

WORKSHOP

Building a partnership between Agriterra, Agricord, ILO and Wageningen International in the field of capacity building of agricultural cooperatives

Date : Tuesday May 26th

Venue: Wageningen International, Lawickse Allee 11, Wageningen, The Netherlands (Building 425, next to WICC).

Background:

This workshop is a follow up event to the ILO – MATCOM Revision Meeting that took place at ILO Geneva, the 23 April 2009. A report of such meeting is available. As insight from this meeting, all the parties realized that it is worthwhile to join efforts for developing programs and training materials aiming to improving the performance of agricultural cooperatives, particularly in Africa. The goal is to create synergies and complementarities between ongoing initiatives and to avoid overlaps.

MATCOM (Materials and Techniques for Cooperative Management Training) is a set of training material for cooperative managers and promoters that has been developed by an ILO international training program (sponsored mainly by Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway between 1978 and the early 1990s). In 2008 COOPAFRICA commissioned a review of MATCOM material, with the objective to develop recommendations on the ways MATCOM material should be adapted to comply with the context in which cooperatives operate today. ILO is currently in the process of re-launching MATCOM and wants to build partnerships with knowledge-based and development organizations for that purpose. The main objective of the workshop is to move one step forward in building such partnership with Agriterra, Agricord and Wageningen International.

Wageningen International and Agriterra are currently developing training modules for strengthening the performance of producer organizations. They have outlined a program entitled "Optimizing the Performance of Producer Organizations" (OPPO), which proposes to address five major themes, each composed of several specific modules. The design caters for the following use of course materials: (i) introductory course focusing on strategic decision-making; (ii) Thematic stand-alone courses (for instance on economic service delivery to members) and (iii) in-depth courses focusing on one or several modules (for instance financial management and sustainability). Other Agri-Agencies that are part of Agricord are also active in the field of capacity building, such as UPADI (Canadian Agri-Agency).

The report of the ILO-MATCOM revision meeting states that "A differentiation between a "Global MATCOM" revision strategy and a "COOPAFRICA MATCOM revision" strategy was clearly established, the former having a more long term perspective and the latter more an immediate one. A double track approach to the revision process would be taken". The workshop will address both tracks. However, emphasis will be devoted to plan the development of a concrete module on "improving the economic performance of agricultural cooperatives", that may be directly useful for the training activities of all the parties. If this initial cooperation works out in the expected way, then the following goal will be to expand the partnership into further training programs, materials and activities.

The short-term objective is then to develop a training module on "economic development of agricultural cooperatives", the supporting training materials and to implement it in at least two (or 3?) locations in a period of 14 months. The

proposition is to develop a "joint product", that might be improved, replicated and upscaled.

Purpose

The workshop has two main goals

1. To pave the way for a broader and long-term collaboration in the field of capacity building between Agriterra, Agricord, ILO and Wageningen International (that may be framed by the re-launch of MATCOM, though not necessarily)
2. To move forward in the planning, development and implementation of the following proposition:

1. Agricord-Agriterra- ILO-WI develop a joint vision on course development, starting off with designing a joint module on economic aspects of cooperative development. The contents of the module would include economic services, value chain issues and entrepreneurial capacity. Supporting training materials have to be gathered/developed.

2. A pilot exercise (implementation of the module, tentatively from the 21st to the 30th September) will take place in Nairobi, Kenya. This event has been commissioned by the Nigerian government to the training unit of ILO. An expert from Wageningen International and a Liaison Officer from Agriterra will attend this course as lecturers (covering the costs their own participation). The target group of this exercise is expected to be services providers to coops in Nigeria.

3. After the pilot exercise, the contents are revised and the material improved, based on insights from the evaluation of the course, and aiming to tailor it to board members and managers of agricultural cooperatives in Africa. A second course targeting this type of participants will take place in May-June 2010. Agriterra could mobilize resources to offer this course to some of its partners organizations in Africa. ILO, WI and Agriterra will provide experts (covered by their own resources) . In the meanwhile, CoopAfrica will likely also make use of the training module for improving the capacity of coop-related human resources in one of its priority countries (Rwanda, for example). We need to discuss how the participation of WI and Agriterra would be in such event.

4. Wageningen International has scheduled an international two-week course in June 2010, which targets services providers to producers' organizations.

5. Based on these experiences, the module may be further improved, replicated and scaled up in the future (a joint product is developed). This may include the development of other modules (dealing with different priority subjects for the parties).

6. The role of Agricord (the alliance of Agri-agencies: development cooperation agencies of the agricultural sector in developed countries) has to be further defined, but the initial idea is that the modules may be used by Agri-agencies to strengthen the capacities of their partner organizations (Agri-agencies would become "costumers" of the "products" (training modules).

Tentative program

Time	Activity
10:30 – 11:15	Presentation and discussion about MATCOM and COOPAFRICA. Carlien van Empel (ILO)
11:15 – 11:45	Presentation and discussion about OPPO. Ted Schrader (WI)
11:45 – 12:30	Presentation and discussion of the overall proposal for partnership. Moderator: Roldan Muradian (Agriterra)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Discussion about the contents of the program and sources of training materials for the pilot module. Moderator: Monica Sopov (Wageningen International)
14:30-15:30	Ownership, distribution of tasks, planning and follow up. Moderator: Cees van Rij (Agriterra)
15:30 – 16:00	Wrapping up and Agricord involvement. Pekka Jamsen (Agricord)

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Participants

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