

CRF GROUNDNUT CONSORTIUM PROJECT CLOSE-OUT MEETING REPORT



Sustainable Partnerships for Research and Development: Experiences of PAEPARD Groundnut Value Chain Consortium in Malawi and Zambia

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Lilongwe, Malawi

1.0 Introduction

The CRF Groundnut Consortium led by the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) has been implementing a three-year project aimed at responding to the aflatoxin challenge and focused on reducing pre and post-harvest waste in the groundnut value chain (GnVC) in Malawi and Zambia.

The project intervened at three levels:

- i. Based on the applied research and analysis of major constraints related GnVC, promising pre- and post-harvest practices and technologies were assessed and validated through participative evaluation in selected rural households;
- ii. The tested practices were documented and disseminated to strengthen smallholder farmer capacities;
- iii. Based on the evidence gained from the validation of pre- and post-harvest practices and technologies, advocacy and policy dialogues were conducted through multi-stakeholder platforms at the local, national and regional levels with the aim of strengthening these aspects in policies and regulatory frameworks.

Over the three of implementation, the project has validated technologies and promoted them in smallholder farming systems. At the heart of the project, was participatory research that involved creating farmer awareness of the existing technologies, validating their efficacy in reducing aflatoxin and documenting research results for policy and agricultural development impact.

2.0 The Project Close Out Workshop

The close-out research dissemination workshop was held under the theme ***'Sustainable Partnerships for Research and Development: Experiences of PAEPARD Groundnut Value Chain Consortium in Malawi and Zambia'*** and aimed at sharing outputs from the research, extension and policy interventions, exploring more on policies and technologies used in management of aflatoxin, generating policy recommendations and isolating areas of further research.

Over fifty-four (54) participants from Government ministries, donor community, universities, private sector, farmer organizations and civil society participated in the workshop. The Guest of Honor to the close-out workshop was from Department of Agricultural and Research

Services in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development.

2.1 Setting the research dissemination scene

The NASFAM Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Betty Chinyamunyamu welcomed participants to the workshop and emphasized on the importance of addressing the aflatoxin challenge. In her welcome remarks, she highlighted the increasingly important role that farmers are playing in defining research trajectories, extension methodologies and policy direction. She also highlighted the lessons learnt that NASFAM as a farmer organization as well as the Groundnut consortium has learnt in terms of partnerships, strengthening research, extension and policy linkages.



Lessons learnt in implementing the project;

- *Undisputed role of farmers in research*
- *The need for a holistic approach to addressing the aflatoxin challenge*

The research dissemination also created a platform for sensitizing the participants on the global role of PAEPARD as well situating the place of Competitive Research Fund within the PAEPARD programme. Dr Jonas Mugabe, the PAPEARD Manager at FARA gave a brief overview of the PAEPARD programme, citing the work packages, the partners and the work in other countries. Striking in his remarks, was the fact that partnerships and demand-driven research are the tenets for developing sustainable solutions to smallholder farmer challenges. In agreement, Dr. Remi Kahane who is the manager of PAEPARD emphasized that the grants under PAEPARD like the CRF were meant to be 'start-up' funds to bring together partners in addressing farmer challenges and together partners will have to develop mechanisms for continuity and further resource mobilization.

Noting the fact that the work of PAEPARD is supported by the European Union, Ms. Beatrice Neri shared with the participants on the European Delegations' agenda on development highlighting main ongoing agricultural programmes in Malawi and called for strengthened collaboration first amongst EU supported initiatives and then for the wider agricultural development actors for increased cross-learning.

Finally, the opening session was concluded with remarks from the Guest of Honour, Dr Hendrex Kazembe-Phiri and the following were highlights of his speech

- The per capital consumption of maize and groundnuts in Malawi stand at 356g/day and 30.4g/day indicates high daily exposure to contaminated grains especially amongst the rural population whose diets are not diversified
- Noting the fact that the producers of groundnuts are also net consumers of own production, addressing the aflatoxin challenge requires raising the consciousness of farmers from both the health and trade perspectives.
- There is need to focus on building the capacity of farmers in validated aflatoxin management technologies but more importantly, there is need to recognize that some technologies have an impact on the labour demands of farmers hence the need to enhance mechanization in smallholder farming systems and especially on women farmers
- The national research agenda should be directed at solving the identified farmer challenges and this should be reflected in the National Agricultural Investment Plans and also the research focus of academia and CGIAR centers.

Figure 2: The High-Level table comprising of Guest of Honour, Dr Hendrex Kazembe-Phiri (Department of Agricultural Research Services); Ms. Beatrice Neri (European Commission); Dr Betty Chinyamunyamu (NASFAM); Dr Remi Kahane (CIRAD); and Dr Jonas Mugabe (FARA)



2.2 Presentation on the work of the GnVc Consortium

The second session of the workshop was on the work of the GnVc consortium. To start off the session, Ms Sharon Alfred of FANRPAN provided the historical sequencing of activities within PAEPARD that eventually led to provision of a grant to support the work of the GnVc consortium. The main point of emphasis was the participatory process of defining federating themes and developing research questions that eventually guided the research questions that formed the design of the GnVc project.

The User-Led Process for the GnVc Consortium



Presentation of research findings by Dr Mweshi Mukanga

A central focus of the close-out workshop was to disseminate results of the participatory research. Dr. Mweshi Mukanga of the Zambia Research institute (ZARI) presented the research results. Over the three years of participatory research, the following pre and post-harvest technologies have been validated;

According to research results, the Mandela Cork which has been widely promoted as a drying method to reduce aflatoxin contamination has been proved to contribute to conditions that increased aflatoxin infestation. In addition, the farmer evaluation on residue incorporation and double row led to the following conclusions;

- Incorporating previous crop residues into groundnuts field significantly increases risk of pre-harvest mould development and insect damage. However, the residue incorporation has no effect on aflatoxin prevalence which indicate that the spoilage mould observed at harvest are not necessarily aflatoxin producers.
- Double row pattern significantly increases groundnut pod mass yield (approx. 20%) but significantly compromises pod development and size. However, there is no significant difference between single and double

Dr Mweshi, shared some of the findings related to regulating technology release as well as the lessons that the consortium has documented that will be useful for further research on aflatoxins. In summary, these were some of the recommendations based on the research findings;

GnVC Research Finding	Recommendation
A basket of technologies are available that help farmers address aflatoxin simply and cheaply	Continue testing and expanding new approaches/methods of aflatoxin prevention/management
Not all current recommendations are appropriate – the Mandela Cock was promoted without local testing	Local testing of technologies is needed before they are extended to farmers
Uptake and adoption is not guaranteed: links between research and extension not always functional	Strengthen participatory research to engage farmers through-out the discovery and recommendation processes. Link with private sector

In the course of undertaking this participatory research, the consortium was influencing farmer practices in terms of drying methodologies and grading groundnuts. It was found out that by just grading and sorting, the groundnuts that is eventually presented for marketing and consumption registered lower aflatoxin level than the one that is not properly sorted.



Participatory evaluation of hand-sorting methods in reducing aflatoxin contamination



Grading and sorting

Presentation of the Result Framework

In addition to the presentation of research findings, the project's result framework was presented to the participants with a view of sharing the project indicators, the targets versus achieved indicators and more generally to share contextual issues that impacted on the project. Incomes from groundnut sales was one of the indicators that the project was measuring on an assumption that the pre and post practices that the project validated, recommended and promoted should result in increased yields, better quality and aflatoxin free groundnuts that would fetch higher prices on the market. It was however observed that in Malawi, market prices were unpredictable and unstable which led to lower incomes in 2017 coupled with inflation changes. In addition, marketing arrangements were affected by Government intervention in the market which affected timelines provisions of markets to farmers and also pricing of commodities. These findings formed part of the basis on recommendations where the need for more private sector engagement was made. The benefits of technology adoption need to eventually translate into increased incomes, reduced poverty and improved food security for farmers to appreciate the value of the technology.

► INDICATOR

► % increase in income from groundnuts (Income/ha)

Baseline	Target	2015 Actuals	2016 Actuals	2017 Actuals	Comments
MK214,000	10-15%	110% (MK450,000)	157% (MK550,000)	63% (MK350,000)	Based on 1000kg/ha & MK350
ZK2,634	10-15%	9% (ZK 2,907)	10% (ZK2,912)	99% (ZK5,250)	Based on 1500kg/ha & ZK3.5/kg Seed



3.0 The Panel discussion:

Dr Ben Bennet of the University of Greenwich- Natural Resources Institute moderated two panel discussions which set the conversation with the workshop participants who raised the following key questions and issues;

- How the GnVc partners leveraged on the existing innovation platforms to disseminate findings and push for harmonized extension messages: *In response to this, the consortium members highlighted that the local extension stakeholder panels need to inclusive of farmers' organizations, agro-dealers and all institutions working with farmers in the area so that they form a community of practice where lessons and best practices are shared.*
- How is the CRF-GnVc partnership going to be sustained: *In response, the consortium emphasized on the fact that the consortium is operating on organic growth where the principles of collaboration are centered on responding to farmer challenges and that the linkages amongst policy, extension and researchers are strengthened based on mutual benefits and accountability for results.*
- There is need to assess the cost of compliance and adoption of technologies versus additional value to farmers who adopt
- Aflatoxin management drive is focused on farmers and yet quality premiums that come from good groundnuts are captured by processors and factories who bulk, shell,

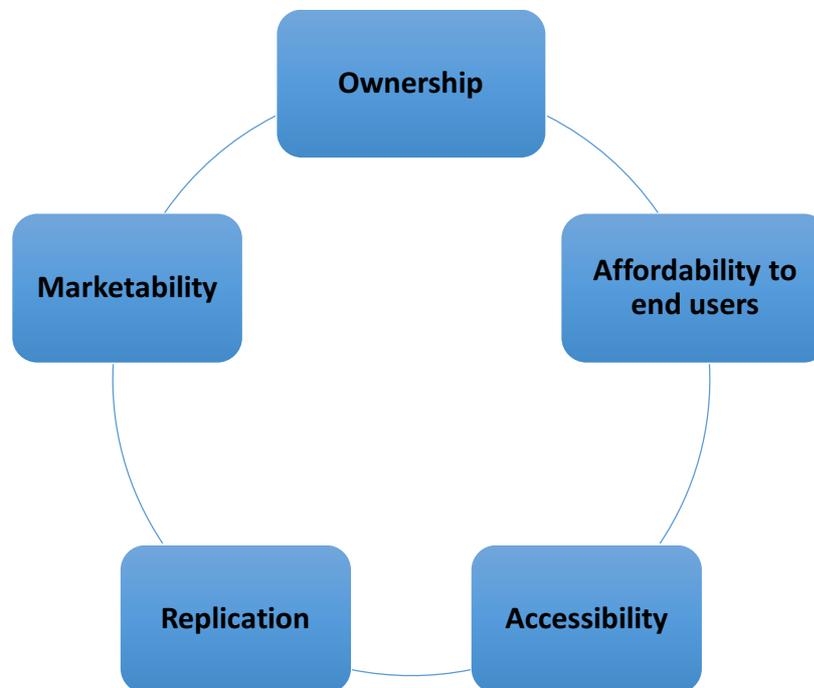
clean and grade for high end markets: *In contributing to this issue, the consortium emphasized on the need to promote strategies that move smallholder farmers up the value chain and developing strong partnerships with private sector actors. There is also need to strengthen structured trade so that the farmers that are operating in the formal markets should experience a differentiated value from those operating in the informal sector.*

- There is need to undertake a value chain optimization exercise to identify critical points of intervention for added value and benefits.
- The role of mechanization in aflatoxin management need to be highlighted
- With the changing times, regional integration and globalization, there is need review the policies and procedures for technology release while balancing local context, timeliness, cost and quality.
- There is need to move away from a focus on adoption to promoting demonstrable changes that come with the technology and the practices
- The need for a multi- sectoral approach in aflatoxin control where the push for food safety is bordering on health, nutrition, trade and economic development in general.
- The Malawi Partnership for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC) called for increased consumer awareness to demand safe and aflatoxin free foods which will in turn send the market-trade signals.
- Dr Kambewa of Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources recommended that there be geographical zooming in aflatoxin managements to avoid a one size fits all approach.

In summary, the panel and plenary discussions appreciated the lessons that were shared by the consortium and called for sustaining the momentum as well as scaling up the validated technologies, contribute to the review of national extension policies and promote the best practice of forming and sustaining multi-stakeholder partnerships

4.0 Funding modalities: facilitated by Dr lombe

The Chief Executive Officer of the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC), Dr. Felix Lombe stimulated discussions on resource mobilization for multi-stakeholder research partnerships and the role of private sector in agricultural research and development. In his preamble, he shared on the vision of AICC and the role it plays in promoting the role of business in development. Noting the fact that sustainability of multi-stakeholder partnerships and continuance of their agenda hinges on funding, a key question was posed: ***can the private sector fund participatory research and be actively involved in promoting proven practices and technologies?*** In response to this question, the following five key considerations for private sector involvement were discussed;



Therefore, to gain active participation of private sector in participatory research and development, there is need for governments, private sector and civil society to act collectively, exercise collective and shared responsibility to drive and hold the forces of economic power accountable by ensuring that business enterprises create and produce wealth responsibly and for governments to provide a conducive environment for private sector participation.

5.0 Closing & Conclusions

In closing the workshop, the Chief Executive Officer of NASFAM called upon all stakeholders to engage in these multi-stakeholder partnerships and go beyond field trials to influencing producer, trader, processor and consumer behavior change through relevant messaging and strengthening the research-extension- farmer linkages.