Tanga Dairy Platform: Case study teaching note

Produced in association with this article:

1. Statement of Relevance

This case study describes the story, organization mode and main achievements of the Tanga Dairy Platform. It is an informal multi-stakeholder platform involving milk producers, dairy processors, input suppliers, milk distributors, NGOs, research organizations and local government bodies. The platform was set up to solve common problems of the dairy industry in this relatively poor rural region of Tanzania. Despite its informal status and activity in a developing country, it is functioning very much like an American commodity council, a Brazilian sectoral and thematic chamber, a Canadian value chain roundtable, a South African commodity forum or an inter-branch organization in European Union countries.

This case is thus a very relevant one to help food and agribusiness users around the world think about and discuss the complex management issues that come with running, facilitating or fostering multi-stakeholder knowledge and information systems, and commodity associations. This case study is also particularly relevant because it shows how the Tanga Dairy Platform has kept meeting and achieving relevant results for its members, despite losing external funding, by relying on the goodwill and energy within its membership. Indeed, financial sustainability and facilitating relevant interactions of multiple stakeholders with different opinions are the two most pressing challenges in operating such a multi-stakeholder group. The Tanga Dairy Platform seems to have found a solution for both of these issues.

The teaching note also invites users of the case study to reflect on the likely impacts on sustainability of these multi-stakeholder groups.
2. Target Market Statement

Main messages. The Tanga Dairy Platform has continued its dairy industry development activities despite losing its initial source of external funding. Key to its success is its capacity to deliver achievements that are relevant to its members, in particular in lobbying for changes in policies related to the dairy industry. This in turn has helped the platform become an interesting forum for a majority of the stakeholders involved in the dairy sector, even beyond Tanga region. Local government authorities and many local and international NGOs are now regular members playing key roles and providing funding for some of the platform’s activities and the region’s dairy development.

Teaching objective. By using this case study and its additional suggested materials for teaching, your students will develop their understanding of the complex concept of a multi-stakeholder group. They will become aware of the various organizational models and legal frameworks that allow the existence and success of such bodies, from multi-stakeholder informal commodity forums to extremely regulated commodity associations in developing and industrialized countries. They will discuss business strategies to allow such precarious organizations to become financially sustainable and relevant to their members and commodity industries. They will also consider the likely impacts of these organizations on the sustainability of their members’ enterprises and communities.

Intended audience: senior undergraduate course or graduate course in agribusiness management, organizational development, agricultural economics or development economics. This case may also be used for executive education, adult education and extension on fostering multi-stakeholder groups for agribusiness development.
3. References

References on the various institutional set-ups, management structures and funding mechanisms of multi-stakeholder platforms, discussing their pros and cons:


References on how multiple-stakeholder platforms can contribute to relevant agrifood policy making and value chain development:


Reference on how multiple-stakeholder platforms can contribute to fostering sustainable natural resources management:


More studies of dairy multi-stakeholder platforms in Tanzania:


4. Teaching Strategy Statement

What are the most relevant organizational models for multi-stakeholder platforms? This case study presents the loose structure and meetings process of the Tanga Dairy Platform, which has emerged as the most appropriate organizational mode to share information, discuss common problems and implement activities together with all the stakeholders of the Tanga dairy industry.

This case also illustrates the strong roles the Tanga Region local government and other dedicated actors in the dairy chain play in sustaining the Tanga Dairy Platform. The platform’s achievements have made it an interesting forum for a majority of the stakeholders involved in the dairy sector. This attracts many new members who contribute their knowledge and contact networks, making the platform stronger in its diversity, but also more difficult to manage and expensive to run. Should the platform continue accepting new members or organize its meetings better so more diverse opinions can be contributed? How can the platform find a sustainable model to fund the activities needed to develop the region’s dairy industry?

Teachers may want to use the business strategy questions at the end of the case study to help students discuss how the Tanga Dairy Platform’s organizational model and history have fostered activities that are very relevant to its members, but also identify the limits of the current organizational model in terms of reaching consensus, funding activities and implementing them. Finally, this case study can also start a class discussion on the likely impacts on sustainability of organizing the various actors of a value chain or industry within a multi-stakeholder platform. Additional reading material listed in section 3 above may be distributed to different groups of students as homework to allow the class as a whole to share different components they have read on how best to organize multi-stakeholder platforms that achieve impact in a value chain setting. The prezi and youtube video referenced in section 5 below may also come in handy as additional material to prompt a discussion in class. See activity statement below for a detailed lesson plan.

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1 Prezi is an open-access online presentation software that makes presentations stand out and get remembered by combining motion, zoom, and spatial relationships. Learn more from [www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com)
5. Activity Statement

Homework: Split your class into three equal groups. Ideally, each group should also be representative of the whole class’s diversity. Give your students their homework to read at least two weeks in advance according to Table 3 below. If you wish to mark the students using a short essay related to the case, you can give them the assignment suggested in Table 3.

Table 3: Homework schedule and assignments on multi-stakeholder platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory reading</td>
<td>Tanga Dairy Platform case study</td>
<td>Tanga Dairy Platform case study</td>
<td>Tanga Dairy Platform case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary reading</td>
<td>Any of the references from the main case study or additional references</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Consider the two strategic questions raised by the platform’s future development (section 5.1 and 5.2 of the case study). Write an essay suggesting a business strategy and action plan to set up a relevant organizational and funding model for the platform (not more than 2 type-written pages in Times New Roman, 12 point, single spacing, normal margins). Make sure your suggestions provide feasible details in the context of the Tanga Region on who should do what, when, and with what resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class: What are the most relevant organizational models for multi-stakeholder platforms?

If you have chosen to gather essays, start the class by collecting the essays from the students. Estimated time: 1 hour and 30 minutes.

To set the scene, you may want to start the class by summarizing the case:
- By a presentation using the following prezi (10-15 minutes):
- Or just show this video (5 minutes and 10 seconds) of two platform stakeholders reflecting on how it works: ILRI (2014). Building a dairy innovation platform: Lessons from Tanzania. Video available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC7zUU7_Hhg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC7zUU7_Hhg)
Ask a student volunteer to present to the class, and within ten minutes, his or her suggestions for a business strategy and action plan to address the organizational and funding issues faced by the Tanga Dairy Platform. Allow the class to ask for clarifications and discuss the suggestion for an additional 50 minutes.

Main learning points to convey and key answers to look out for in the discussion with a view to marking students’ contributions to the class:

- The Tanga Dairy Platform is formed by different types of stakeholder members from within and around the dairy industry.
- Despite the strong diversity of profiles and interests of the different members, each one has something to contribute to solving common problems within the platform.
- The platform keeps on going thanks to the voluntary and enthusiastic contributions of some of its key members, who are dedicated to achieve the platform’s goal of sustainable dairy development in Tanga Region.
- The current organizational model is based on a relative devolution of decision making and activity undertaking from the general assembly to the ‘board’ and on to the ‘executive committee’ and technical working groups, which all report back to the general assembly.
- Facilitation of the platform’s activities and managing power imbalances within it are key factors to sustaining the platform. (Look out for these insights from students in Group 3; their additional references touch specifically on these points.)
- There is no size-fits-all for multi-stakeholder platforms: different historical contexts and legal traditions have led to various types of multi-stakeholder agrifood organizations, each one with pros and cons. (Look out for these insights from students in Group 1; their additional reference touches specifically on these points.)
- When dealing with different geographical scales, it is crucial to set up mechanisms that will allow actors at the local levels to feed their inputs into the decision-making process that lead to national policies. (Look out for these insights from students in Group 2; their additional references touch specifically on these points.)
- See the follow-up statement in Section 7 below for the actual answers provided by the key stakeholders interviewed to tackle the Tanga Dairy Platform’s challenges. More importantly, make sure your students’ suggestions are relevant and feasible in the local context of the Tanga Dairy Industry, as described at the beginning of the case study.

Marking: You may want to review the essays along the lines of the suggestions made and discussed during the class, keeping in mind the recommendations from the platform stakeholders themselves (see follow-up statement in section 7 below), and the feasibility of the suggestions given the dairy industry’s context in Tanga Region. This essay could account for 2/3 of the total mark of the class. You may also consider giving extra points to students when they make relevant contributions to the discussions during the class, as outlined in the main learning points and key answers to look out for above. All these points could account for up to 1/3 of the total mark for the class based on this case study.
Additional focus on sustainability: Time permitting, or if your course puts a particular emphasis on sustainability, you may consider using the following questions to launch a discussion on the impacts of the Tanga Dairy Platform’s achievements on the sustainability of the dairy industry in Tanga.

- Economic pillar of sustainability: Given the achievements of the Tanga Dairy Platform, how can an efficient multi-stakeholder organization improve the financial stability of the businesses and producers involved in the chain?
- Social pillar of sustainability: Given the achievements of the Tanga Dairy Platform, what impacts will a more sustainable dairy value chain have on the sustainability of the local pastoral and farmer communities?
- Environmental pillar of sustainability: How can the activities of a financially and socially sustainable multi-stakeholder organization like the Tanga Dairy Platform (and the activities of its members) lead to positive or negative environmental impacts?

6. Research Statement

The material for this case study was gathered through semi-structured interviews with four stakeholders actively involved in the Tanga Dairy Platform. The interviews were conducted in Tanga in February 2014 and were followed by further face-to-face and phone interviews with the platform Chairman Julius Shoo to confirm the information gathered. None of the information presented has been simulated or disguised by authors.

7. Follow-up Statement

The suggestions of the platform stakeholders interviewed for this case study in reply to the two business case questions are detailed in the original version of this case study, and reproduced below.


“5.1 How to keep facilitating platform activities with evermore varied members?

- Foster the development of dairy platforms at village and, particularly, at district level to help solve issues relevant to the lower administrative units rather than burdening the regional platform with problems that are not necessarily relevant to all the region’s stakeholders. This will contribute to limit the number of issues being raised at the current regional platform meetings. It could also help decrease the number of participants in the regional meetings if issues relevant to village and district levels are already being tackled by local stakeholders in local platforms.
• Consolidate the thematic working groups that have emerged to tackle specific technical or organizational problems in smaller dedicated groups of passionate and active participants.

• Set up an appropriate membership fee to cover the operational costs of the platform and some costs of implementing projects. Such a membership fee could deter people from attending meetings; on the other hand, the clear benefits members see in attending the platform meetings could be strong enough an incentive for them to contribute a small monetary contribution to sustain this forum. Given the diversity of backgrounds and capital resources of the platform members, it was recommended to allow for some variation in the monetary contributions from members. Nonetheless, farmers’ contributions were seen as very important to get them to be active contributors to an institution that is meant to help them. Larger voluntary contributions from the bigger public, non-governmental and private organizations could also be encouraged to secure some resources for core platform activities. These contributions already exist in kind; it could be useful to make them more formal. Some projects and initiatives could also be undertaken by the platform and some of its members. There would thus be income received to implement such activities on behalf of a donor or government agency.

5.2 How to institutionalize further the platform so that it is not dependent on the enthusiasm and goodwill of a few key stakeholders?

• Consolidate further the committee and working groups of the platform so as to spread out the burden of organizing platform activities to more members.

• Form a permanent secretariat for the platform with some full-time staff dedicated to organize the activities of the platform. Although this would create additional costs for the platform, it could consolidate its portfolio of activities by assigning human resources that are fully dedicated to the task of facilitating the platform.”

Short vitae of all authors

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Pham Ngoc Diep is a young Vietnamese agricultural economist. At the time of study, she was undertaking a Research Fellowship at ILRI as part of her MSc studies in agriculture and food economics at the University of Bonn in Germany. She really enjoyed her two months in the field interacting with Tanzanian smallholder farmers and other dairy chain stakeholders. After her graduation she wants to go back to Vietnam and work for farmers.
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