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Facilitating change

Synthesis of SDC E+I Network e-discussion 28 March to 21 April 2011

This paper is a synthesis of the first e-discussion of the employment and income network of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in 2011. The topic '**facilitating change in M4P programmes**' was based on three hypotheses drawn from an input paper developed as a follow up of the e-discussion cycles 2010 and published as a draft at the beginning of the discussion.

For fast readers, the following table gives an overview on the hypotheses and the conclusions drawn from the discussions.

Hypotheses	**Conclusions of the discussions**
Hypothesis 1: Facilitation is not restricted to programme implementation or to the implementing agent. It needs to be included at all stages of the programme cycle, from initial design to evaluation and it concerns all agents, from donors to strategic partners.	Facilitation plays on important role in all aspects of the project cycle including the initial design up to the evaluation. It is, however, important to differentiate between the attitude of being a facilitator and actually acting as a facilitator. The 'facilitative attitude' is something that needs to be present throughout the project life cycle. The actual facilitative action is something that is more concentrated on the implementation phase of the project, where the facilitation team is in contact with market system actors and tries to influence them in order to improve the stage of the system leading to reducing poverty.
Hypothesis 2: A facilitator must clarify its role and responsibility and constantly update its understanding of the system, catalyse change and engage with all actors and functions while at the same time remain neutral.	The hypothesis was largely shared by the participants. The statement that a facilitator needs to remain neutral is seen as very tricky if achievable at all, especially because also facilitators have their own agenda, project outcomes to be achieved and time frames. An internal reflection of organisational practices and a continuous update on roles and responsibilities is seen as important. In the discussion, the roles of donor and facilitation team as well as the market actors were defined. Because of the M4P approach being a rather young approach, the donor needs to be much more involved with the implementation agency to flexibly adapt the project to the changing environment and to new insights. The facilitation team needs to focus on enabling the market actors themselves to actually change the market system and not do it themselves.
Hypothesis 3: 'Crowding in' is too late when started after the initial interventions. Many preparatory steps – including a joint assessment of challenges, risks and potentials, as well as the formulation of a common vision – are essential for creating an environment of trust and learning; and more importantly, it is the basis for local ownership and long-term sustainability.	'Crowding-in' was clearly separated from 'participation'. Crowding-in was defined as the taking over of a market function by a market actor driven by a commercial incentive. Hence, it cannot start before the project interventions. Analogue to the facilitative attitude it is, however, important that the potential for crowding in of other market players is a goal from the beginning of a project – it is in effect a part of the facilitative attitude. This can be achieved with a participative approach where market actors are included in the analysis of the market system and the intervention design.

Introduction

The shift from conventional, intervenistic development projects to projects applying market facilitation is often called a paradigm shift. Approaches based on market facilitation – such as the Making Markets Word for the Poor (M4P) approach – are striving for a high degree of sustainability and outreach. Facilitation is thereby seen as 'light-touch' intervention, changing behaviours and structures in market systems that were hindering the poor to meaningfully engage in commercial transactions. The facilitation team takes up a temporary, catalytic role without becoming itself an actor in the system.

Despite this clear necessity of shifting the role of development agents towards facilitation, there is still a high degree of uncertainty what facilitating change in market system actually means in the reality of the fieldwork. A working paper to better define the term and give guidance for concrete implementation was written as a result of three e-learning cycles organised by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation discussing relevant issues in the implementation of M4P and VCD programmes[1]. A draft of this working paper was used as an input for this e-discussion and will also be used in this synthesis document as underpinning theoretical background. The final version will be produced based on the conclusions of these discussions. As a second document that serves as theoretical background is the Operational Guide to the Making Markets Work for the Poor Approach of DFID and SDC is used[2].

The present discussion was based on three hypotheses that were presented to the participants during the whole discussion cycle. Every hypothesis is presented on an introductory page together with a quick look at the theoretical background and a short conclusion of the discussion. This page is followed by a summary of the most important points of the discussion. After the presentations and discussions on the three hypotheses, open issues and questions that could not be discussed during this e-discussion cycle will be highlighted. Finally, four concrete examples of facilitation projects are presented.

e-discussion cycles 2011

After this e-discussion on facilitating change, a face-to-face event of the E+I Network will take place in Switzerland in May 2011. Based on the discussions during this event, two more e-discussions are planned later in the year. So far, the following is planned:

- e-discussion 2 in June/July 2011: "**M4P in fragile contexts – the reality check**"; follow-up, deepening and review of practical aspects from the face-to-face event in May 2011.
- e-discussion 3 in September 2011: "**Results measurement in M4P programmes – an experts hotline**"; follow-up of the training sessions during the May 2011 event and online clinic for results measurement challenges.

Contributors to this e-discussion

The facilitation team thanks all contributors of this e-discussion for their valuable comments (in order of appearance):

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[1] Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Employment and Income Network (forthcoming). *Working Paper on 'facilitating change in M4P programmes'.*
[2] Department for International Development DFID and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC (2008). *The Operational Guide for the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) Approach.*

Hypothesis 1

Facilitation is not restricted to programme implementation or to the implementing agent. It needs to be included at all stages of the programme cycle, from initial design to evaluation and it concerns all agents, from donors to strategic partners.

Conclusion of the discussion

Facilitation plays on important role in all aspects of the project cycle including the initial design up to the evaluation. It is, however, important to differentiate between the attitude of being a facilitator and actually acting as a facilitator. The 'facilitative attitude' is something that needs to be present throughout the project life cycle. The actual facilitative action is something that is more concentrated on the implementation phase of the project, where the facilitation team is in contact with market system actors and tries to influence them in order to improve the stage of the system leading to reducing poverty.

Theoretic background

In the Operational Guide for the M4P Approach, a facilitator is defined as "an action or agent that is external to a market system but seeks to bring about change within a market system in order to achieve the public benefit objective of systemic change. A facilitator is a 'catalyst' that stimulates the market but does not become part of it. A facilitator should have a clear, realistic view of the future functioning of a market system."

The document presents five factors to guide facilitation actions:

- Where a facilitator intervenes in relation to functions in a market system.
- Who a facilitator engages with in the market system.
- How facilitators conduct their relationships when they engage with the market system.
- How much support facilitators should provide in seeking to stimulate market change.
- Consistency of their actions with a 'pathway to crowding-in'.

The SDC Working Paper on Facilitating Change in M4P Programmes introduces the notion that facilitation in practice also means a better integration and participation of all actors, being on the one hand governments and donor agencies as well as market actors and beneficiaries. In the setting of the strategic framework, for example, a strong involvement of the beneficiary government can lead to the development of a common vision for the future and high-level trust. Furthermore, market actors should be involved both in the market analysis as well as the definition of sustainable outcomes.

Discussion of hypothesis 1

In order to find an answer to this hypothesis, the participants tried in a first step to better define what facilitation actually means for them and differentiated between 'facilitative action' and a 'facilitative attitude'. Many argued that facilitative action is not appropriate for the planning stage of a project because in that stage, the project implementer – or facilitation team as it was called during the discussion – needs to be very active in order to gather enough information on the market system they want to influence. Hence, following a facilitative role would not lead to solid results in this stage.

This was described for example by Scott Merrill: "The first phase of any project should be to conduct an analysis of the value chains / markets in which you are going to be working. The initial analysis or 'mapping' does not call for a facilitative role because you are not anywhere near to designing your actual interventions in the market system. Instead you are asking market actors to describe the markets in which they operate." Also Richard Kohli is convinced that "(…) the process of analysis and designing intervention strategies as such is hard core work – not light touch interventions – in which an implementer is directly and heavily involved."

On the other hand, the participants argued that a facilitative attitude needs to be adopted from the beginning of a project, i.e., also during the initial planning stages. This facilitative attitude is seen as necessary since it will lead to appropriate intervention design that follows the principles of market facilitation.

> *« Facilitation is a way of understanding and being in the world; is an ethos that should permeate everything we do as practitioners… from the talk to the walk. »*
> Luis (Lucho) Osorio.

"We must carefully differentiate between two things: (a) facilitation as a work attitude or mind set" argued for example Thomas Bernet, "and (b) facilitation as a pragmatic way of intervening in marketing systems aiming to reduce poverty."

The importance of adopting this facilitative attitude was pointed out by Luis (Lucho) Osorio, when he wrote that "it is not possible to maximise the benefits of facilitation during implementation (mainly sustainability, cost-efficiency and impact at scale) if we design an intervention using linear, top-down, managerial, control-centred approaches."

Hence, it was generally accepted that there is a need for a facilitative attitude throughout the whole project lifecycle. Facilitative action, in contrast, "is a clear way of implementing interventions and therefore relevant for the implementation step of a project", as Marcus Jenal put it.

The exclusive use of facilitative action in the implementation phase is, however, not always clear cut, as Scott Merrill specifies: "The specific techniques used and the order in which they are used varies according to the particular situation; however, the general principle is that we are facilitating market actors to propose specific activities. This means that even at the 'planning' stage, we can use facilitation techniques."

But when do we start with acting as a facilitator? For Richard Kohli, "this step gradually happens during the design stage of intervention strategies. At the initial analysis stage facilitation is secondary. (...) Progressing from analysis to design, participation of market players is probably growing and with this also facilitation." For Marcus Jenal we take the facilitation role "as soon as we start working with the system, e.g. when we get in touch with key actors (...)."

Hypothesis 2

A facilitator must clarify its role and responsibility and constantly update its understanding of the system, catalyse change and engage with all actors and functions while at the same time remain neutral.

Conclusion of the discussion

The hypothesis was largely shared by the participants. The statement that a facilitator needs to remain neutral is seen as very tricky if achievable at all, especially because also facilitators have their own agenda, project outcomes to be achieved and time frames. An internal reflection of organisational practices and a continuous update on roles and responsibilities is seen as important. In the discussion, the roles of donor and facilitation team as well as the market actors were defined. Because of the M4P approach being a rather young approach, the donor needs to be much more involved with the implementation agency to flexibly adapt the project to the changing environment and to new insights. The facilitation team needs to focus on enabling the market actors themselves to actually change the market system and not do it themselves.

Theoretical background

For the clarification of the role and responsibilities of a facilitator, both the Operational Guide to the M4P Approach as well as the SDC Working Paper on Facilitation in M4P Programmes bring forward guiding factors. The latter describes the following three core values to guide facilitation:

- *Valid information*: Everyone involved shares and understands all information relevant to an issue as well as its implications.
- *Free and informed choice*: Participants have the ability to define their own goals and ways of achieving them. The facilitator does not influence the ultimate decisions but belong to the parties themselves.
- *Internal commitment to the choice*: Internal commitment to the choice means that people feel personally responsible for the choices they make.

The Operational Guide to the M4P Approach points out four important characteristics of facilitators:

- *Closeness to markets*: their relationships with market players should be based on understanding and informed empathy, but they should not be 'captured' by them. Facilitation can be seen as acting as a bridge between the public objectives of funders and the narrower aims of individual market players.
- *Good knowledge and insight*: sufficiently informed to be able to analyse market systems and assess opportunities to stimulate change.
- *Entrepreneurial instincts*: an orientation that allows facilitators to spot opportunities and rapidly convey an 'offer' to different players in the market that not only responds to their situation but also addresses systemic constraints.
- *Independence*: a status that allows facilitators to be regarded as impartial in the eyes of market players so that the facilitation role is understood and accepted.

Since market development programmes are working in complex systems, there is no best practice for facilitation. "Given the diversity of market contexts in which facilitators operate and the array of potential market problems that they face, a blueprint for what a facilitator should actually do (or not do) is unrealistic. Facilitators will always face choices on how best to structure their interventions so that they develop rather than distort market systems", as it is written in the Operational Guide to the M4P Approach.

Discussion of hypothesis 2

The first point of discussion tried to specifically clarify the role of the different actors involved. A definition of the roles that was generally accepted by the participants was put forward by Marcus Jenal: "There is the donor, who is responsible to define the overall goal, provide the funds and usually also comes up with some additional, mandated criteria (…). This [facilitation] team is responsible for the project design following the criteria set out by the donor, including the analysis and planning phase, the implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation. Finally, we have the actual actors of the system we want to influence, i.e., the market actors, the civil society, and the government actors."

> *« Donor is responsible creating a comfortable and friendly working environment for the implementing partner. »*
> Kushtrim Mehmetaj

Different participants also expressed the need for more flexibility as in conventional development programmes, since the market system is constantly changing and strategies and interventions need to be adapted. Stefan Gamper points out that "for flexibility to work trust built through a close and regular communication between implementing agency and donor is crucial. Particularly in M4P projects, which cannot relate back to 20 years of best practices and clear implementation guidelines, but are in many ways (still) searching for answers and are constantly learning within highly dynamic environments, a regular interaction between donor and implementing agency helps to avoid misunderstandings, allows for adaptations of strategies, renegotiations of targets, definition of flexibility boundaries. From an overall portfolio management perspective this implies considerably more time, which might not always be easy to justify internally, particularly since M4P projects often co-exist in portfolios with more 'traditional' projects, where somewhat different rules apply."

> *« [Facilitation is] an art not a science! It requires to a great extent proper analysis of the situation, flexibility to approach different stakeholders with different 'tactics', business-like relationship, etc. There is no 'one-fit-all' solution to facilitation. »*
> Fouzia Nasreen

As for the role of the market actors themselves, for Marcus Jenal it is clear that "the actual market actors, i.e., the agents in the system we are looking at, should not be taken out of their usual role, since this is where their capacities and incentives lie. (…) The aim of the facilitation would be to guide them to making their job better, leading to changes in the system as a whole."

The second question while discussing this hypothesis was concerning the possibility of a facilitator to remain neutral. For Osman Haruni it is a fact that the facilitation team is often unable to remain neutral since there are planned outcomes and results of a project that must be achieved according to plan: „in order to get our desired outcome we are sometimes doing or (straightly) we have to do 'facipulation' due to 'guided by...' or 'given' budget, mandate etc." He was seconded by Thomas Bernet who cited from his experiences with the Participatory Market Chain Assessment (PMCA) framework when he said that "PMCA processes always relate to clear objectives, mainly related to 'poverty reduction', 'promotion of rural development' etc. (...) In this sense, I would say that 'facilitators' don't have to be 'neutral' – or are not neutral – but they have to be (1) committed to 'noble' sector development objectives, and (2) be transparent in this manner, by sharing these interests with stakeholders."

Finally, the discussion on this hypothesis centred on the question how to do good facilitation. Luis (Lucho) Osorio understands facilitation "as the creation of appropriate conditions for others to transform a system (could be an organization, a market, etc) easier, faster, and therefore more cost effectively." Hence, it is not the facilitator as such that transforms the system, but the system actors themselves. For Stefan Gamper "'boxing' or sharply defining [facilitation] is difficult; more important than a clear definition of facilitation is probably a regular and critical reflection on it and an adaption – sometimes maybe even a stepping out of a pure facilitating role – depending on systemic constraints in a particular market."

As a part of good facilitation it is extremely important to find the right moment to exit the system as a facilitator. Marcus Jenal reminded that from a theoretical perspective, "the exit strategy has to be part of the facilitative interventions (and inbuilt in the 'facilitative attitude')." Or, as Luis (Lucho) Osorio puts it: "One of the insight emerging from practitioners in this field is EXIT BEFORE YOU ENTER." However, in reality, this is generally not the case, as André Vording points out: "I have however not seen many successful exits/ phase outs to date. Is this because we as donors do not like to leave our successes behind, or is it because there is still something to be facilitated which we did not develop as part of an exit strategy?"

Hypothesis 3

'Crowding in' is too late when started after the initial interventions. Many preparatory steps – including a joint assessment of challenges, risks and potentials, as well as the formulation of a common vision – are essential for creating an environment of trust and learning; and more importantly, it is the basis for local ownership and long-term sustainability.

Conclusion of the discussion

'Crowding-in' was clearly separated from 'participation'. Crowding-in was defined as the taking over of a market function by a market actor driven by a commercial incentive. Hence, it cannot start before the project interventions. Analogue to the facilitative attitude it is, however, important that the potential for crowding in of other market players is a goal from the beginning of a project – it is in effect a part of the facilitative attitude. This can be achieved with a participative approach where market actors are included in the analysis of the market system and the intervention design.

Theoretical background

The Operational Guide to the M4P Approach defines 'crowding-in' as "the central process in – and purpose of – facilitation through which interventions catalyse or bring in other players and functions into the market system so that it works better for the poor. Crowding- in can result in enhanced breadth (more transactions in the core of a market), depth (supporting functions) or reach (new areas or markets)."

The pathway of crowding-in is thereby following three steps:

1. Assess and identify the key achievements from initial interventions: what is there to build on?
2. Define the size and nature of the market system in the future, given initial intervention experience.
3. Design and implement supplementary interventions to stimulate wider market development and progress.

The paper warns that "facilitators should recognise that a 'do nothing' option based on the belief that an initial spark will result in a large-scale demonstration effect is usually over-optimistic. Other than in the most innovative and resource-rich environments, change does not happen in this manner."

A market system is more attractive for other actors to crowd in the more competitive it becomes. A thorough understanding of the market system and its actors is crucial to develop the necessary interventions to achieve this. This can be reached through participatory market analysis methodologies. Especially the understanding of the mentality of the market actors is thereby important to prepare the ground for others to successfully crowd in.

Participatory methods can also directly improve the competitiveness of a market by building trust and stimulate innovation within a market chain. Transforming the relationship between market actors through participatory processes is crucial for increasing competitiveness of markets.

Discussion of hypothesis 3

To get a better understanding of crowding-in, Marcus Jenal put forward a crucial issue, i.e., the differentiation between participation and crowding-in: "We have to be careful not to confuse crowding-in with participation. I do agree that it is important to work together with key stakeholders from very early in the planning stage (...). Crowding-in, however, is something that cannot happen before the initial intervention. I understand crowding-in as the taking over of a function within the market system by market actors driven by a commercial incentive - and these incentives often only show up after the initial interventions of the facilitation team." He further points out the importance of the aim of achieving crowding in of other actors as part of a facilitative attitude: "Yes, I think that crowding-in has to be in the mind of the facilitators from the beginning, i.e., the whole point of the interventions is to lead other actors to crowd in new opportunities (...). I would include this in the 'facilitative attitude'."

Also for Luis (Lucho) Osorio it is "clear that the earlier we involve strategic market actors in the process of market transformation, the more cost-effective, sustainable and scalable it will be." He goes on in saying that "facilitators should at all costs avoid changing the market system directly and should instead create appropriate conditions for the market actors to change it themselves in the "easiest" ways possible."

Open issues that should be discussed in a future occasion

A number of issues came up during the discussion that could not be directly discussed. Some of them will be taken up either during the face-to-face event of the E+I Network in May 2011 or in later e-discussions.

- **Participation**: How to motivate market actors to participate in the analysis and intervention design phase?
- **Analysis**: How to do an analysis of the (market) system in a systemic way, i.e., including interdependencies and circular dynamics like feedback loops?
- **Exit**: How to plan the exit of a donor intervention to support an outside facilitation team? How can the donor support and the intervention from the facilitation team be planned that the endogenous actors assume ownership and self-responsibility from the beginning?
- **Long-term facilitation**: Is it appropriate to set up local facilitation entities?
- **Preconditions**: Are M4P like facilitative interventions always possible or is there a need to prepare the ground for such projects?

Next steps

After this first e-discussion on facilitating change, a face-to-face event of the SDC E+I Network will take place in Switzerland in May 2011. Based on the discussions during this event, two more e-discussions are planned later in the year. So far the following topics are planned: (i) on "**M4P in fragile contexts – the reality check**" in June/July 2011 and (ii) on "**Results measurement in M4P programmes – an expert hotline**" in September 2011, both as follow-up, deepening and review of practical aspects from the face-to-face event in May 2011.

In parallel the existing **working paper "Facilitating Change in M4P programmes"** prepared by AGRIDEA and Intercooperation will be updated incorporating this discussion's outcome. The final version will be available in English, French and Spanish and send to all members of SDC's E+I Network and e-discussion participants.

Examples of facilitation practices

In the following, four examples of projects that use a facilitation approach to influence market systems.

Example 1: Katalyst

In Katalyst, we work in a range of different sectors and thus come across a variety of partners. At the onset, as intervention managers we make sure if we have assessed the sector well enough to identify the root causes impeding inclusive growth which means we identify where the poor are in the sector, how they can benefit from the growth of the sector and what kind of market system changes are needed for this. Of course, this is not easy but we follow a range of tools for this analysis starting from field surveys to key stakeholder interviews.

Once the problem is identified, we tend to look for players in the sector who will have the incentive to change the market system.

The other very important point that we tend to be careful is to communicate our role as a facilitator very clear from the onset of making a deal with sector stakeholders. We make sure to emphasize the fact that we are temporary and are not part of the market system. It is them who should be in the lead. The communication is not easy but a very important one. This also leads to the other point of making sure the partners' adequate buy-in to the intervention in terms of commitment of resources from their side. Sometimes, it is important to show some quick-wins to the partner as a result of a better service provided to get the ball rolling. This could be done by assisting the partner to pilot a business model and learn from it.

(Fouzia Nasreen)

Example 2: Markets for Meghri

Our project operates in the remotest area of Armenia which has old traditions of horticulture. The local farmers have relative advantage in terms of crops growing in the region vs. the other horticultural regions of the country.

Thus our role is to assist in getting higher yields via introduction of intensive agriculture practices (production of and access to high quality saplings, plant protection, farming techniques, and the like) as well as enhancing access to farming-friendly finance and new markets. Regarding the M4P approach we facilitate the reinforcement of business links between major procurers, e.g. intermediaries and processors, input/agrimachinery suppliers/producers and farmers. Though sharing the same interests each of market participants has peculiarities that ask for special attitude on behalf of project. For instance, all intermediaries (middlemen) operate in the “shadow” and any additional function offered to them by the project is being respected with a certain consideration. The processors lack such restrictions therefore they are more willing for collaboration with the project.

I have to say that there is bilateral influence between abovementioned market players and the project. They know the local context, they have established informal relations with Meghri farmers that ensure high probability for the success of the new efforts leading towards deeper collaboration between them and the farmers. On the other hand we come up with initiatives based on our insights on development of mutually profitable links between all market participants. The better informed market participant both on the local context the higher probability that they grasp the offered (by the project) idea and start implement it.

(Ara Danielian)

Example 3: Participatory Market Mapping

In Practical Action, the Markets and Livelihoods Programme have been working in Africa, South Asia and Latin America developing and applying a logic of change that has facilitation at its core. For the sake of brevity, it goes like this:

- Using the resources available as facilitators …
- … we try to promote periodic engagement of market actors (i.e. routines) in three broad areas:
  - (i) Empowerment (of marginalised actors) for engagement (with other actors);
  - (ii) Interaction (of public and private actors) for transformation (of strategic parts of the market system); and
  - (iii) Communication (of successful ideas) for uptake (of innovations in the broadest sense).
- (If well facilitated) this engagement should lead to changes in the market system, led and owned by the market actors, that steer it in the

direction of higher inclusion, more productivity and competitiveness, and less negative impacts on the environment.

Some of our main roles as facilitators are getting the right mix of empowered market actors to take maximum ownership of these three processes in the shortest time and at the lowest costs possible; and helping them to explore new ways of doing business, investing and mobilising policies and other resources. We also need to create conditions for efficient diffusion of innovations to take place throughout the wider system.

(Luis (Lucho) Osorio)

Example 4: Rural Livelihoods Development Programme (RLDP)

Concrete experience of facilitation

For each selected sub-sector, a detailed and comprehensive assessment was carried out on the basis of which sub-sector strategies were developed. Looking back on our experience, we have learned that there should be increased participation of sub-sector stakeholders in both assessment and strategy development. Although RLDC has conducted "vision-building workshops" that convened sub-sector stakeholders, these meetings were more about sharing the already developed strategy than the facilitation of a sub-sector development vision owned by sub-sector actors.

Actors include private companies, rural micro-entrepreneurs, BMOs, producers' organisations, central and local Government institutions, extension agencies. As observed by Fouzia from Katalyst, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to market development; also within RLDC, interventions between the sub-sectors and even within the sub-sectors differ a lot and so does the depth of facilitation by RLDC.

All staff of RLDC's market development department has been trained in facilitation but the approach is still sometimes misinterpreted, leading to merely "subcontracting" implementation to partners. On the other hand, the way some stakeholders perceive RLDP does not contribute as well to strengthen the role of facilitation. So explaining facilitation seems to be an ongoing exercise and will probably with RLDP as long as it exists. However the training and coaching of staff can improve its understanding and application.

How are we perceived by actors?

The identification and selection of partners becomes an important aspect of market development which RLDP addresses throughout the process of market analysis and vision building. Some of our partners do not have adequate competence and do not share the same vision, however we have not much alternatives within the context of the Central Corridor and must therefore work with them. We have to do capacity building although it would not be required from a M4P point of view.

We also share the difficulties highlighted by Fouzia about the dilemma between a temporary role of the project versus a more long term need for market facilitation. While the current practice of rather short (max. 1 year) contracts may favour the first, they fail to build the capacities for the latter. It is also not clear whether we should be a temporary facilitator, or whether an additional role would be to prepare another stakeholder to take over this role in the long-run.

Who are we influencing?

At a local level, RLDC is able to influence collaborations between stakeholders. For example, facilitation has led to better collaboration between the private and the public sectors in the cotton sub-sector with private companies and the local government authority engaged in active dialogue mechanisms and concrete collaboration. RLDC has also managed to convince private companies about the potential benefits of investing in relationships with producers, e.g. by establishing local service provision systems linked to public extension services (cotton, sunflower, rice sub-sectors) or by promoting the organisation of individual producers (dairy and cotton sub-sectors).

Who is influencing us?

Given the fact that RLDP was a pioneer in market development in Central Tanzania, the influence of other market development actors was quite small at the beginning. Realisation of dialogue needs emerged, however, later and led to the creation of the National Market Development Forum as well as several internal "World Café" exercises to exchange views and ideas. The programme will have to endeavour to also learn more from the others.

(Alain Cuvelier with Susan, Maja, Godfrey)