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Mapping Knowledge Management in a Banana Agro Processing Industry in Uganda: the Case of the Banana Industrial Research and Development Centre

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Abstract

This research conducts a systematic focus on knowledge mapping of the Banana Industrial Research and Development Centre (BIRDC) with the aim of identifying the different critical actors, how they collaborate and share information and how to improve efficiency of their operations from the banana farms through the agro-processing. The main goal for engaging in this research was to identify and map the different knowledge centres, their knowledge needs and interlink the different actors along the production chain. Specifically, the objectives were to identify and categorise the knowledge levels of the different actors in the banana production chain, identify how the stages in the banana production chain are interlinked, investigate the extent to which BIRDC has implemented knowledge management practices such as knowledge creation, sharing and retention through the assessment of existing KM enablers, develop a model that interlinks the different actors to ease information access and to make recommendations to the BIRDC management on KM and mapping. The research design used in this study was a non-probability purposive case study in the pilot banana-growing area located in the five districts of the Greater Bushenyi. Quantitative data were collected from randomly selected managers and technicians at BIRDC and randomly selected banana farmers located in the different sub-counties of the Greater Bushenyi districts. In addition, a GPS was used to collect shape-file information from the research sites and ArcGIS was used to map the study area using some of the quantitative data that was collected. The findings of this study indicated that KM and mapping concepts were not well understood at BIRDC, but after the research, the BIRDC staff viewed the subject as a necessary contribution that would impact on their performance. The findings showed that collaboration of staff within the BIRDC organisation and between BIRDC and the banana-farming communities in creating a meaningful and relevant knowledge environment was essential for BIRDC competitiveness in promoting the commercialisation which is the cornerstone of the organisation. The conclusions and recommendations help develop appropriate BIRDC's wide policies and practices for proper and well-organised methods of integrating and harmonising work processes, collaboration and information sharing.

Keywords: Knowledge management, knowledge mapping, organisational performance, precision decision-making, product traceability