



Concept Note

High Level Forum: AUC/FAO Support to Regional Capacity Building to Reduce Post Harvest Losses (Project Number TCP/RAF/3311(D))

Background

The importance of agriculture for most African countries is well recognized. The sector accounts for 70 per cent of employment and contributes as high as 25 per cent of the GDP of many countries. On the other hand, despite its crucial importance for the continents' food security and achievement of MDG 1 and past efforts to develop the sector, African agriculture continues to generally lag behind and its full potential is far from realized.

Key challenges to increasing agricultural productivity in Africa include under-capitalization of agriculture and research, inadequate use of mechanization and agrochemicals, inadequate investments in irrigation and low land and labour productivity. While all these factors contribute to high levels of hunger and poverty, the situation is exacerbated by high levels of post harvest losses occurring along the food chain, from farm to fork, in handling, storage, transportation, processing, which contributes to reduction in the quantity, quality and market value of agricultural commodities. A FAO/World Bank 2011 report: *Missing Food: The Case of Post Grains Losses in Sub-Sahara Africa*, estimates post harvest grain losses in SSA at about \$4billion a year, enough to meet the annual requirements of about 48 million people.

At the 2006 Abuja Food Security Summit, AU heads of state and government committed *inter alia* to introduce measures to halve post-harvest losses within 3 years and reduce them to 10 per cent by 2005. This ambitious goal was confirmed at the 2008 Assembly of the AU 11th Ordinary Session in Sham El Sheikh where the HSG committed to improve post harvest management to minimize agricultural losses and enhance value addition.

Although there is increasing awareness and knowledge amongst governments in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) on the problem of PHL and the positive effect that reduced losses can make in improving economic growth and food security situation in the region, the capacity of African governments and other stakeholders to address and meet this challenge remains very limited. It is in an effort to assist in meeting this challenge that AUC in close collaboration with FAO have formulated the above titled Project. The project, which is to be implanted over 18 months, is designed to strengthen the capacity of SSA Governments and other organizations and institutions in the agriculture sector to tackle PHL by filling some of the exiting knowledge and policy gaps and is aimed at promoting increased investment in PHL reduction programmes.

Outputs

The four envisaged outputs of the Project are:

- i. Strengthening the capacity of senior policy makers from the core national and regional institutions in the design of policies, strategies and programmes targeting increased investments in PHL reduction.
- ii. Sensitizing senior technical officials of Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Trade and Industries, national research organizations and other public institutions involved in post harvest issues as well as senior management of the private sector including the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other apex private sector organizations in the identification, design and implementation of country level projects in PHL reduction and introducing to them, methodologies and tools for conducting PHL assessment.
- iii. Establishing a virtual network as a basis for information exchange and coordinating network for tackling PHL issues in sub-Saharan Africa.
- iv. Proposals for investments projects targeting PHL reduction in up to 5 countries to be funded under AfDB's PHLP or other financing arrangements

High Level Forum

As part of the implementation strategy of the project, it is proposed to hold a High Level Forum for policy makers and implementers in agriculture across Africa with a view to providing an opportunity to discuss capacity needs in policy formulation, and helping to mobilize more investment in post harvest loss reduction and management in sub-Sahara Africa.

Objectives

Specific objectives of the forum will be:

1. Promoting ownership of the project: This will be demonstrated by the willingness of participants to arrive at a joint resolution or make a statement of intention to follow through the recommendations of the Forum in their organizations or institutions.
2. Fine-tuning the content of the training workshops: the Forum will deliberate on policy dimensions, capacity needs and, institutional frameworks and highlight areas that need focus in training in policy formulation on post harvest management and loss reduction.
3. Identifying investment priorities in PHL reduction at national and regional levels in the context of the CAADP.
4. Enhancing synergies: The forum will recommend way forward in implementing the remaining project activities, including collaboration with other actors and linkages to other existing projects and programmes.

Target Participants

In order to facilitate meaningful dialogue and develop an actionable agenda, participants will ideally be ministers or permanent secretaries in national agriculture and related ministries, chief executive officers or heads of relevant department in public and private sectors, members of parliamentary committees, heads of research and knowledge institutions or other such high ranking personalities that can make or influence policy decisions at high level.

Financial and development partners will also be invited to attend at their own cost.

Expected attendance, including FAO and AUC officers, will be 40. Twenty to thirty participants will be sponsored by the project.

Dates and Venue

17-18 October, Desalegn Hotel
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Facilitation

Resource persons will be FAO and AUC experts. FAO has also recruited two short term consultants to assist.