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Multistakeholder Platforms for Sustainable Food Value Chains in Tanzania: A Space for Empowerment and Effective Engagement

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Abstract

To address the challenges facing the agriculture sector and natural resource management, the multistakeholder platform (MSP) approach is increasingly being embraced by research and development actors as a framework aimed to bring together multidisciplinary and heterogeneous actors to address problems of common interest. MSP approach aims to enhance effective interaction and engagement of stakeholders to join hands together in setting strategic directions, identifying complementarities and developing joint actions. The approach helps to create a space for empowerment and active participation of multiple stakeholders intending to search for solutions to common problems. Recently, the MSP approach was adopted by a consortium of researchers from different institutions in Germany and Tanzania who are implementing a multistakeholders food value chain project aiming to innovate upgrading strategies to safeguard Food Security using technology and knowledge knowns as “Trans-SEC project”. Stakeholders in Trans-SEC project include farmers (and pastoralists), processors, millers, stockiest, traders, middlemen, transporters and consumers, policy makers, extension officers, service providers, NGOs and churches etc. The engagement process in Trans-SEC project happens through interviews, workshops, focus group discussions, trainings, testing and assessing food value chain UPS that take place during the implementation of various planned activities. Through stakeholders’ involvement, it has become apparent that stakeholders have different perceptions across case study sites, at district, regional and national levels. In order to achieve an effective involvement, there is need for good facilitation skills to allow interaction of actors while considering age, gender, status, skills, and personal background. However, farmer groups which have been formed to implement each UPS in the case study sites are still very weak, hence need continuous monitoring so to enable then play their role efficiently.

Keywords: Food security, food value chain, multistakeholder platforms, multistakeholders engagement processes