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Towards a circular production system in the coconut value chain: Actor, roles, linkage and constraints in Kilifi county, Kenya

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Abstract

Circular economy (CE) has been recognised as an innovation to resolve coconut waste challenges while promoting economic growth. A transition towards a circular economy is expected to be a shared responsibility among stakeholders. However, there is limited research in relation to the interactions between actors in the coconut value chain. This limits the development of strategies to enhance stakeholder collaboration, therefore hindering the development of policy that enhance extension service delivery. This study, based on the coconut value chain, elucidates stakeholders' perceptions by identifying key actors, their roles, linkages, level of influence, perceived benefits, and potential constraints faced by actors. Data were collected through a participatory workshop and key informants' interviews anchored on Social Network Analysis (SNA). Twenty-one stakeholders and linkages were identified in the information, product, and finance networks. The National Coconut Development Authority (NOCD), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (MOALF) were the most influential stakeholders in the information network. Farmers and cooperatives are centrally positioned in the product network, whereas finance flow is dominated by the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and the private sector (commercial banks). Despite stakeholders' positive perceptions, several challenges, such as actors' limited knowledge and skills, inadequate funding, and limited market access, impede the transition to a circular economy. To enhance the adoption of a circular economy, this study recommends the formation of more inclusive farmer groups and cooperatives to improve access to information, credit, market linkages, and bargaining power, strengthening the coconut value chain.

Keywords: Circular economy, coconut value chain, Kilifi county, net map, value chain stakeholder