SURVEY OF FARMER ORGANISATIONS (FOs) IN THE SADC REGION
Preliminary Observations

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STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION

- INTRODUCTION
- PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES
- APPROACH
- CONSTRAINTS
- PRELIMINARY RESULTS
- CONCLUSIONS
INTRODUCTION

• Landscape of farmer organizations in the region has not been systematically mapped
• Incomplete and fragmented information about them.
• Lack of a consolidated database on farmer organizations in the region
• Frustrations in mobilizing broad-based support on key issues
• Communication difficulties
• Difficulties in providing them development support
• Collaboration with FANRPAN
PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

• **Purpose:**
  - To develop/compile a database of all farmer organizations in the SADC region for use by SACAU and its various stakeholders.

• **Objectives:**
  - To identify the main organizations representing farmers
  - To develop a profile of each farmer organization
  - To develop a consolidated and broader understanding of the key capabilities, issues and challenges faced
  - To assess the potential for mobilizing new members for SACAU
Areas of Enquiry

- Types of national FO’s in each country
- Contact details
- When established and how registered
- Reason for existence
- Organizational and governance structure
- Membership (number, types, fees, etc)
- Main concerns of their membership?
- Asset base
KEY QUESTIONS (cont’d)

• Communication facilities
• Activities and services
• Key national policy issues being tackled
• Regional and international trade issues
• Budget and funding sources
• Strategic alliances at national, regional and international levels
• Communication with members
• What are their key strengths and weaknesses?
• Development support needs
APPROACH

• 10 countries
• Focus on organizations that have a national constituency
• Not more than 12 FO’s in each country
• Unions, Commodity Associations and Cooperatives
• Country based researchers
• Regional coordinator
• Standard questionnaire
• Researchers’ workshop
• Convenient sampling
• Field work
Expected outputs

- Individual country profiles of FO’s
- A compendium/consolidated report representing a collation of all farmer organizations in the region for publication
- A synthesis report derived from all the individual country reports for publication
- An assessment of the potential for closer cooperation amongst the various farmer organizations for wider dissemination
- Data base of FO’s
CONSTRAINTS

- Limited resources
- Limited time frame
- Researchers- different styles and capacities
- Some FO’s reluctant be interviewed
- Restricted access to information
- Variable quality of information provided
- Length of questionnaire
- Challenges in collation/consolidation and synthesis – too many variables
PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Coverage
- Characteristics
- Objectives of FO’s
- Constraints and challenges
- Weaknesses and threats
- Communication with members
- Access to key facilities
- Main sources of funding
- Linkages
- Development support needs
- Conclusions
Coverage

• Based on returns from 8 countries (excluding Mozambique, Namibia & Swaziland)
• Total of 48 national FO’s covered
• Most (65%) are Commodity Associations
• About a quarter (27%) are Unions
• Cooperatives are not very common (8%)
Characteristics

Key observations include:
• FO’s at very different stages of development
• Few = quite old, well-established and focusing on large scale commercial farming
• Majority = relatively young, weaker and focusing on small scale agriculture
Objectives of FO’s

Main objectives of national FO’s relate to

- Provision of technical skills (48%)
- Acting as a mouth piece for members (46%)
- Protecting members’ interests (42%)
- Facilitating dissemination of market info (35%)
- Lobbying for favourable policies (33%)
- Facilitating marketing of products (32%)
- Other = less that 15% each
Constraints and challenges

- Poor access to inputs (44%)
- High cost of production (44%)
- Unfavourable economic and political environment (35%)
- Lack of tech training and extension on production (29%)
- Poor infrastructure (23%)
- Land reform/land issues (21%)
- Prohibitive policies and legislation (19%)
- Trade and market liberalisation (19%)
- Others (each less than 18%)
Weaknesses

• Ltd financial resources/weak funding base
• Donor dependence
• Poor/ltd communication systems
• Inadequate human capacity at leadership and secretariat levels
• Ltd skills for advocacy and lobbying
• Lack of assets
• Dependence on domestic markets
Threats

• Unstable macro-economic climate/ changes in government policies
• Trade liberalisation
• Poor infrastructure
• HIV/AIDS
• Non payment of membership fees
• Proliferation and competition of FO’s
Communication with members

- AGM
- Annual reports (54%)
- Quarterly & monthly newsletters (48%)
- Telephone (46%)
- Radio programmes (38%)
- Fax (38%)
- Letters (35%)
- E-mail (33%)
- Other (less than 20% each)
Facilities- Owners/Access

- About a third own offices
- 40%+ rent offices
- Vehicle ownership
- Access to internet facilities (42%)
- E-mail facilities (56%)
- Telephones (44%)
- Fax machines (60%)
- Three quarters have computers
- Two thirds have printers
- 40% have photocopiers
Main sources of funding

• Membership fees (56%)
• Donors/donations (35%)
• Levies (31%)
• Business operations (15%)
• Consultancy fees (8%)
• Government (6%)
• Service charges (4%)
• Others (interest, projects, licensing fees) less than 3% each
Linkages

• With national organisations (60%)
• With regional organisations (44%)
• With international organisations (56%)
• Knowledge of SACAU (54%)
Development support needs

- Capacity building (general?) (29%)
- Information management and dissemination (21%)
- Improved production techniques and technology (19%)
- Training in management skills (17%)
- Improvement of service delivery (15%)
- Training in advocacy, negotiation and lobbying skills (13%)
- Secretariat and funding (10% each)
CONCLUSIONS

• Fragmented landscape/multiplicity of FO’s – need for unity programs
• Inadequate linkages at regional level – need to facilitate networking and linkages among FO’s in the region
• Predominance of Comm Assoc.- explore mechanisms of affiliation to SACAU
• Variability in capacity – avoid blanket approach to capacity building
• Multiple and interrelated issues - need for a comprehensive approach
• Pool of skilled experience in mature FO’s- harness this for the development of weaker ones
• Need for support in policy analysis, advocacy, lobbying and leadership
• HIV not featuring as a key issue- Need to increase awareness on the immediate impact of the HIV/AIDS problem
• Communication capability is weak- need for programmes in this area
• Level of commercialisation of farmers is related to the strength of the FO they belong- need to speed up commercialisation of small farmers
• Marketing of SACAU