of its members, support their members with training and information, and is involved in the implementation of agricultural and rural development programmes.

A previous study has shown that existing national and regional agricultural funding institutions, although they have funded quite a lot of projects and programmes, have achieved only limited impact at the level of the small family farming enterprise. There is an urgent need to develop new funding instruments that also reach out to small family farmers, women and youth in order to promote agricultural development in West Africa. Appropriate funding for new technologies, value chain development, production factors, etc will contribute to the modernisation of current family farms and help them to respond more effectively to market demands. Several national and regional agricultural funds have been put in place (PAU, ECOWAP/PDDAA), but without taking into account the farmers' voice in the creation and the governance of the funds.

Through the ESFIM-study ROPPO collected sufficient relevant data on how the existing national and regional funds, the way they are actually conceived, would be able to foster the modernisation of the family farms and respond to their ambition to be better integrated in the markets in order to 'feed the African towns'. The difficulties national and regional funds for agricultural finance face came to the surface by the outcomes of the research, i.e. the demand for agricultural finance is not well-structured and there is an incoherent dialogue between supply and demand.

The recommendations of the study have been used by ROPPO to dialogue and lobby with the policy makers and the people in charge of the funding institutions so as to incite for innovative strategies and mechanisms that help to realise this ambition.



Photo 5.13 Photos of consultation workshops (Source ROPPO)

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Write
workshop



Write workshop

A successful write workshop was organised in November 2018 with all participating FOs

This chapter shortly reflects the process and outputs of the “ESFIM write and evaluation workshop” that took place on 11-15 November, 2018 in Izmir, Turkey. This workshop brought together the representatives of the FOs involved in the ESFIM research. The workshop aimed at creating a platform for all participants to exchange knowledge, to share insights and to verify and discuss policies to strengthen the capacities of smallholder farmers in their respective countries.

This chapter shortly reflects on the write workshop. More information can be found in Appendix 7. The full report has been shared in three languages with all participations and with AgriCord in December 2018 and is available upon request.

The objectives of the workshop can be summarised as follows:

1. To study and acknowledge the research results and translate these into a working paper;
2. To translate the results to recommendations for policy;
3. To share mutual knowledge and to exchange results and experiences;
4. To evaluate ESFIM both as a tool to generate demand-driven action research, and in terms of how the process was set up.

A write workshop: a participatory set up with the focus on written output

The applied methodology is a face to face workshop with the specific objective of writing a document, a report and/or a publication. The objective of the workshop was to generate and share the experiences of the participants in the

implementation of their research projects including the outcomes and relevance of the research for the FO and its members.

Each session aimed at collecting data on the different aspects of the research. Some sessions aimed at undertaking a brief situation analysis to highlight the change(s) the research projects did or will bring about. Each session was designed through the introduction of exercises incorporating steps to stimulate discussions to bring out the experiences of the implementation process.

The groups were divided according to language, in order to facilitate communication among peers and sharing of experiences. The plenary sessions were translated simultaneously by professional translators. The subgroup sessions were facilitated by either a English, French or Spanish speaking facilitator. Those language groups were French, English and Spanish.

Many outputs have been generated from a visualisation of the research to an impact narrative

All participants generated the following outputs:

- Poster / visualisation of the research
- Oral presentation of posters
- Narratives on the research (past – present –future)
- Drawings of the ripple effects (impact of the research)
- Narrative of the impact generated
- Evaluation of ESFIM (content wise and process wise)
- Recommendations for future ESFIM
- Research topics / agenda for FO



Evaluation and satisfaction

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Evaluation and Satisfaction

Total response rate of 69% to the ESFIM evaluation with highest response among WUR researchers and FOs

ESFIM has been evaluated by all participating parties. This enables us to measure satisfaction and appreciation and to improve ESFIM as a tool for FO research. All FOs were asked to anonymously evaluate the ESFIM workshop at the end of the write workshop in November 2018 and to provide their appreciation and comments of ESFIM in general. The results are summarised in this chapter. In addition to that, all parties involved have been asked to respond to an evaluation form after completion of the research. The response rate is 69% with the highest score among WUR researchers all but one filled in the evaluation forms. The lowest score is among the agri-agencies. Despite several reminders the response rate is only 40%. See Table 7.1 for the response rate per group. The evaluation form can be found in Appendix 8.

Table 7.1 Response rate per group

Group	Number of respondents	Of total	Response rate (%)
Farmers organisations	12	15	80%
Local researchers	8	13	62%
WUR researchers	10	11	91%
Agri-agencies	6	15	40%
Total respondents	37	54	69%

7.1 Evaluation scores

All agree on the applicability of ESFIM as a tool to improve smallholder farmer market access, but it can have more impact if organised a bit differently

Clustering all the results on whether ESFIM has met the expectations, both the overall execution of the ESFIM research and ESFIM as a tool show high

satisfaction (Figure 7.1). ESFIM as a tool is highly appreciated: according to all participants, ESFIM is a perfect tool to enable FOs making informed decisions and establishing a working relationship between farmers and researchers. This process also helps the farmers gain awareness about their own knowledge which gives them more confidence in accessing markets. It's a good and appropriate tool in itself but it can have more impact if organised a bit differently (see chapter conclusions and recommendations). Another comment is that applied research needs more support in order to consolidate the process that has been undertaken. In some cases the process with the FO has been very harsh and long due to difficult communication and delayed information. More input and value in terms of policy of the FO was expected by the local and WUR researchers. For the analysis part, it has remained quite descriptive at the FO as well as the local researcher level.

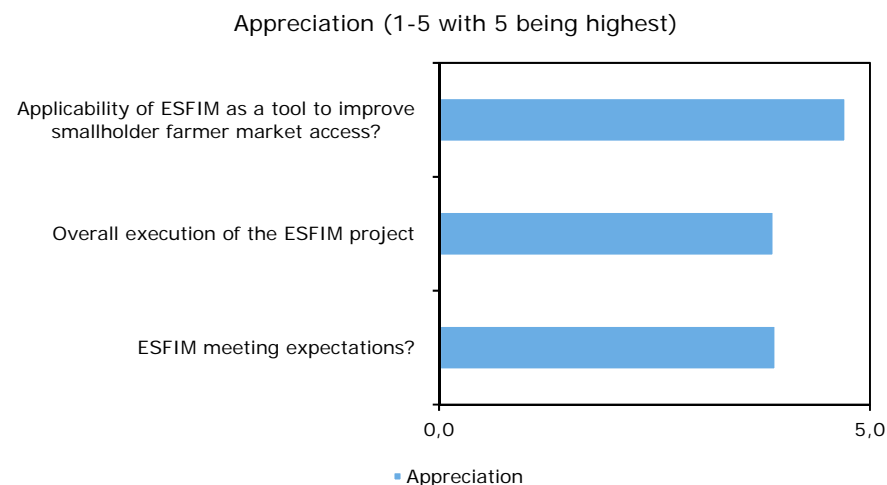


Figure 7.1 Appreciation on three statements of all participating groups (n=37)

Not all participants are very satisfied, mainly because of limited time, no face to face contact, low involvement agri-agency and incapability of FO

A total average score of all groups shows variation in satisfaction. The local researcher is the most satisfied group with a score of 4.5 on 5 with 5 being very satisfied. The FO is somewhat less satisfied (4.2 on a scale of 5) but still more satisfied than the WUR researchers who are the most critical in their review (Figure 7.2). This has mainly to do with the limitations in backstopping (time and no face to face contact or field visit), the sometimes challenging relation with the local research party (or no relation at all). Another factor contributing to less overall satisfaction is the limited participation and commitment from the majority of agri-agencies. The expectation was that they would be more involved and eager to steer the process when having regular and face to face contact with the FOs they support. Another serious feedback is the quality of the FO. Some FOs appeared to be incapable of managing ESFIM research. They have too many activities with limited staff and budget, and do not know how to guide a research project.

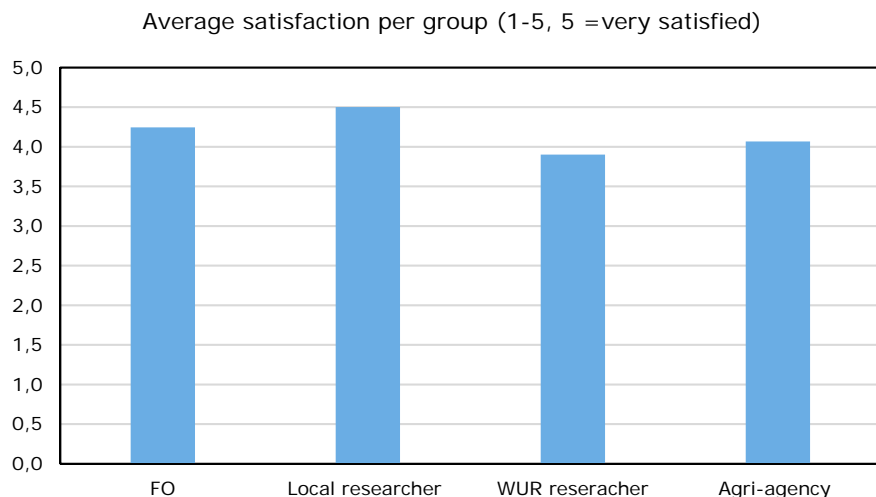


Figure 7.2 Average satisfaction scores per group (n=37)

7.2 FO appreciation

Process evaluation shows high appreciation and satisfaction

Overall, the appreciation and satisfaction of ESFIM as a tool to improve smallholder farmers to markets is very high (92%) among the FOs and there is even 100% satisfaction with the results of the research (Figure 7.3) (See also Chapter 5 on research results).

With the results, two interesting new variety of rice are identified which are very much appreciated by our member farmers

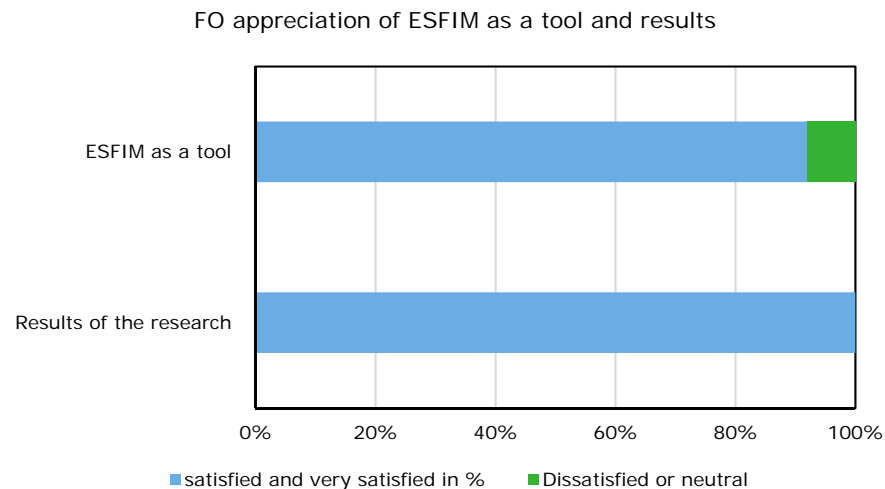


Figure 7.3 FO appreciation of ESFIM as a tool and the results (n=12)

FOs are overall satisfied with research support, but some critical notes are made by both the local and the WUR researcher

Communication with and expertise of the local researchers do not score very high on satisfaction (Figure 7.4). Positive elements mentioned were

i) understanding of the local context and dynamics, ii) personality and work ethics, iii) commitment. Less positive were the low availability, un-consistent schedules and the fact that they were sometimes driven by their own research priorities. Overall, FOs are satisfied with the support and quality of the WUR researchers. There was positive and good communication, although distant. Input and research expertise of the WUR researchers were very much valued. On the other hand, the FOs sometimes faced difficulties in understanding 'jargon' (scientific / research language), and in reaching out to them as their time was limited and agenda's often full.

sometimes not very clear and many revisions had to be done by the FO. The contracting and financial procedures seem fine. However, misunderstandings and delays in payment by the managing organisation occurred. Communication about the financial procedures and criteria including the financial reporting and submission of receipts was a little difficult. The communication with the ESFIM project management has been rated positively. According to the FOs the management was always available for every topic and question. There has been fairly fluid communication despite the language gap.

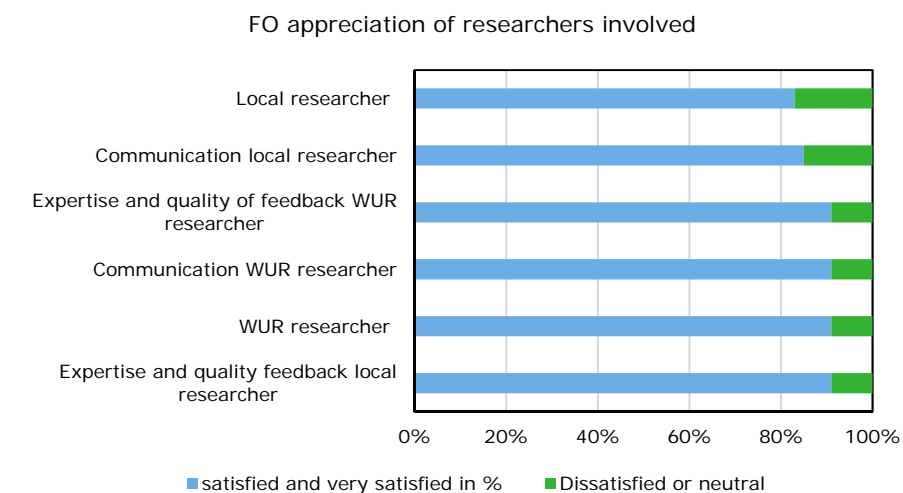


Figure 7.4 FO appreciation of researchers involved (n=12)

Time consuming procedures, slow payments and misunderstanding of some rules of the game are compensated by the clear, fast and open communication with the ESFIM project management

The FOs were also asked their opinion on the procedures, the process of submission of the proposal, the information and the assessment criteria and the communication with the ESFIM management. Figure 7.5 shows the satisfaction levels on these elements. The process of submission can be improved. The set-up was clear according to the FOs, but the feedback was

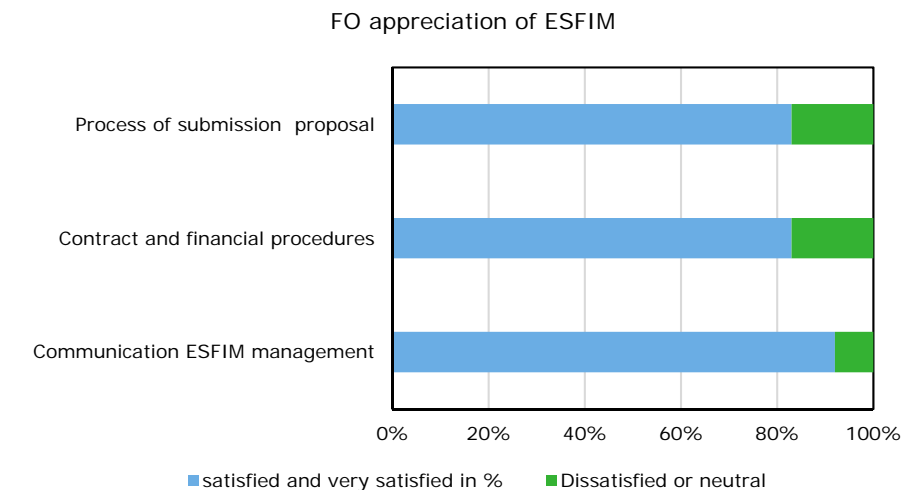


Figure 7.5 FO appreciation of procedures and management (n=12)

7.3 Challenges faced

Researcher prioritisation

FOs seem to have faced difficulties with regard to the availability of the local researchers to implement the research activities/steps and/or delivering the reports in time. One FO referred to the difficulty of having long procedures to comply with before official take off. Another FO referred to the difficulty to

make the researcher understand that they are doing a research based on a past and not a new initiative.

Researchers' distance from the realities on the ground

Feedback highlights the difficulty of WUR and local researchers being detached from the ground which created communication issues like questionnaires using a language not appropriate for the context, and for trying to match knowledge at the local level using a complex language. Another result of this detachment from the field is the researchers' lack of realisation of different contexts as well as suggestions of methodologies not appropriate for the local context they would be applied to and, in some cases, local researcher not being competent on the topic they would make a research about.

Communication issues with WUR researchers

Also linked with the earlier challenge of researchers lack of touch with the ground, communication gaps, use of scientific jargon and the language used for communication were highlighted by participants. Additionally, long distance communication mechanisms were not always effective. Relation building and enhancing trust between the FO, local researcher and WUR researcher are very important to have more impact and a successful collaboration.

Common understanding and collaboration

One FO emphasised the importance of ensuring the contribution of the FO team to the research by being familiarised with the scientific approach and increase efficiency on facilitation at local level. Other FOs stressed the need of collaboration and communication for the design of instruments aiming at collecting data and define common methodology. The FO also acknowledged that they often lack research expertise and that capacity building of the FO takes considerable time and effort of the local and WUR researcher involved.

It allowed us to know the internal weaknesses of the PO, that hamper better access to markets. The research gives an overview of markets that are possible for farmers to access. We now know our problems and can propose alternatives, so that our members can enter the market under more equal conditions

Establish trust

When it comes to data collection at local level the readiness of the farmers to provide real data is yet to be established. This was communicated through diverse research project owners to highlight the challenges of collecting data on sensitive topics like tax collection or any other topic which farmers might feel uncomfortable about.

Infrastructure and human resources

In some projects poor road conditions made it a challenge to reach out to all target groups. The limited human resources created difficulties for the fieldwork and in some cases the timing for the research was a challenge as the implementation time could go ahead of the agricultural calendar.

Sometimes difficult to balance interests

This set up indeed resulted in a demand-driven process, ownership and a research theme which has priority for the FO and its members. The demand driven set-up of the research resulted in some challenges in aligning parties and interests and ensuring quality. There was also the risk of a trade-off between quality and research based on scientific principles and the local FO being in the lead in combination with the limited time available for WUR backstopping

Many unexpected difficulties

As elaborated upon in the process chapter (Chapter 4), there were many unexpected issues on the ground affecting the progress and sometimes quality of the research projects (e.g. floods, riots and tensions, elections, capacity of staff (turn-over, illness and decease)).

7.4 Benefits

Enhancing communication

The implementation of the research project enabled enhancing communication with related actors. FOs were able to communicate their expectations and felt understood. The existence of local researchers lifted the language barriers and made them accessible for support and for discussions. Some highlighted the benefit of being able to receive quick responses.

Mutual learning and collaboration

Working with researchers created the opportunity to contribute and discuss about research protocols and implement activities collaboratively. Some FOs referred to the researchers as good collaborators with whom they would continue to work in the future. The process supported the improvement of competences for both the researchers and the FOs. Some could experience how the capacity of their team increased in terms of research skills and knowledge. The process helped as well to improve analytical and report writing skills. The research also provided knowledge on basic analysis tools like ODK (Open Data Kit) which the FOs could use for themselves. This was especially beneficial because it helped the FOs to learn about the most important subjects for their cases.

ESFIM has made it possible to acquaint ourselves with collaborative research

Innovation and expertise

The research process enabled FOs to be exposed to new knowledge, approaches and techniques which they did not think they would acquire. The critical review of the research teams' output enabled better quality outputs appreciated at local level. The research helped the emerging of specialised knowledge and provided technical input in designing and implementing necessary interventions. The involvement of local researchers enabled their awareness of the bitter reality of the communities they work with. A highlight is the recognition of the producers' experiences. The contribution of researchers both from local to international level supported objective input and enabled an outsider view to the problem. At some examples, due to the relation established through the action research project, POs could get additional services from the researcher at a lower price.

Scientifically sound basis

The systematically collected and documented data (clear and reliable) created a good basis also for the results to be recognised by diverse actors but also to involve them to address specific challenges. This strong basis makes the FO more confident to tell the farmers the obtained results and create a better understanding of the local situation as well as the FOs own situation. This process and the developed materials strengthened the relations with technical partners such as public institutions and also provided support in negotiating with the government.



8

Conclusions and
recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations

The research outcomes provided crucial input for FO policy and benefitted its' members

All research projects have been finalised in 2018 including the two newer research projects. All PO expressed the added value of doing research as an FO which is a different way of working and thinking than the majority is used to. As such the research not only provided them with important information for their strategies, it also strengthened their research capacity. All research questions, topics and approaches were different but they all departed from a participatory and action research design focused on challenges the FO and the members face in accessing the markets and increasing members' income. The outcomes provided the FOs with crucial information and an understanding of the problems faced. The so called 'black box' has become smaller and less black. The know-how of FOs is safe-guarded and improved and this in turn has improved access to (future) markets and incomes of the FO members at stake. The research has been important in discovering and showing new and unexpected mechanisms, and generated new knowledge, so that the organisation can go forward in a more autonomous way. The FO can now make evidence-informed policies fed by the outcomes of the research.

Local research capacity has been built

As such, the research has been useful for the organisations in different ways. ESFIM has made it possible to establish a working relationship between producers and researchers. Also, existing partnership frameworks have been strengthened. Moreover, researchers have started to adapt their work to the needs of producers. Thanks to the ESFIM support, the organisations have been able to formulate their research topics as well as their expectations and research needs. FOs are in a better position now to negotiate research activities with the pertinent institutes and universities.

FOs defined new research agenda and prioritized research themes for future research support

Successful completion of the research projects despite the main challenge of distant backstopping and no face to face relation building

Although the overall collaboration and communication between FO, local researcher and WUR expert on ESFIM has been quite positive, it has been challenging to keep all parties on track and to have them deliver according to the timeline. It has required a lot of time to receive responses from the FOs and local researchers, either on progress, deliverables, financial reporting, signature of contracts or response to the evaluation forms. The main conclusion is that distant back stopping and coaching from the WUR researchers and project management is not ideal. Relation building, face to face contact and transparency are important conditions for progress and upgrade of the research quality.

Enabling factors for success of follow up of ESFIM

After their experience with collaborative research, almost all stakeholders involved reaffirmed the importance of this type of partnerships between FOs, northern researchers, national consultants and supporting development organisations. The collaborative research requires capabilities and structures to handle the divergent incentives of the collaborating partners. Several enabling factors came to the surface:

- Face-to-face contact is required.
- Sufficient research time for all parties involved.
- More backstopping and Management is needed.
- Alignment with and more participation of agri-agencies supporting the FO involved.
- Capable and eligible FO committed to the research.
- Well experienced local researcher with focus on FO context.
- Interdisciplinary and multi-methods experience of the researchers involved.
- Pro-active creative attitude all stakeholders involved.

High potential and need for follow-up ESFIM but incorporate lessons learnt

Many wish to see the continuation of the ESFIM support either to carry on with what they have started or for addressing new research needs. They would like to see the contribution of ESFIM in disseminating the research outcomes as well as the lessons learnt from the projects. Some adjustments to the procedures have been suggested like ensuring the international researchers support in person at local level and review the project duration times based on the experience of earlier phases. Especially, to consider the approval period until the release of funds and how this can have an impact in the timing of the research.

Follow-up of ESFIM

- Continue to consolidate the research results and strengthen FOs in research.
- Organise a sharing / kick off workshop to get to know each other and enable more exchange between countries / FO.
- Stronger involvement of and communication with the AA for alignment of the various activities and projects with the FO and for maximum impact.
- Adjust the project duration time to the research content.
- Align research/project timeline with agricultural/crop calendar.
- Capitalise on the results of the projects, promote these and support research results dissemination.
- Consider strategic partnership for continuous / periodic research with FOs.
- The lessons learnt from the researches should be systematically compiled and shared with the organisation.
- Adapt the duration of the projects according to their themes and which require repetition.

Suggestions for future research topics according to the FO

- Support FO to analyse the value chains of main products
- Support farmers to access/supply to new markets
- Research on post-harvest and food safety
- Support research on branding and labelling
- Research on enhancing FO and increasing productivity

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Appendix 1 Realised planning call for proposals

Activities	Realized planning
Distribution 1 st call for proposals	August 2015
Deadline 1 st call for proposals	October 2015
Evaluation submitted proposals	November 2015
Distribution 2 nd call for proposals	March 2016
Deadline 2 nd call for proposals	April 2016
Evaluation submitted proposals	May 2016
Distribution 3 rd call for proposals	July 2016
Deadline 3 rd call for proposals	September 2016
Evaluation 3 rd call for proposals	October 2016
Distribution 4 th call for proposals	November 2016
Deadline 4 th call for proposals	December 2016
Evaluation 4 th call for proposals	December 2016
Proposal writing of approved draft proposals, contracting local research parties and WUR backstopping	2016
Formal contracting, payment and implementation of first batch or approved research projects (7 research projects)	December 2016
Proposal writing of approved draft proposals, contracting local research parties and WUR backstopping	2017
Formal approval of second batch of accepted research proposals	December 2017
Implementation of research projects	2018
Write workshop with all FOs	November 2018
Final deliverables of all research projects	December 2018
Final payments	December 2018
Final reporting and dissemination	March 2019

Appendix 2 Realised planning call for proposals

v	Name	Gender	Organisation	Year of foundation	Scope of the organisation (National, regional, commodity based etc.)	Research Subject	Data collection	main Research approach	Commodity (focused on the research)	Number of farmers	Number of households represented by the organisation	Main activities of the organisation Economic Functions: input supply, processing, trading etc.	Main activities of the organisation Representation Functions: Advocacy, Lobby, Capacity Building etc.
Albania	I,	F	Adad Malore	1996	National	Strategic orientation of the organisation of smallholder farmers in the Kukës region, Albania	Immediate Market Assessment and value chain analysis & Common Choice Experience (determining market position & market approach + development growth strategy for local market)	Primary and secondary data collection. Mixed Methods. Surveys, interviews, Focus group discussions. Workshops/seminars and field visits + fairs	Goat breeding - Goatkid Meat Apiculture - Honey and by products Orchards - apples, plums, chestnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts Horticulture - potatoes	600 members	7000 households 75 members in the research area (Kukes)	Value addition - GI	Focus on mountainous areas: Capacity building Pilot projects for demonstration Collaborative and individual support to farmers Lobby and advocacy Organising farmers according to their specialisation
Bolivia	Mr. José Luis Crespo	M	AOPEB	1991	National	Fair and equitable taxation for smallholders in Bolivia	analyse the current tax regulations, reviewing past initiatives and new possibilities to create a mechanism (such as an improved Régimen Agrario Unificado –	Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool (FACT). participatory research consisted of an exhaustive recollection of data from the organisations by a group of expert consultants in order to guarantee the relevance of the proposal that was formulated. After this,	No specific commodity. AOPEB: organic production, processing, marketing and capacity building to improve self-sufficiency and food sovereignty of farmers	50000	70000 households	organic production, processing, marketing and capacity building to improve self-sufficiency and food sovereignty of farmers and indigenous communities in Bolivia.	Also lobby & Advocacy (organic production / indigenous)

v	Name	Gender	Organisation	Year of foundation	Scope of the organisation (National, regional, commodity based etc.)	Research Subject	Data collection	main Research approach	Commodity (focused on the research)	Number of farmers	Number of households represented by the organisation	Main activities of the organisation Economic Functions: input supply, processing, trading etc.	Main activities of the organisation Representation Functions: Advocacy, Lobby, Capacity Building etc.
							RAU) that reduces the tax burden of farmers organisations	the proposals were socialized and validated.	and indigenous communities in Bolivia.				
Burkina Faso	Mr. BIRBA T. Athanase	M	FEBA/B	1997	National	Improved economic information (economic/commercial and technical/agronomy) & monitoring system	Document review, primary & secondary data collection, workshops stakeholders, SWOT analysis; development of information tool, testing and validation and consolidation	Mixed methods, desk research, surveys and interviews producer groups; interviews stakeholders/producers	Dry cereals Fruits & vegetables	241261	37 producer organisations affiliated to FEPA/B 241 261 individual members (52% women) 6133	Mission: Representation and defense of interests - individual and collective - of the affiliated POs. Activities: - Organizational and institutional strengthening of its member POs and groups - Defense/promotion of producers in the value chains of "fruits and vegetables" and "dry cereals", via national producer unions - Information/Communication	Mission: growth in competitiveness of members' production on the market. Activities: - support to collective marketing - advice to family farms (CEF) - Information/Communication
Burkina Faso	Mr. Sessi Rostaing Akoha	M	ROPPA	2000	Regional	Investigate the regional Fund for the Financing of Family Farms and Farmers' Organisations in West Africa (to support and improve the family farming sector,	Document review; country data collection; brainstorm workshops at national/country level; regional validation	Mixed methods, participatory / exchange	No specific commodity. It's to collect sufficient relevant data on how the existing national and regional funds, the way they are	1 million farmers (regional organisation, 13 countries / 13 PO, west africa)		in this case: advocacy and support to improve the family farming systems in the region (all sectors, agro-silvo-pastoral and fishery)	Advocacy: ROPPA represents the interests of its members, support training and information, and is involved in the implementation of agricultural and rural development programmes.

v	Name	Gender	Organisation	Year of foundation	Scope of the organisation (National, regional, commodity based etc.)	Research Subject	Data collection	main Research approach	Commodity (focused on the research)	Number of farmers	Number of households represented by the organisation	Main activities of the organisation Economic Functions: input supply, processing, trading etc.	Main activities of the organisation Representation Functions: Advocacy, Lobby, Capacity Building etc.
						agro-silvo-pastoral and fishery)			actually conceived, will indeed be able to foster the modernisation of the family farms and respond to their ambition to be better integrated in the markets in order to 'feed the African towns'				
El Salvador	Mr. Jose Peraza Martinez	M	CCA	1994	National	Market and value chain analysis of the sugar cane sector in El Salvador (including certification)	Interviews, FGDs at cooperative level and secondary literature study	qualitative	Sugar cane	11 cooperatives, 9 producer, 2 credit)	1290 households	Input supply, collective marketing, machinery services	advocacy
Indonesia	na		SPPQT	1999	National	Analysis of the coffee market and supply chain in Indonesia	Surveys among the VC stakeholders (from producer to consumer); FGD; interviews;	Mixed methods; value chain analysis, SWOT, Consumer analysis. Also trainings were provided on value addition and marketing	Coffee	18000		Economic strengthening farmers (Marketing) and technical strengthening (Integrated Organic Farming, improving quality and quantity of the harvest, cultivation, etc.)	Lobby & Advocacy (Education Awareness to farmers (Human rights, Farmers rights, etc.), Community Organizing, Advocacy (rule, Case etc.),
Madagascar	Ms. Ida Randrianasolo	F	CEFFEL	2006	national	Optimalisation of potato seed systems in Madagascar	Testing of seed/trials and demoplots and interviews on identification of	Technical & informational components. Technical: tests on research stations and	Potato (seed)	11 members	11 members, that represent 170,000 families	training sessions about production techniques and has a centre for trials and experiments. Furthermore CEFFEL	

v	Name	Gender	Organisation	Year of foundation	Scope of the organisation (National, regional, commodity based etc.)	Research Subject	Data collection	main Research approach	Commodity (focused on the research)	Number of farmers	Number of households represented by the organisation	Main activities of the organisation Economic Functions: input supply, processing, trading etc.	Main activities of the organisation Representation Functions: Advocacy, Lobby, Capacity Building etc.
							information needs + appropriate traceability system	farms, exchange visit on test plots, dissemination of results. On traceability: identification of info needs, training on M&E and application of info system				also trains agricultural advisors, and supports its members with economic information.	
Madagasca r	Ms. Julienne Ralisoa	F	CRAM	1996	national	Improvement of regional seed production systems for rice and beans Madagascar	Testing of seed/trials and demoplots of varieties beans/rice + testing on the farm (more trust and ownership of producers)	Technical component: testing of the local adaptability of newly (pre-)released rice and bean varieties. Institutional component: try out business models for local cost-effective and sustainable production of early generation seed and testing of seed value chain organisation opportunities to professionalise the bean and rice seed production and marketing system	Rice and beans	250 members		The Farmers' Organisations support their seed producers with advice on production technology, organisation of quality assurance, and the planning and marketing of the seed	
Nepal	Ms. Sunila Rai	F	Sundardeep	2012	national /local	Market and value chain analysis of carp supply chain in Nepal	FGD workshops beginning and end project; literature review carp; survey among vc actors	mixed methods, FGD and interviews + desk study	Carp	25 female fish farmers	297 women fish farmers and their families benefit from (via collaboration with other cooperatives)	provides inputs to their members and organises trainings to women fish farmers and nursery owners on leadership management, integrated fish farming and nursery management.	

v	Name	Gender	Organisation	Year of foundation	Scope of the organisation (National, regional, commodity based etc.)	Research Subject	Data collection	main Research approach	Commodity (focused on the research)	Number of farmers	Number of households represented by the organisation	Main activities of the organisation Economic Functions: input supply, processing, trading etc.	Main activities of the organisation Representation Functions: Advocacy, Lobby, Capacity Building etc.
Nepal	Mr. Naresh Acharya	M	DACF	2010	national	Market and value chain analysis of potato in Nepal	Survey among all value chain actors; FGD and interviews	Mixed methods, survey and interviews and FGD among value chain actors potato	potato	17000	Bajrabarahi and Namtar are the two most active SFACL in Makwanpur district. Both the cooperative are located very near to each other. These cooperatives have 1180 and 680 members (mostly women) respectively		
Peru	Mr. Nilda Estela Guevara	M	AVA	2009	regional, cocoa farmers	Legal assessment on how to improve property rights for farmers in Peru	9 member organisations were interviewed	FACT (Farmers Advocacy Consultation Tool) - participatory and bottom up;	no commodity focus	6079	15 Associations and Cooperatives who represent about 6,000 cocoa and coffee producers	advocacy, competitiveness-enhancing services	
Uganda	Mr. David Muwonge	M	NUCAFE	1995	national	Investigating current and future drivers and barriers to youth participation in the coffee value chain in Uganda	Surveys; informant interviews, FGD	mixed methods. Component 2 esfim: more qualitative research for better understanding and interpretation	Coffee (youth)	175 members	170000	farmer empowerment by focusing on social development and business development	Lobby and advocacy
Vietnam	Mr. Thanh Ha Ho	M	TTHCA	1994	national	Value chain analysis for acacia	Surveys and in-depth	baseline and endline; mixed method	acacia	256 Cooperatives	236,000 households	marketing and production services and	

v	Name	Gender	Organisation	Year of foundation	Scope of the organisation (National, regional, commodity based etc.)	Research Subject	Data collection	main Research approach	Commodity (focused on the research)	Number of farmers	Number of households represented by the organisation	Main activities of the organisation Economic Functions: input supply, processing, trading etc.	Main activities of the organisation Representation Functions: Advocacy, Lobby, Capacity Building etc.
						products and feasibility assessment of PEFC and FSC group certification in Vietnam	interviews with 9 member organisations and value chain actors; desk study; baseline and follow up study			(128 Agriculture cooperatives own forestland)	(more than 180,000 are agriculture and forestry farmers)	manages the development of 256 cooperatives over provincial wide, with 11 main types of business. They focus mainly on agricultural production	

Appendix 3 Research proposal format

ESFIM Research Proposal format (Appendix 2)

1. Contact details of Farmers Organisation, number of members, year of foundation, supporting partner (agri-agency).
2. Describe the main activities of the Farmers Organisation (150 words maximum)
3. Describe the problem statement or opportunity. How does this problem affect the market position of the members of your Farmers Organisation? What are the opportunities to improve the market position of your Farmers Organisation? (300 words maximum)
4. Which activities have already been conducted to solve this problem? (300 words maximum)
5. Why do you consider research necessary to solve this problem? (300 words maximum)
6. Define the objectives and main research question(s) (150 words maximum)
7. Describe the main activities to be conducted by the contracted researcher(s) (300 words maximum)
8. What would be the expected output of the research (e.g. reports, policy proposal, database, video's, workshops)? (150 words maximum)
9. What will the Farmers Organisation do with the outcomes of the research? (150 words maximum)
10. How are the expected outputs and outcomes disseminated to, and shared with the members of your Farmers Organisation? (150 words maximum)
11. How will the board of the Farmers Organisation and its members be involved in the progress of the research? (150 words maximum)

Call for Research Proposals

Empowering Smallholder Farmers Organisations in Markets (ESFIM) through collaborative demand-driven research

ESFIM Research Support Fund

AgriCord and Wageningen University are launching the ESFIM Research Support Fund for Farmers Organisations in developing countries. The fund will provide strategic support with action-oriented research that empowers smallholder farmers in markets. This is an invitation for eligible Farmers Organisations that operate within the network of Agri-Agencies of AgriCord to submit a research proposal.

The main objective of the ESFIM Research Support Fund is to strengthen the position of farmers, particularly smallholders, in resolving problems related with their access to markets or grasping opportunities to improve the market position. The ESFIM Research Support Fund is part of the Farmer Fighting Poverty (FFP) programme which is financed by the Government of Netherlands. The general objective of this programme is to contribute to poverty reduction, strengthening the capacities and enhancing the operations of the organisations of smallholders' farmers in developing countries.

Application procedure

The ESFIM Research Support Fund selects research projects through the following steps:

Step 1: ESFIM distributes this call for *draft* research proposals through the network of Agri-Agencies of AgriCord.

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- Step 2:** In response to the call, Farmers Organisations can apply by submitting the *draft* Research Proposal Form (see below). Applications with all required documentation will be reviewed by the ESFIM Evaluation Committee. This Committee consists of different research institutes that are part of Wageningen University. Applicants will be notified accordingly.
- Step 3:** Farmers Organisations with an approved *draft* research proposal are requested to develop a more comprehensive and detailed *final* research proposal. In the stage of developing the *final* research proposal, Farmers Organisations will receive support from Wageningen University in improving the research methodology and research questions. Wageningen University can also support Farmers Organisations with desk research to gain insight in existing knowledge that can be complementary for the *final* research proposal.
- Step 4:** The completed *final* research proposal will be submitted to the ESFIM Evaluation Committee and the AgriCord Project Committee for final approval.
- Step 5:** For each approved *final* research proposal a budget with a maximum of €25,000 euro is available (VAT included). This budget has to be used for all in-country costs of the *final* research proposal (e.g. budget for local researchers, workshops, data collection and dissemination).
- Step 6:** After approval of the *final* research proposal the ESFIM Research Support Fund will help the Farmers Organisation with the selection and supervision of the local researchers who will carry out the research activities.

Draft research proposals can be submitted before 16 April 2016 through e-mail to researchsupportfund@esfim.org. *Draft* research proposals that do not contain all information required will not be taken into consideration. For further information please also contact researchsupportfund@esfim.org. Farmers Organisations that have submitted a *draft* research proposal will be informed about the result of the review of the ESFIM Evaluation Committee within six weeks after the deadline of 16 April.

Examples

The ESFIM Research Support Fund builds on previous experiences, documented in www.esfim.org. Below some examples of potential research projects for Farmers Organisations, supported earlier, are presented which would be within the scope of the current ESFIM Research Support Fund:

Re-introducing long-fibre cotton in Peru

Through COSTACH, the long-fibre Pima cotton has been re-introduced. In 2011 COSTACH started to assume processing and exporting functions. It managed to contract a cotton ginnery to produce fibre and vegetable oil. COSTACH is recognised by key institutions such the Ministry of Agriculture, investment banks and municipalities and is now looking for ways to build their own ginnery. They are starting the first step to a Denomination of Origin (DO) of the Peruvian Pima Cotton, to stop unfair competition with imported low-quality textiles.

Contract farming in Kenya

To reduce the high processing costs, Kenyan Breweries decided to replace barley with sorghum. The ministry of agriculture, within the 'Agribusiness promotion programme' (a donor funded project) procures the seed and ensures that this seed is distributed to the farmers. Farmers who receive the seed have to sign a contract. The contract is long (8 pages) and has been drawn up by the strong legal department of the Breweries. KENFAP staffs at headquarters together with coordinators at district level have studied the East Africa Breweries contract section by section. They checked whether farmers' interest has been taken into consideration. They discovered some sections they want to discuss with farmers, to verify whether these are fair or not.

Input subsidies in East Africa

Government programmes aim at increasing maize productivity by improving access to low-cost fertiliser and other inputs. It also aimed at ensuring higher output prices to adequately reward investments by farmers. However, among farmers, there were major concerns about the certainty of government interventions. The aim of the study by KENFAP was therefore to determine the impact and sustainability of the interventions, involving delivery of subsidised fertiliser and certified seeds to smallholder farmers, and to outline relevant policy recommendations.

Case-studies on organisational intelligence of economic farmers' organisations in Bolivia

During 2011, 38 economic farmers' organisations have been studied to describe the rules and regulations that they implemented to resolve the tension between the interest of the group and the interest of the individual member when engaged in collective marketing. The research identified lessons learnt on fair and cost-efficient internal organisational agreements in the group on price determinations, payment systems, quality assurance systems, commercial task delegations, etc.

Research Proposal Form

1. Contact details of Farmers Organisation

Full name Farmers Organisation:

Short name:

Country:

Number of members:

Number of households represented by the organisation:

Year of foundation:

Website:

Contact Person:

E-mail address:

Skype address:

Partnering with Agri-agency:

Contact person Agri-agency:

E-mail address contact person agri-agency:

2. Describe the main activities of the Farmers Organisation (150 words maximum)

3. Describe the problem statement or opportunity. How does this problem affect the market position of the members of your Farmers Organisation? What are the opportunities to improve the market position of your Farmers Organisation? (300 words maximum)

4. Which activities have already been conducted to solve this problem? (300 words maximum)

5. Why do you consider research necessary to solve this problem? (300 words maximum)

6. Define the objectives and main research question(s) (150 words maximum)

7. Describe the main activities that would have to be conducted by the contracted researcher(s) (300 words maximum)

8. What would be the expected outputs of the research (e.g. reports, policy proposal, database, videos, workshops)? (150 words maximum)

9. What will the Farmers Organisation do with the outcomes of the research? (150 words maximum)

10. How are the expected outputs and outcomes disseminated to, and shared with the members of your Farmers Organisation? (150 words maximum)

11. How will the board of the Farmers Organisation and its members be involved in the progress of the research? (150 words maximum)

Appendix 4 Evaluation form research proposals

Question	Comments evaluation committee member	Score (0-10) filled in by the evaluation committee members (4)
Contact details		
Description		
Problem statement		
Previous activities		
Necessary to solve		
Objective & res. Questions		
Research activities		
Outputs		
Outcomes		
Dissemination		
Involvement FO's		
Total/overall		
Note		

Appendix 5 Format application local research party

Details suggested local research consultant / partner

Name :
Contact person :
Address :
Phone number(s) :
City :
Country :
Email address 1 :
Email address 2 :
Website :
Year of establishment :

Criteria for the local data collection partner / consultant

1. Track record with research activities in the domain of small holder farmers organisations and cooperatives.
2. Formally registered entity.
3. Fluency in speaking and writing in local languages
4. Fluency in writing in English, French or Spanish.
5. Earlier engagement with collaborative research with farmers' organisations
6. Two examples of written research output.
7. Indication of staff rates.

Why is this partner/person considered by your organisation as a suitable research partner:

.....
.....
.....

Add:

- In case of consultant : CV, track record in research domain, bank details
- In case of organisation : proof of registration, track record, organisation profile, bank detail

Appendix 6 ESFIM output indicators

Output indicator	Status by 31/3/2019
Assessment criteria: outline for the research proposals including assessment criteria.	Outline for the research profile has been defined and agreed upon.
Distribution of call for proposals: FOs supported by the network of AgriCord have received three calls for proposals by September 2016.	Four calls for proposals has been distributed by the end of 2018
# Of received research proposals: at least 25 draft project proposals are submitted to WUR by FOs in the period from 1 October 2015 to December 2016.	43 draft research proposals were submitted and evaluated.
# Of funded research proposals: by the end of 2017, 17 research proposals have been /are funded.	19 research proposals have been approved and formal contracts were established 4 research projects had to be stopped.
# Research outputs: by December 2018 all 17 research projects outputs are submitted to WUR with quality appraisal provided by the FOs and meeting research quality criteria.	All 15 research outputs have been received by the end of 2018. A closing write workshop has been organised in November 2018 with all participating FOs but one
# Targeted farmers: for each implemented research proposal the number of farmers within the FO that benefit from the research outputs is estimated.	The total number of outreach is 1,333,40 member farmers and 280 member cooperatives.
Dissemination of research outputs: for each implemented research proposal the research outputs are disseminated to the relevant farmers within the FO.	All FOs submitted their dissemination deliverables and accomplished their communication aims. All FO submitted a poster of their research. Annual reports have been delivered to AgriCord. A write workshop report has been delivered in English, French and Spanish. A final report has been submitted to AgriCord. An A5 coloured brochure has been printed and disseminated. An ESFIM book chapter has been published ⁴ . The ESFIM website is up to date with all research in English, Spanish and French.

⁴ Ton, Giel., Plaisier, Christine. 2019. Participatory research of the Sage Handbook of Participatory Research (forthcoming 2019)

Appendix 7 ESFIM Write workshop 2018, Turkey

This appendix provides for the full workshop programme. The full report is presented to AgriCord in December 2018 and is available on request.

Full programme

Arrival : Sunday November 11
 Activities : Monday 12 till Wednesday 14 November
 Departure : Friday November 15

Day 1: Monday, 12 November 2018

Time	Content	Learning Objectives	Methods/Notes	Materials
09.00 – 09.45	Introduction; and objectives of the workshop	By the end of this session participants; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are introduced to the workshop methodology and programme ▶ Understand the objectives to be met ▶ Know the desired outcomes ▶ Are introduced to the participants in terms of countries, projects, similarities and differences. 	1. Interactive presentation	Projection machine
09.45 – 10.15	Expectations	By the end of this session participants; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Expressed their expectations with regard to the writeshop ▶ Know what will and will not be covered in the workshop 	1. Explanation of the assignment 2. Division in language groups 3. Presentation per language groups 4. Presentation of the programme in relation to the expectations	Metacards
10.15 – 10.45	Introduction to participants and their research projects	By the end of this session participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are familiar with each other's research projects ▶ Went through the research project poster exhibition ▶ Are aware of potential topics of research benefitting FOs. 	1. Introduction of the assignment ▶ Elevator Pitch 2. Presentation of the participants	Printed posters Paper tape
11.15 – 12.00	Overview of ESFIM research projects outcomes	By the end of this session participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have more insight on the outcomes of ESFIM projects ▶ Understand how each research contributed to FO's policies/strategies ▶ Are aware of the different ways PO's and PO members benefit from research ▶ Have an overview on the lessons learnt ▶ Know how different POs will use research for their agenda and/or to design the future of the PO 	1. Presentation of each language group research projects overview	Projection machine

Time	Content	Learning Objectives	Methods/Notes	Materials
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have insights on how to work with researchers 		
13.30 – 14.30	Transformation: Past, Present and Future	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have collectively reflected on the past and present ▶ Have visualised the past and the present 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explanation of the group work 2. Rich picture in groups Past: How was the picture looking in the past (before research) Present: How does it look today 3. Presentation of the past and today (plenary) (To create inspiration/food for thought for the future) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipchart papers Coloured pen Board markers Post-its
15.30 – 16.15	Transformation: Past, Present and Future	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have collectively reflected on the future ▶ Have collectively visualised the future 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Last rich picture Future: How do you want it to look tomorrow 5. Presentation (plenary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipchart papers Coloured pen Board markers Post-its
16.15 – 17.15	Transformation put into words	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have created a narrative of their transformation ▶ Have elaborated further on the projections 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explanation of the assignment 2. Transforming the rich pictures to a text 3. Preparing brief points to present in Plenary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projection machine
17.15 – 17.30	Wrap up of the day	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have been briefed on the key points generated through the transformation text ▶ Have reflected on the day ▶ Have been reminded of the 2nd day's programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plenary wrap up 	

Day 2: Tuesday, 13 November 2018

Time	Content	Learning Objectives	Methods/Notes	Materials
09.00 – 09.30	Recap and introduction to the day	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reflected upon the 1st day of the workshop ▶ Are reminded about the objective of the workshop and of the day 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recap of the objectives of the workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projection Machine
09.30 – 10.30	The Ripple Effect (1)	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reflected on what the research changed or will change in practice ▶ Brainstormed on the benefit and limitations with regard to the involvement of different actors throughout the research process 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to the assignment 2. Work in groups 3. Presentations – key points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipcharts Board markers Post-its
11.00 – 12.00	The Ripple Effect (2)	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identified the cooperation/collaboration opportunities created through research 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to the assignment 2. Work in groups 3. Presentations – key points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipcharts Board markers Post-its
13.30 – 14.30	The Horizon: Exploring the future for ESFIM (part 1)	<p>By the end of this session participants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have elaborated on why and how ESFIM projects could continue ▶ Explicitly formulated farmers research needs ▶ Have identified research priorities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Work in groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipcharts Board markers Post-its

Time	Content	Learning Objectives	Methods/Notes	Materials
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are able to define the difference between a development and a research project 		
15.00 – 15.45	The Horizon: Exploring the future for ESFIM (part 2)	By the end of this session participants; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have elaborated on why and how ESFIM projects could continue ▶ Explicitly formulated farmers research needs ▶ Have identified research priorities 	3. Presentations	
15.45 – 16.45	Review and finalisation of each language groups outputs	By the end of this session participants; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have reviewed and updated their different sessions outcomes 	1. Work in groups	
16.45 – 17.30	Wrap up, introduction to the fieldtrip and closing	By the end of this session participants; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Raised their closing remarks. ▶ Reflected on their expectations and Learning objectives 	1. Plenary session	

Day 3: Wednesday, 14 November 2018

Time	Content	Learning Objectives	Methods/Notes	Materials
08.00 – 17.00	Field visit: Ipek Hanım's farm	By the end of the field visit participants; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have been introduced to an entrepreneurial farm in Turkey ▶ Understand how value addition can be done at farm and/or PO level ▶ Have discussed the lessons learnt for POs ▶ Brainstormed on how the model could be replicated elsewhere. 	Breakfast (kitchen of the farm) Lunch (highland village) Dinner back in İzmir	
16.45 – 17.30	Evaluation and Recommendations	By the end of this session participants; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have evaluated the workshop ▶ Have shared their recommendations for the future 	1. Explanation of the assignment and distribution of metacards	Metacards Board markers

Sharing experiences and knowledge among between representatives of 12 different FOs

#	Organisation	PARTICIPANT	Country
1	C.C.A.	Mr. Jose Peraza Martinez	El Salvador
2	AVA	Ms. Nilda Estela Guevara	Peru
3	AOPEB	Mr. José Luis Crespo	Bolivia
4	NUCAFE	Mr. David Muwonge	Uganda
5	TTHCA	Mr. Thanh Ha Ho	Vietnam
6	DACF	Mr. Naresh Acharya	Nepal
7	Sundardeep	Ms. Sunila Rai	Nepal
8	Adad Malore	Ms. Liljana Isakaj	Albania
9	CRAM	Ms. Julienne Ralisoa	Madagascar
10	CEFFEL	Ms. Ida Randrianasolo	Madagascar
11	ROPPA	Mr. Sessi Rostaing Akoha	West Africa/BF
12	FepaB	Mr. Birba T. Athanase	Burkina Faso
Facilitators			
	Consultant	Melike Hemmami	Turkey
	Consultant	Jur Schuurman	Guatemala
	WUR	Cor Wattel	Netherlands
	WUR	Christine Plaisier	Netherlands
Logistics			

Appreciation and feedback

The main points raised in the evaluation cards were about the methodology which was mainly appreciated because of its participatory and interactive nature which helped participants to contribute widely. Another point that was repeated by many was the short duration of the workshop which inevitably had an impact on the level of sharing and being bound to a tight schedule had its limitations. Yet, participants still felt they could learn from and interact with each other during the workshop. Participants think the workshop met its objectives and used the opportunity for networking and hope to keep in touch in the future. Although the fieldwork was appreciated one participant would have liked to visit a local Producers' Organisation. Overall the participants were happy of the logistics and were pleased with the provided food and accommodation. Finally, some participants suggested, if these workshops are to be repeated, to include some time for introducing the cultural aspect of each represented country and allocate more time for off-ESFIM topic interaction. Please find below feedback of the participants according to a certain topic. Please note that the original version of the evaluation feedback can be found in annex 6.

The methodology of the write workshop was highly appreciated. However, sometimes it was difficult to aggregate all the individual stories

The highly interactive method was very much appreciated. It allows for participation, learning and co-creation. However, it would be better if case wise stories (per FO) were developed and presented. It was quite difficult to aggregate all the different stories into one overall impact story. It is worthwhile to consider the inclusion of local researchers who were involved in the research and international consultation. According to some, three days is not enough to share everything. It is very interesting and relevant for all to have enough time to share how each FO/PO operates (networking). Also, some time is needed for cultural exchanges.

Appendix 8 Process Evaluation form

Target groups: i) FO, ii) local Research party, iii) Agri-agency, iv) WUR researcher

Dear Sir, Madam NAME,

You are or have been involved in the ESFIM research project commissioned by AgriCord and implemented by Wageningen University and Research. The following questions refer to the process, the procedures and ESFIM as a tool. Please send your answers by responding to this email. Please react before DATE, Evaluation and reflection is per case. So if you as a researcher are involved in more ESFIM research projects, please refer to the specific case/FO research project under study. Your opinion will be treated with confidentiality. Please feel free to express yourself as your opinion and experiences will provide crucial insights into the process, learnings and about ESFIM as a tool. It is only possible to improve and adjust when we receive your important feedback.

Thank you very much!

Kindest regards,

The ESFIM project management,

Christine Plaisier

Kirsten Haak

Concerns:

FO:

Country:

How satisfied are you with:	Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	N/A	Comments if needed:
1. ESFIM as a tool to achieve results on the theme Smallholder farmers Access to markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. The overall results of the ESFIM research conducted by this FO?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. The local researcher involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. The WUR researcher involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. The process of submission of the proposal including the documents, the information and the criteria for assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. the communication with the ESFIM project management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. the contract and financial procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. the expertise and quality of feedback of the local researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. the communication with the local researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. the expertise and quality of feedback of the WUR researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. the communication with the WUR researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Did ESFIM meet your expectations? (scale 1-5, 1=not at all, 5=very much)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments if needed: <input type="checkbox"/>
13. How do you rate the overall execution of the ESFIM project	Very bad <input type="checkbox"/>	Bad <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments if needed: <input type="checkbox"/>
14. How applicable do you perceive ESFIM as a tool to generate insights into improving smallholder farmer market access?	Not applicable at all <input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	A little applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	Very applicable <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments if needed: <input type="checkbox"/>
15. What recommendations do you have for improving the ESFIM?							
<i>a. In terms of process and procedure</i>							
<i>b. In terms of executing the research</i>							
<i>c. In terms of dissemination of the results</i>							
Any additional comment/question:							
Can we approach you via skype or telephone for additional discussion and clarification on your answers?							
					Yes	No	

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Wageningen University & Research
REPORT
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Many grand challenges of our times, like food security, climate change, poverty, and health inequity are characterised by deep value conflicts. The same applies to possible technological and societal responses to those problems. At the section Communication, Philosophy and Technology (CPT) of Wageningen University & Research, we study problems and solutions. We analyse and clarify key values and arguments, develop new forms of dialogue and persuasive communication, and we contribute to strategies for inclusive development and responsible innovation.

