SECTION 6

The Planning Report and Preparing for the Next Steps

The planning report based on the work in this *guide* aims to establish a common framework for partners to begin a process of agroenterprise development in their designated area. The report should be written in a simple style, so that the results from the resource assessment and joint planning process can be shared amongst partners and community members. Results can be presented in two ways:

1. As a combined text and table document that includes sections on purpose, results, and next steps.
2. As a verbal talk, with key points illustrated by pictures to show areas of interventions and basic bullet points for actions, indicating who will be responsible for which activities.

Outline of the Planning Report

A basic outline for the planning document could be as follows:

Title and authors
Acknowledgments
Executive summary
Contents
Introduction
Objectives for the agroenterprise planning process
Reconnaisance study
Formation, purpose, and membership of the working group
Results from the resource assessment
- Definition and map of area
- Criteria and results from zoning exercise *(if undertaken)*
- Identification of farmer groups and potential products
- Prioritize interventions according to their importance, feasibility, and impact.
- Identify short-, mid-, and long-term activities
- Resource allocations—existing and required
- Action plan with a timetable, showing roles and responsibilities

Plan for monitoring and evaluation

Conclusions and recommendations
Appendix 1. List of organizations in the working group
Appendix 2. Questionnaire used in resource survey
Appendix 3. Cards of the most preferred products

This final document should be held by the faciltating organization and local working group members as a record of how the process was conducted and results. The product options should now be used in the next step of the agroenterprise development process, which is focussed on the identification of market opportunities and market chain integration.

Next Steps

At the end of this planning *guide*, the working group survey team will have selected a specific area for intervention, identified key partners and farmer groups to work with, and identified potential products that require market evaluation.

The study will also have highlighted areas of weak capacity, where additional training is required and where more contacts need to be made. In some cases, additional training and preparation will be required prior to shifting into the next stage. Some issues to review include:

- Are the existing smallholder producer groups sufficiently well organized to take on market based interventions? Are they already involved in collective actions, or will this be a new concept for them?
- Are the partners and their farmer groups sufficiently interested and/or motivated to invest more time in undertaking further market studies to evaluate market prospects for products they are already producing, or are they more interested to evaluate new market options?
- Do the facilitating partners have sufficient in-house capacity to lead a market-based intervention or do they require additional training prior to or as part of their learning process?
- Does the combination of partners and farmer groups have sufficient financial capital to invest in new enterprise options? If not, can the group obtain credit from a local service provider, a micro credit organization or do the farmers also need to start a savings and loans scheme to build financial skills and capital.
- What scale of intervention is the working group hoping to achieve? Will the working group opt for a small pilot project, several marketing approaches for diverse producer groups, or focus activities on one mainstream market option?
- Are there any conflicts between seeking widespread impact for a given market area and the desire to provide differentiated options for diverse beneficiary groups?

After discussing the most important issues related to next steps, we advise the team to continue as quickly as possible onto the next step in CIAT's Agroenterprise Development Strategy. Depending on the strategy selected, the farmer group should work with the most appropriate skills set outlined in one of the following *guides* from the Agroenterprise Development series:

- Identifying Market Opportunities for Rural Smallholder Producers.
- Participatory Market Chain Analysis for Smallholder Producers.
- A Market Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Agroenterprise Development.
- Collective Marketing for Smallholder Producers.

The service providers, research team, and representatives of interested smallholder producer groups, should evaluate which methods are most appropriate in their next steps and then begin the process of upgrading their skills to identify new opportunities for increasing their incomes through successful agroenterprise development.

Conclusions

Undertaking this first practical part of the agroenterprise development approach is the beginning of a new journey towards marketing for smallholder producers. This first step will have highlighted some of the assets and resources available in the target area and also provided a flavor of the requirements in building new enterprise options.

Although no investments have been made as yet, the planning stage is an important part of the overall process, and learning how to analyze local resources, and engage local agencies and business options, are important elements in

building agroenterprise capacity. This first analysis is an important learning process, not only for the lead service provider but also for the members of the working group, who can begin to use these skills now and in their future business planning.

This first step provides a sound basis to start engaging in marketing and for developing skills in systematic information, gathering, analysis, and decision making. These are all vital skills for the subsequent stages in agroenterprise development.