

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING ON EXPORT PROCEDURES IN THE EAC FOR FOOD PRODUCTS TO AGRI-VALUE CHAIN ACTORS HELD IN NORTH KIVU, DRC ON 01 NOVEMBER 2023.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

A training session was held in the Federation des Entreprises du Congo (FEC)/North Kivu meeting room on Wednesday, November 1, 2023. The training organised by FEC in collaboration with the East African Business Council (EABC) under the Sequa programme involved members of the agricultural sector of FEC/North Kivu.

The purpose of the capacity-building training was to train stakeholders on export procedures in the East African Community (EAC). The training was attended by Business leaders and/or their representatives.

2.0 PARTICIPANTS

The workshop convened **40 agri-value chain stakeholders** from the agri-value chains, media, and government agencies. The list of the participants is attached as an **appendix**.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

In her welcome address, Mrs. MASIKA KIGHANA Espérance, Head of the Provincial Directorate of the FEC/North Kivu and Facilitator of the workshop recalled that the training follows the Regional Training of Trainers Workshop organised in August 2023 on Contract Farming and Export Procedures, following the integration of FEC and EABC.

Among the objectives of this training, she cited:

- i. Enhance participants' capacities and knowledge of EAC export procedures,
- ii. Help participants understand export processes and documentation requirements for food products,
- iii. Enhance the understanding of participants in the EAC trade regime on the specific rules and regulations governing food exports within the EAC region, and
- iv. Strengthen participants' capacity to take advantage of export market opportunities at the regional and global levels.

4.0 THE TRAINING SESSION

This workshop was divided into three main parts, namely the presentation of the module, the reactions of the participants and the group work. Finally, the recommendations sanctioned this training.

4.1. PRESENTATION

The presentation focused on several points, in addition to the objectives already mentioned above. These were Food Sector Export Opportunities and an Analysis of demand for selected food products: An analysis of the opportunities was presented to the participants. It was seen that the DRC ranks among the importers of cereals, fish and fish products, meat and edible eggs, dairy products, birds/poultry eggs, and edible vegetables. On the other hand, no products are exported from the DRC to other countries. Hence, the concern is for Congolese Economic Operators to think about their ways of working and focus on improving their production.

Understanding export trade in the context of the EAC: After explaining what exporting is in the context of the EAC, which can be either formal or informal, various reasons for exporting were discussed. These are opportunistic reasons and tactical reasons. Opportunistic reasons include earning foreign exchange for businesses, selling overproduction, etc. Among the tactical reasons, the local market does not allow for

growth, it is stagnant and saturated. It is also a question of avoiding competition within the subregion, Export enablers, Legal frameworks, population, production capacity, access to the ocean, incentives, multilateral frameworks with the EU, etc.

Export-friendly principles in the EAC were reviewed. These include non-discrimination, reciprocity to prevent free riders, binding and enforceable commitments, transparency, and safety values. Among the various export facilitation, preferential market access under EAC trade regimes, duty and VAT exemptions. The participants were informed that there are no export taxes, however, there are duty refunds on materials to be produced for export. There is also foreign exchange liberalisation as exporters have the right to retain 100% of foreign exchange.

Some of the export challenges identified included complex export procedures, the fundamental elements were emphasised namely resources, including finance, land and knowledge. Then there is production and marketing. It was stressed for exporters to fulfil their responsibility for the orders after getting paid.

Then the different stages of export were explained. These include preparing for export, producing, buying, shipping and finally getting paid. Reference was also made to the documents required for export. Export documentation identifies the goods and the conditions of sale. They also provide the title to the goods, proof of insurance coverage, and guarantee that the goods will pass through customs quickly and without any unexpected costs.

4.2. DISCUSSIONS

Participants were informed of COMESA-RECOS. RECOS is the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime that can be used by small-scale traders, whether or not they are nationals of COMESA countries. Through the regime, small-scale traders can import or export goods with a value of not more than USD 2,000. The goods are included in the common lists of products eligible for RECOS. These are goods that merchants are going to sell. Travellers who do not have goods for sale should not use RECOS. Traders with consignments of goods exceeding USD 2,000 who would like to benefit from the exemption from customs duties on the goods should use the COMESA Certificate of Origin and the Customs Documents.

During the discussions, it was also noted that DRC's borders are porous and there is no financial support in the agricultural sector. It was highlighted that some of the provinces such as Rutshuru Territory do not have funds to pre-finance the production by farmers.

Instead, the farmers obtain their finance from neighbouring countries of Uganda and Rwanda which are pre-financing this production at more than 60%. As a result, they are the ones who set the conditions and thus dictate the terms of sale and benefits to producers are marginalised. The issue of lack of skilled labour force and low application of fertilizers was also highlighted. Imported fertilizers may not be compatible with the soil and thus may impact the fertility of the soil leading to serious sustainability problems. Participants were sensitized to move away from the myth that soil fertility is enough for quality produce and encouraged to use compatible fertilizers.

Participants also reacted to the issue of insecurity in the Eastern part of the DRC. It was stressed that ongoing insecurity in the DRC is detrimental to agricultural productivity. Participants also called for the government to provide quality seeds to farmers to meet the production challenges.

Stressed on the need to focus on local sourcing of chicks as the region has adequate and affordable supply. It was, however, recommended that local suppliers of chicks should enhance the capacity to follow up and after-sales services to consumers. Further, there should be training for poultry farmers on proper breeding techniques and available technologies.

Farmers were also informed on the sources of credit. Further noting that in most countries, there are insurance companies and financial institutions that work in agricultural production. Once all producers are insured in the event of a production-related problem, the insurer contacts the Bank to make up for the losses recorded. However, in DRC, there is an absence of insurance companies that work in production.

4.3. RESULTS OF THE GROUP WORK

Participants were asked to list the top 5 agricultural food products that the DRC should specialise in exporting and the reason.

GROUP 1

N°	PRODUCT	DESTINATION COUNTRY	REASON
01	Palm Oil	KENYA, SOUTH SUDAN, and RWANDA	Potential for high production.
02	Ground Nuts	KENYA, SOUTH SUDA, and CHINA	Potential for high production.
03	Chilli Pepper	KENYA, CHINA	Potential for high production.
04	Soya Beans	RWANDA, KENYA, UGANDA, CHINA	Potential for high production.
05	Coffee and Cocoa	EUROPE	Potential for high production.

GROUP 2

N°	PRODUCT	DESTINATION COUNTRY	REASON
01	Sugar	KENYA, TANZANIA, RWANDA	Internal self-sufficiency.
02	Soya Beans	EAC Partner States	All EAC Partner States export Soya Beans to Ghana.
03	Fish	EAC Partner States	Adequate water bodies.
04	Groundnuts	EAC Partner States	Possibility of high production
05	Chilli Pepper	EAC Partner States	Possibility of high production

GROUP 3

N°	PRODUCT	COUNTRY OF DESTINATION	REASON
01	Coffee	BRAZIL, THAILAND, USA	High demand ¹
02	Chilli Pepper	EAC Partner States, CHINA	High demand
03	Pasta	EAC Partner States	Adequate quantities.
04	Soya Beans	EAC Partner States	Possibility of high production
05	Vanilla	EAC Partner States	Possibility of high production

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the discussion, the participants provided the following recommendations:

5.1. Government:

- i. Restore and ensure national security.
- ii. Provide producers with improved seeds and appropriate equipment for agriculture.
- iii. Facilitate small-scale producers in the face of high competition from imports.
- iv. Create an Agricultural Bank to facilitate credit to small producers and pre-financing production.
- v. Create facilities for the production or analysis of fertilizers.
- vi. Reduce the cost of the coffee export certificate.
- vii. Centralise production statistics.

5.2. EAC:

- i. Mutually recognise the analyses carried out by the DR Congo Bureau of Standards (OCC) and the Ministry of Agriculture's Animal and Vegetable Quarantine Service (SQAV) and admit them throughout the EAC.
- ii. Lift restrictions prevent the Congolese from exporting to their respective countries and they do so easily by exporting their products to the DRC. This is the case with the packaging requirements for palm oil from Congo.

¹ Il se trouve que le certificat d'exportation du café coûte cher. Ce qui freine le volume des exportations.

5.3. FEC:

- i. Advocate for farmers, producers, and entrepreneurs.
- ii. Carry out marketing for respective members, in the case of those who work in poultry.
- iii. Invest in agricultural production insurance companies.
- iv. Establish statistics on their production and transmit them to the authorities for the drafting of reliable reports.
- v. Train before starting a business in this or another field.
- vi. Enhance members' collaboration to boost their respective activities.
- vii. Improve production competitiveness.

5.4. Public

- i. To build a culture of consuming local products.

ANNEXES:

1. REVIEW OF POST-EVALUATION FORMS.
2. PHOTOS OF THE ACTIVITY.
3. ATTENDANCE LIST

POST-TRAINING EVALUATION ON THE PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING

Q1	DEMOGRAPHY				
	MALE	FEMELLE			
	19	23			
	From the survey about 55% of the participants were Female and 45% were Male				
Q2	OVERALL ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP				
	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
	12	30	0	0	0
	Most of the participants (75%) were of the view that the organisation of the workshop was Very Good. Moreover, 25% of the participants rated the overall organisation and structure of the workshop as Excellent.				
Q3	TRAINING OBJECTIVES				
	YES	NO			
	42	0			
	All participants replied that the training objectives were clearly stated and achieved during the training.				

Q4	CONTENT OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS			
	HIGHLY INFORMATIVE	INFORMATIVE	AVERAGE	NON-INFORMATIVE
	42	0	0	0
	All participants were of the view that the contents of the training were Highly Informative.			
Q5	RELEVANCE OF THE TRAINING MATERIALS			
	YES		NO	
	42		0	
	All the participants were of the view that the training materials were useful and relevant.			
Q6	KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE TRAINER IN DELIVERING THE CONTENT			
	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR
	0	42	0	0
	All the participants rated the knowledge and experience of the trainer as Very Good respectively.			
Q7	QUALITY OF INTERACTIONS AND ENGAGEMENTS			
	YES		NO	

	42	0		
	All the respondents were of the view that the training sessions were interactive and engaging.			
Q8	OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO ASK QUESTIONS AND SEEK CLARIFICATION DURING THE TRAINING.			
	YES	NO		
	42	0		
	All the respondents felt that they were given adequate opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification during the training.			
Q9	RATING OF THE TRAINING FACILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS			
	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR
	0	42	0	0
	All the participants reported that the training facilities and arrangements were Very Good.			
Q10	CAPACITY AND SKILLS IN EXPORT PROCEDURES			
	YES	NO		
	42	0		
	All the participants were of the view that the training objectives met the requirement to enhance their capacity and skills in Export Procedures for food products.			

Q11	PERCEPTION OF THE CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN EXPORT PROCEDURES AFTER ATTENDING THE TRAINING	
	YES	NO
	42	0
	Participants were asked to rate their perception of the capacity acquired on export procedures after the training. All the participants perceived that they were better equipped to engage in export procedures after attending the training.	

Q12	RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE TRAINING
RESPONSES	<p>The responses below highlight aspects of the training that were relevant and useful to the trainees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Export procedures. ii. Analysis of the demand of the EAC countries, what to on when exporting, and the demand that our country needs the most. iii. EAC Partner States country profiles of opportunities. iv. The importance of getting into exporting. v. The training was interactive, especially regarding the export of products to other countries. vi. Understanding of the procedures (transportation, documentation, etc.) and prioritisation of food products when exporting. vii. Identification of exportable products from the DRC that we can improve in our country. viii. Process of obtaining Export Documents and other trade documents focusing on quality and customs clearance. ix. Export drivers, export-facilitating institutions, exported products. x. Knowledge of support structures at the documentary level by the Bureau of Standards (OCC) and Ministry of Livestock (SQAV). xi. Transparency and working in a cooperative. xii. Identification of the products we need to produce to increase our exports.

Q13	PROPOSED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
RESPONSES	<p>Respondents proposed the following areas for improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Expand training on the area of customs in the customs. ii. Local suppliers should improve their customer and after-sales services. iii. Vaccination of chickens. iv. Focus on the quality of the products and know the suppliers before launching, signing contracts and being formal. v. Agricultural productivity. vi. The ECF can help to improve farmers' capabilities. vii. Applying reciprocity in the agricultural sector in the DRC. viii. Grassroots production (quality products). ix. Coffee, cocoa, palm oil. x. Provide a clear understanding of the documents. xi. Organise for mass exports. xii. Invite the relevant authorities during the next workshop to listen to the challenges presented by economic operators on exporting. xiii. We always need to multiply these types of training. xiv. Constantly review the procedures for exporting food products in the EAC. xv. The duration of this training can take at least 2 to 3 days to deepen certain notions on export procedures. xvi. Supporting farmers to increase the quality and quantity of production. xvii. Improve capacity to provide certification with the OCC which is problematic for exporters as well as several required documents. xviii. Packaging and compliance. xix. Study of market products, develop a business plan, and product development, and know the quality and standard of the product. xx. Rehabilitation of agricultural feeder roads. xxi. Exemption for farmers. xxii. The notion of added value. xxiii. The Laws of Reciprocity. xxiv. Improving skills and financial support for farmers for better positioning on the African and global markets. xxv. Breeding, fishing, and the production of necessities. xxvi. The EAC should make it easier for customs to clear goods. Example: DRC-RWANDA.

Q13	POSSIBLE CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS TO BE MADE IN THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF THE TRAINEES.
RESPONSES	<p>The respondents provided the following areas of improvement in their professional practice following the training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. We will provide a declaration advisor and legal counsel for international contracts. ii. I always want to take care of the quality of my products, be formal and sign contracts before production. iii. We will improve the quality and quantity of our products to have a better impact in the region. iv. Obtaining all required documents during export. v. I intend to focus on the production of raw materials in the field. vi. Stress on acquiring the necessary export documentation for our products. vii. Direct all members in my department to facilitate exports in one day. viii. How to prepare for export. ix. Maintain business documents and improve the quality of my products. x. Become competitive using the knowledge of products to be imported for a new market and the necessary documents for export. xi. Look for necessary documents and find off-takers first before exporting goods. xii. The practice of watermelon and apple cultivation. xiii. Product certification. xiv. Formalisation and packaging of products. xv. Have the certificate of origin. xvi. Broadening my vision to face the EAC market. xvii. Make sure to complete the entire procedure and document review, sign the contract before shipment, and meet the insurance requirements and regulations of the destination country.

Q14	THE IMPACT OF THE TRAINING ON THE MEMBERS OF THE TRAINEES' ORGANISATION
RESPONSES	<p>The respondents identified the impact of the knowledge gained from the training on the members of their organisation as provided below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The training was relevant and has the potential to impact our company's productivity. ii. Encourage our members to work hard to improve the quality of our product. iii. Understanding the export of food products. iv. We will provide feedback to our agents. v. Start planning for the necessary steps on exports. vi. The organisation of work and work in the sectors demanded by importing countries. vii. Enhance the team's focus on quality production. viii. Restitution to the members of my company. ix. Capacity building. x. Better organise our work and ensure our products are packaged well. xi. This training will be shared with members of my organisation. xii. Importance of vaccination for chicks. xiii. Improve our product quality.
Q15	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
RESPONSES	<p>The respondents provided additional comments/suggestions regarding the training programme as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Please arrange follow-up training on the necessary compliance documents when importing and exporting to international markets. ii. Ensure that the time is respected. iii. We will also train our agents.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">iv. We need the support to enhance our export capacities.v. Implement the recommendations made by the participants.vi. Sharing the training module for the good mastery and practice of the subject.vii. Enhance the government's support for agricultural entrepreneurs and processors so that in the country, we can produce in quantity products to satisfy the local market first, then export.viii. Allow the opportunity to exhibit our products in the EAC country to enable us to improve our products and marketing.
Refresher training in all areas.ix. The assessment should be done online.x. These trainings are an opportunity to get a first-hand look at the problems affecting the cross-border market. |
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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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PHOTOS







MEDIA

<https://www.agoragrandslacs.net/nord-kivu-la-fec-renforce-les-capacites-des-entrepreneurs-du-secteur-agricole-sur-les-procedures-en-vigueur-dans-la-cae/>

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