

Capacity building report for Tanga Innovation platform leaders

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Contents

Introduction.....	1
Terms of Reference	2
Training.....	2
Lushoto District	3
Mbuzii and Ubiri	3
Progress made.....	5
Recommendations and way forward	5
Handeni District.....	7
Kibaya and Sindeni	7
Challenges emerged	7
Recommendations and way forward	8
Annex 1: Leadership Guidelines	9
Roles of Leaders in the Platform	9
Annex 2: Executive Committee Governance Charter.....	12
Overall Roles and Responsibilities.....	12
Responsibilities.....	12
Meetings.....	12
Members	12
Reports	13
Annual Executive Committee Goals	13

Introduction

This report is written in response to a consultancy to train members of the executives committee of the eight (8) innovation platforms established under Maziwa Zaidi in Morogoro and Tanga Region, and the executive members of the Morogoro region platform.

Maziwa Zaidi established eight (8) innovation platforms in four (4) districts of the two regions of Morogoro and Tanga. Two platforms were set in each of the two districts in each of the regions.

The platforms mainly comprise producers with a few other actors along the dairy value chain. The innovation platforms were established in order to address specific challenges in their respective villages.

The terms of reference required that the leaders of innovation platforms be trained in order to enhance the capacity of the leaders in understanding about the functioning and usefulness of innovation platforms. This was prompted by the project after realizing that there has been a different understanding among the platforms on what are the innovation platforms and their usefulness to the stakeholders along the dairy value chain.

This report summarizes issues observed and raised during the training sessions. No training need assessment was conducted which would have helped tailor training for each platform, the trainer had to set an entry point in order to engage the leaders on how best they platforms can be managed.

A recap session on what is innovation platform and their usefulness, how these are formed or emerging, and who are eligible members was necessary, this session was used to set the ground and bring back the leaders to focus on the concept of the innovation platform; then the action plan for innovation platform was reviewed together in order to understand the progress made to up to December 2014; this helped to trigger roles of the executive members in steering the innovation platform. Finally the leaders were probed on what challenges they are facing in executing their task as leaders of the innovation platform. Recommendations are given at the end of this report.

A simple guideline is attached to this report which might adopted by the platforms if they wish to give direction and stipulate roles of the leaders. The attached guideline was not part of the terms of reference for this consultancy but if adopted my help improve operationalization of the platforms and also creating uniformity in running the platforms.

This report covers the platforms in Tanga Region.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the consultant are:

- Conduct two facilitation training and planning event each in Morogoro and Tanga Regions for executive members of the MilkIT village IPs. Write a brief report each for Morogoro and Tanga region.
- Coach the facilitator(s)/executive members of the Morogoro Dairy Platform for effective facilitation of one more platform meeting and its follow up. Write a brief report.

Training

The trainings were organized in two rounds, round one took place in December, 2014, and included the platforms in Morogoro (Mvomero and Kilosa platforms). Round two took place in January, 2015 in Tanga Region (Lushoto and Handeni platforms).

The participants in these sessions were Platforms executive leaders; these are Platforms' chairperson, secretary, treasurer and chairpersons & secretaries of each committee in the platform.

Methodology employed was participative where participants were given much time to bring out challenges and then discuss how the challenges can be addressed. In the end the consultant emphasized on important issues and what how leaders will become effective towards steering the platforms in the right direction.

Lushoto District

Mbuzii and Ubiri

The training and coaching in Tanga were undertaken during the second round which took place in January.

Training in Ubiri took place on 8th January, 2015. The training which was conducted in Ubiri brought together, leaders of Ubiri platform and well as leaders from Mbuzii platform. Nineteen (19) leaders participated in total from these two platforms; the training for these two platforms was well attended, this is impressive and important for sustainability of the platform.

Training started with a recap session, leaders were asked if they recall what innovation platform is and why they are formed. The some of the leaders were able to recall. Participant were taken through illustration of the dairy value chain, This illustration was intended to help the leaders to where they are position in the dairy value chain, and who else is supposed to be include in the platform to make vibrant and able to achieve intended objectives. The drawing in **Fig.1** below was used to illustrate this session.

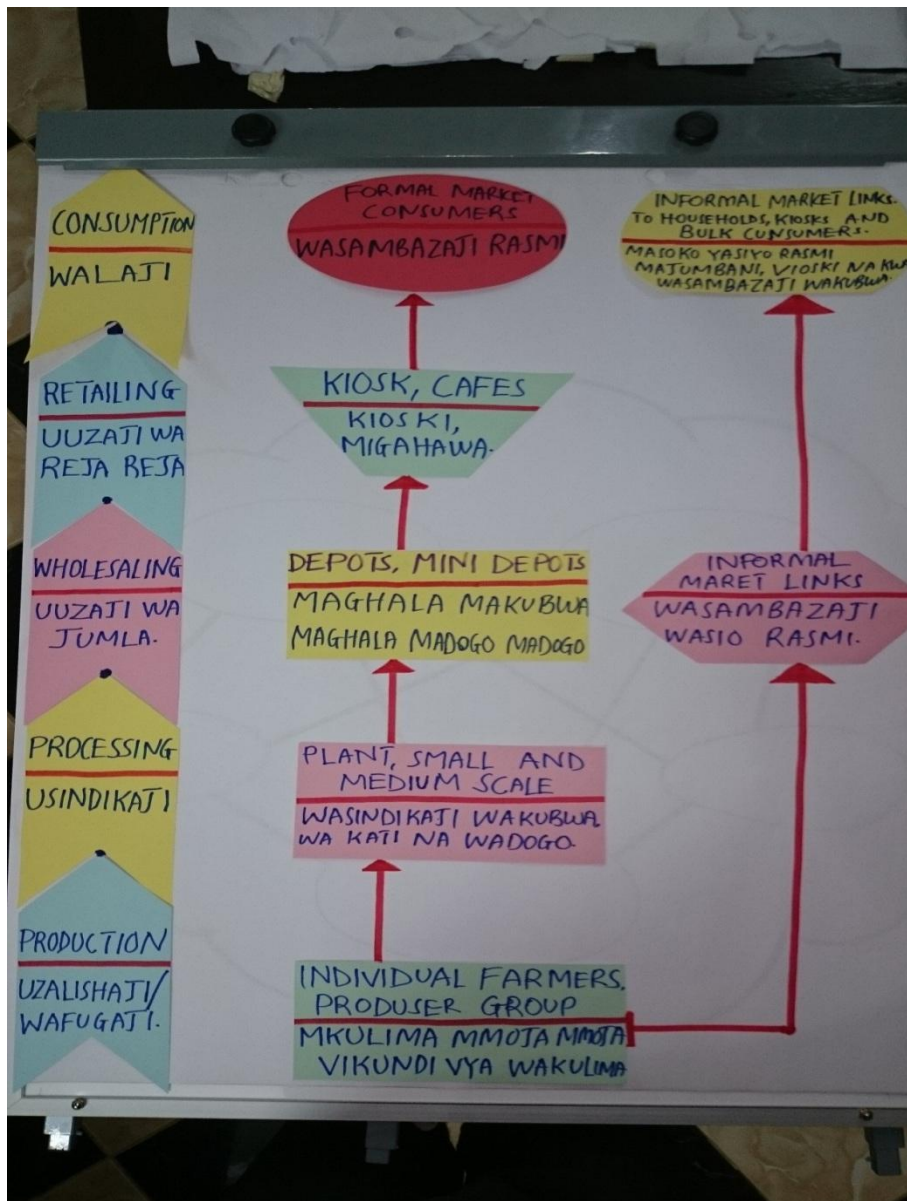


Fig.1: Simple dairy value chain.

The platforms are performing fairly well, despite the fact that leaders were not very active; yet a number of achievements have been recoded.

It was clearly noted that the leaders didn't know their basic roles as leaders of the platform as well as those of the respective committees, and how they can coordinate activities at the committee level and also at platform level. A good example came from the *Kosaafu* committee (specie of the dairy cow) committee; the leaders of this committee could not link this activity with what was on their work plan, and therefore work done by TALIRI is not reported back report to the platform; TALIRI had taken blood samples from the cows as part of research on the specie of the cows which are now kept by the producers, result for this research are not yet report back as this is work in progress., the leaders could not report this until they were prompted (this was a significant milestone to the platform) know how to report one significant activities

Documentation and reporting of their activities was a challenge and this was the emphasis of the coaching session.

Progress made

No committee has met on a formal meeting to deliberate on what has been assigned for them. (This indicates that there is low understanding of their roles as leaders). It was therefore emphasized that committee should set up their small work plan on how to achieve the objectives of the committee, and to document all progress made and prepare for feedback at the platform meeting.

Documentation of the committee activities is important, and reporting has been emphasized. Simple and brief reports for committee activities were advised. The report can cover a few things like; **what happened, when, who was involved, what are the expectations, and what would benefit the platform.**

Ubiri and Mbuguzi platforms leaders (committee leaders) do not document any of their activities, as result important information on platform activities is missing, this brings challenges to measure the progress of the platform.

A number of trainings have taken place and member of the platform participated but the leaders could not link these training with their action plan.

Clear lack of confidence among the leaders has been observed. This led to leaders failing to communicate a number of achievements which have accrued from platform's interventions..

Chairperson accepted that the platform is lagging behind due to lack of confidence and low leadership knowledge (thanks to this training), now after the training leaders commits to make sure the platform is on track once again, and achieve what has been planned.

Recommendations and way forward

Documentation of platform activities is important for platform to keep track of what is happening. It will also give platform opportunity to evaluate itself. Currently the platform depends on the institutional memory of a few members who get opportunity to attend trainings and meetings. During these training and meetings, issues which are beneficial to the platforms may arise but if no feedback is given after such events, they will remain with those who attend. Leaders should also document what they have done on addressing the challenges from their committees, e.g. When a leader follow up something at the district office, should come back and document what has transpired.

The leaders of the platform and committee leaders should learn on how to give feed back to the platform. It has been observed during training, that leaders have completed some of the tasks on their challenges but they did not give any feedback to the platform; feedback is important link to communicate success and challenges faced during implementation of agreed tasks; members need to know progress on the platform and this will help on the sustainability of the platform

The communication and feedback should not only be two ways; i.e. should not be limited to only communicate back to the chairperson or at the platform meeting; communication should be happening between committee level, committee A can communicate with committee B to find out how they can work together, compares notes and share what they are doing; this lateral communication between committees will help to synergize and reduce cost in addressing some of the challenges

Handeni District

Kibaya and Sindeni

Training in Handeni district took place on 9th January, 2015 in Misima. Fifteen (15) leaders in total attended the training from both platforms. The training day coincided with the event where newly elected leaders were taking their oath, most of the platform leaders were elected to lead village government in just ended election. Therefore the training session was delayed to start to allow these new leaders to take their oath of office.

Sindeni and Kibaya platform is progressing slowly though it has achieved some milestone on its planned activities. This platform has been facing some conflict between platform leadership and village leadership, this conflict has affected performance of the platform. This conflict has existed for so long, village leadership saw the platform leadership as a threat to the village leadership (this is common if the platform performing), and therefore the village leadership became a stumbling block on platform activities.

Challenges emerged

Most of the activities implemented were not documented, for the example there a number of trainings which were undertaken by other external stakeholders, but the platform leadership failed to link these training with their work plan and integrate this with the platform activities.

As it has been noted in Ubiri and Mbuguzi, this platform also faces the same challenge where members of platform do attend to trainings but no feedback is given to the platform. The platform also does not hold regular meetings where committee leaders could have an opportunity to give feedback. This habit affects the learning process in the platform, the knowledge gain remains among a few who did get opportunity to attend trainings and meetings.

The platform received very poor support from the village government, but managed to find an innovative solution. On realizing that village leadership is an obstacle to platform activities; they vied for leadership position in the village during civic election which took place in December, 2014. It was fortunate that all members of the platform who vied for village leadership have been elected, therefore it is expected now platform challenges which need attention and support of the village government will be expedited smoothly.

The prepared a demo plot grass, unfortunately it was close animal route and therefore invaded by the animals, this brought the need for the platform to find an alternative site. The exercise has been repeated, it is now expected to give good result, as now the demo plot has been relocated to a far place where it cannot be invaded by the animals.

Attendance to platform meetings remains another challenge to these platforms; this contributes to low performance of the platform.

The platform leadership came out clearly explaining poor relationship which exists between the district council leadership and the platform leadership. They believe that the District

authority does not offer enough collaboration with villages, whenever they raise concerns which need attention of the district authorities.

Recommendations and way forward

Coaching the leaders was the primary goal of this work, during the process it become very clear that these platforms are very much needed by the producers, but very limited in terms of stakeholders. Most of the members are producers. It is important for the scope of the platform to be widened.

For effectiveness it is recommended to introduce another level of the platform. The district platform; this will take representatives from the current two platforms, and other members from other villages (if they will decide to form), but the biggest advantage will be to increase the scope , and therefore be able to attract other actors at the district level; such as financial institutions, private sector actors, research institutes, etc.

Leaders of the platforms should change the current attitude of not documenting committee activities, and start to learn on record keeping and share information among the platform members.

Leaders now should start to be more proactive now, since they have managed to take position in the village government they push the innovation agenda at the village level without compromising their positions in the village. Care is needed to avoid politicizing the platform activities.as they have claimed to overcome the implementation challenges from village leaders.

Annex 1: Leadership Guidelines

The maziwa zaidi innovation platforms were formed based on challenges identified by research. The premise is to increase milk production through improving feeding regime of the dairy cows as well as well as the traditional cows. The project is implemented in Tanga and Morogoro.

The project applied the innovation platform approach as means to achieve its objectives.

The innovation platforms were formed at the village level and the aim was to help in addressing the challenge specifically identified for each village.

In principal these innovation platform have been built on **producer groups** which were in existence prior to the project or formed during implementation of the project.

The platforms were formed and leaders elected. The structure is simple with top having a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. The next level is the committee level; each with a chairperson and a secretary who are elected by the members of the committee. Committee members are elected by the assembly of all stakeholders. Each committee has members not exceed 5.

This guideline intends to help innovation platform leaders to understand their roles as leaders and improve their performance in managing the platforms. The guideline is in two sections; the first section simply defines leadership and tries to elaborate some basic tasks which innovation platform leaders need to perform for effectiveness and efficiency of the innovation platforms, these tasks were generally elaborated during the coaching sessions. The second section is a sample guideline on putting in place an executive committee charter which can help the executive committee to be organized and be systematical on implementation of their activities.

Roles of Leaders in the Platform

For leaders to effectively lead the innovation platforms, it is necessary for the to have a clear understanding who is a leader and what roles to leaders do leaders have not necessarily in the innovation platform but also elsewhere where leadership is needed. Leadership is a wider concept and one can research and write volumes of report.

For purpose of these innovation platforms a simple definition can be used which define a leader as a person who leads, commands a group, organization or country.

To lead is to show the way; therefore leaders of the have the primary role of showing the way. The destination of the platform is those objectives which have

been agreed upon. Leaders need to show the way towards this agreed destination. It is expected that platform leaders are the ones who will show direction and steer the platform to its intended destination; if they fail to do this noble task entrusted to them, the platform will fail to achieve the goals.

To achieve these goals leaders need to take up roles and responsibilities. Among many roles and responsibilities leaders has, depending on size and complexity of the organization, is to set rules and modalities to operate. In case of the platform we expect rules and modalities will be found in the constitutions of the platforms. Other roles will be setting up of routine and regular meeting with feedback upon actions.

While doing that the leaders need to observe a number of key issues such as making sure that members of the platforms are actively participating in agreed activities, the innovation platform members are committed to the platforms and owns it, and effective and efficient process of information sharing and communicating exist.

Innovation platform approach involves addressing challenges using action research, then leaders should make sure they stimulate members toward the culture of continue learning. Facilitation and management is critical especially the transition from external initiative to self-organized platform (human, physical & financial resources), leaders should be able to understand role & responsibilities of internal & external stakeholders as these platforms consist of internal stakeholders, and external stakeholders)

The leaders of the innovation platforms should be able to:

A: Create an inspiring vision & lead by example

- Create an inspiring vision; establish shared value, give directions and set stretch goals.
- Manage changes strategically, take risks, create change, lead change, manage resistance to change
- Lead by examples, practice what you preach, set an example & share risks or hardship
- Demonstrate confident; win respect and trust without counting on popularity

B: Empower, inspire & energize people.

- Be enthusiastic, inspire & energizing people, create a positive work environment
- Empower people, delegate authority, be open to ideas, have faith in creativity of others.
- Communicate openly & honestly, give clear guidelines, set clear expectations.

- Emphasize, be willing to discuss and solve problem, listen with understanding, support & help

C: Build and lead team

- Use team approach, facilitate cooperation, involve everyone, trust your group, and rely on their judgment.
- Bring out the best in your people, have common touch with them, coach and provide effective feedback
- Permit group decision, help your team reach better decision
- Monitor progress, but don't micro manage, lead your team avoid close supervision, do not over boss, do not dictate, lead team assessment

Annex 2: Executive Committee Governance Charter

This charter can be developed for each platform and can be customized depending on the challenges existing in that particular platform. The charter gives the platform an overall picture of what is expected to be achieved and what will be done by each subcommittee and when. It helps to describe the work relationship among the platform leadership, committee leaders, and the members.

XYZ DAIRY INNOVATION PLATFORM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHARTER

Overall Roles and Responsibilities

The executive committee of the platform provides for effective operation of the platform in order to achieve agreed objectives of the platforms, and for the benefit of the members of the platform as well as the society at large. (Platforms should feel free to tailor these roles and responsibilities to be specific to their platform)

Responsibilities

Specific Responsibilities for the executive committee will be:

- Steering the Innovation Platform towards achieving the agreed objective
- Developing and submitting for approval from members the IP action Plan
- Reviewing and recommending(to members) for any relevant changes or adjustment in the action plan
- Evaluating the progress of IP
- Communicate with external stakeholders on matters of benefit to the IP
- Attract other stakeholders to the Innovation Platform.

Meetings

The executive committee meets at least **X** times in the year. Here the platforms need to specify how many times the committee will meet. It is advisable to identify and fix dates for the meeting. The executive committee meetings will deliberate on issues from subcommittee and later this will be used to develop reports for submission to members of platform in **annual** or **semiannual** meetings depending on how many the platform has agreed to meet in a year.

Members

The executive committee of the IP shall constitute the following members

- The chairperson of the innovation platform
- The secretary of the innovation platform
- The treasurer of the innovation platform
- Chairpersons of specific sub-committees
- Secretaries of the specific sub-committees

Reports

The executive committee shall receive the following reports

1. Progress Reports from sub-committees
2. Financial Reports(these can be named accordingly and agreed upon)
3. Any other relevant report which might be agreed upon by the members of the innovation platform

Annual Executive Committee Goals

The executive committee needs to establish/set its annual goals. Here the executive committee will specify what will be areas of focus. In this section the platforms can enlist the identified challenges in short, and put up agreed targets towards addressing the challenges, e.g.

- Improving housing for the dairy cattle...
- Capacity building on various aspects...