

Sorghum Transformation Agenda in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

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Executive Summary

With approximately 6.6 million people living in the Eastern Cape-roughly 13.5% of the South African population, which ranks the province as the third most populous, after Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal the agricultural potential for Eastern Cape is enormous. However, the province – and particularly the agricultural sector - faces numerous challenges. Like the rest of the country, the province is still grappling with the remnants of a parasitic, two-sector economy that disadvantages majority of the people. The need to transform the mainstream economy is mirrored, and even amplified, in the rural, agricultural economy.

There are on-going initiatives to revive and revitalize the province's agricultural sector. While some efforts have been success, others have had mixed performance. One of the cross-cutting themes of these interventions has been the need to change ownership and management arrangements of the public assets driving the agricultural sector. The national government has identified the cooperative movement as an ideal vehicle of addressing some of the challenges facing the country's economy, especially the agricultural sector. In the Eastern Province, the expected transformation – through the cooperative sector – has been hampered by capacity challenges.

It is in the context of the above that the Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency's (ECRDA) Sorghum Transformation Agenda (STA) must be viewed. Truly achieving a functional, inclusive, impactful and vibrant cooperative movement, is an opportunity worth seizing. Moreover, investments thus far made by The ECRDA through the Rural Enterprise Development (RED) Hubs initiative has achieved successful and inclusive primary producer cooperatives. The STA build on the success of the past; even more important, it identifies critical lessons that point to the need to recalibrate future strategy. Strengthening the sorghum value chain (SVC) in Eastern Cape is not just a critical success factor but more importantly, a sustainability imperative for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development for the province.

We believe the efforts described in this report contribute to catalyzing development of a province-wide strategy on strengthening the cooperative movement, especially within the agricultural sector context. The recommendations will help optimize the agricultural resource-potential of the province as a vehicle for developing sustainable livelihood options and raising the living standards of its people.

Background

The RED Hubs approach adopted by ECRDA - as a flagship program, since 2014 - is a transformative strategy with the potential to transform the rural economy in the Eastern Cape Province. Based on Africa Harvest's experience in the African development sector, the RED Hubs are a transformational model worth emulating – with some adaptation - in many African countries. RED Hubs are based on the MEGA farm concept and designed to create and exploit synergies in agro-processing by leveraging opportunities in production, processing and marketing of cereals (such as maize and sorghum) as well as dairy products.

Africa Harvest a pan-African rural development entity with operations in South Africa and whose vision is “to be a lead contributor

in making Africa free of hunger poverty and malnutrition,” has more than nearly two decades of experience in agricultural development, focusing on “the last mile,” or working to access high end agricultural technologies to rural communities. The use of improved technologies and methods, as well as products of scientific research, has been the signature of Africa Harvest's work.

Africa Harvest had developed proven models of commercializing sorghum and other agricultural products; this experience and expertise is being brought to bear in the East African province. Africa Harvest also has a strong partnership focus and a whole value chain (WVC) approach based on a sustainable market-pull, sustainable ecosystem management and in-



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clusive development and growth.

Since 2009, Africa Harvest has been at the forefront of efforts to commercialize sorghum production and marketing among rural smallholder communities in semi-arid parts of Eastern Africa. That initiative has seen more than 75,000 smallholder producers access improved technologies (varieties and hybrids), enhanced skills in good agronomy and thus improved productivity (from 800kgs to 2,000kgs per hectare using OPVs or Open Pollinated Varieties).

Farmers have seen a reduction of post-harvest losses through mechanization and access to alternative end-user markets in human food, animal feed and malting industries. The sorghum value chain in Eastern Africa has not only enhanced participation by youth and women but also been catalytic in employment creation through enterprise development while integrating key stakeholders in the process including banks, micro finance institutions, insurance service providers, mobile money, agro-dealers and processors. Some USD 26 Million worth of quality surplus grain has so far been traded through the aggregator model that Africa Harvest piloted in 2013 with a view to enhancing productivity and market participation, by smallholder producer, through an inclusive process.

ECRDA and Africa Harvest have partnered in exploiting synergies and opportunities to enhance the sustainable achievement of their individual mandates. A team of technical experts from Africa Harvest spent 10 days visiting the Eastern Cape province in November 2016.

They interacted with the communities and co-operative members in the four RED Hubs of Mqanduli, Ncora, Emalahleni and Mbizana. A follow-up learning tour, to Kenya, by representatives of these cooperatives as well as staff of ECRDA was conducted in March 2017 where 16 representatives from Eastern Cape spent seven (7) days touring and learning from various cooperatives in Kenya.

The RED Hub at Lady Frere in Emalahleni local municipality is the oldest of them all and was upgraded in 2015 to increase its capacity and scope to process both maize and sorghum. With the increased capacity in processing, a



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track record of both sorghum and maize production and conducive agro-ecological conditions to support the same, the areas around Emalahleni (Chris Hani District) are thus well suited for the Sorghum Transformation Agenda (STA) mooted by the two institutions and their partners.

While the entire Chris Hani District is considered Arid and Semi-Arid with an average of below 400mm of Rainfall per annum, Emalahleni Municipality has higher rainfall rates of between 500-699mm per annum. The ability to engage in both sorghum and maize production further improves the chances for diversification of product lines even as alternative end markets are developed to enhance

profitability and strengthen the RED Hub's revenue base.

Given its long history, both the Ibuyambo Secondary Cooperative, as well as the six (6) primary cooperatives which bring together 800 members, have a proven track record in production of sorghum that should be leveraged to help inform and develop a sustainable sorghum production, processing, marketing and employment creation enterprise as envisaged in the STA. It is in furtherance of this goal that a project scoping mission was mooted to help inform the next phase of agenda, identify and prepare stakeholders in anticipation of the STA approval and roll out.



Purpose & Methodology

The primary purpose of the scoping mission was to gather data and generate information critical to the design of a sustainable and market-based sorghum production and marketing program within Emalahleni municipality, using the RED Hub at Lady Frere, Ibuyambo Secondary Cooperative and the primary producer cooperatives under its umbrella as the focal point of entry for implementation.

Data and information sought was to address issues around the main thematic areas that include, but are not limited to:

1. Potential market and linkages
2. Production and extension services
3. Post-harvest management and storage Aggregation services
4. Processing and value addition
5. Gender inclusion
6. Cross-cutting issues (finance, insurance)

Methodology

A consultative and inclusive methodology was used during the mission, seeking to enjoin the participation of the target beneficiaries in the primary as well as secondary cooperatives in Emalahleni by actively soliciting their inputs and contribution to the STA design process. The overarching objective was to cultivate buy-in and enhance the social capital and acceptance required sustain the initiative over the longer period while identifying risk factors and opportunities to enhance ownership by the communities in the target area. To this end, the team made use of the following approaches to gather data and information:

- A) Focus group discussions with selected members of the cooperatives, both primary as well as the secondary level.
- B) Desktop review of documentation, reports and publications.
- C) Observations during the visit to Emalahleni.



Findings & Observations

The mission was conducted between Monday 25th June and Friday 29th June 2018 and comprised the following:

Navy Simukonda - ECRDA

Luvo Qongqo - ECRDA

Masizole Maswana - Department of Agriculture, University of Fort Hare

Nambita Mekane - Mkunga (Pty) Ltd

Daniel Kamanga - Africa Harvest (South Africa)

Nehemiah Mburu Taylor - Africa Harvest Head office (Nairobi, Kenya)

The team held discussions with the leaders and Production Manager of the Ibuyambo secondary cooperative based at the RED Hub in Lady Frere (newly named Cacadu) as well as members of 4 out of the 5 primary producer cooperatives affiliated under the Ibuyambo Secondary Cooperative. The team met with a total of 59 members (of both the primary and secondary cooperatives) who contributed their ideas and information to support the design of the proposed intervention.

The primary cooperative visited were:

1. Maqhashu Sorghum Cooperative
2. Ndonga Ncedolwethu Agricultural and Farming cooperative (NCAFCO) in Greyspan-Vukani Primary Cooperative and,
3. Magxibha Primary Cooperative

Details of the cooperatives are captured in the table on the next page.



| Name and Nature of Cooperative (Primary / Secondary | Date and Number of Members at formation | Current membership (2018) | Current area (Ha) under Sorghum production (2017-2018) | Highest area (Ha) cultivated with Sorghum | Total Area available for Sorghum production | History of Sorghum production in the area. | Other important details. |
|---|---|---------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| Ibuyambo Secondary Cooperative Lat: -31.69418611 Long 27.1946667 Alt: 1081.0 | Formed in 2010 with 7 Primary Co-ops | 5 out of 6 Primary cooperatives | 394 Ha | 800 Ha | 6000 Ha | | One of the primary cooperatives affiliated to Ibuyambo is inactive due to membership validation. Cooperative is BEE certified and has a VAT exemption certificate. |
| Maqhashu Primary Cooperative Lat: -31.74345000 Long: 27.33500000 Alt 1236.4M | Started in 2000 and registered in 2004 with 10 members. | 63 members | 128 Ha | 1000Ha | 3000 Ha | 1000 Ha in 2014 200 Ha in 2002 55 Ha- 2016/2017 | Membership at R 100 with monthly contribution of R 50 per person. No payouts from the cooperative to date. |
| Ndonga Ncedolwethu Agricultural & Farming Cooperative Ltd (NCAFCO)- Greyspan area Lat: - 31.66772222 Long: 27.37472222 Alt 1130 M | 2005 with 355 members | Total 45: 19 women and 26 Men. | 77 Ha | | 1500 Ha | Planned to cultivate 400 Ha in 2017/2018 season but the rains hindered them. | Women in the cooperative have been trained in poultry and vegetable farming. Members received R 500 in 2014 as distribution of earnings. The coop tried to grow wheat during the winter period with no success. |
| Vukani Primary Cooperative Lat: - 31.64136667 Long: 27.36694444 Alt 1144.8M | 2006 with 57 members | 8 only | Did not plant in 017/2018 season due to issues with their bank account | 25 Ha | 25 Ha | Harvested 2tons in 2012/2013 and 24 Tons in 2014/15 production season. | Need low cost irrigation/water harvesting, Tractors for land preparation, Security against livestock and theft, more land and fencing. Sorghum used for malt production at a cottage level for local brews |
| Magixha Primary Cooperative in Lady Frere Lat: - 31.66168611 Long: 27.19555556 Alt 1086.4M | 2006 with 380 members | 120: 75 women and 45 men. | 260 Ha | 500 Ha | 2680 Ha (already fenced) | 220 Ha planted in 2006/07 450Ha in 2008 with support from Chris Hani District 380 Ha in 2011 500 Ha in 2014 with ECRDA Support (182.5 MT harvested) | Profit redistribution done in 2014. R1000 joining fee payable in instalments. Challenges include: water, lack of alternative crop, limited # of tractors, weather and lack of finances. Women expressed desire to engage in poultry and pig farming. Cost of feed: R330/40kg bag. |

Discussion of Findings

Based on discussions with and information shared by the primary and secondary cooperative representatives during the sessions, over 7,200 ha of land are available for sorghum production (see table above).

Below are highlights with regard to each area of concern:

Pre- Production Phase:

Sorghum production in Emalahleni is currently under rain fed regime. Rains are expected between October 15th and Dec 15th, when planting is done. As such, pre-production activities like land preparation, pre-plant spraying of weeds and grass in the fields is timed to coincide with the expected rainfall dates but ordinarily commence one month earlier, around 15th September. Information on weather pat-

terns including the like onset of rains is thus critical to success. Farmers in Vukani mentioned that weather information is not readily available and one would have to visit the local agricultural office to access it.

The use of local radio to disseminate information on weather trends and expected onset of rains should be considered.

Limited access to tractors for land preparation was cited as a major constraint to achieving desired targets. For example, Ndonga Ncedolwethu Agricultural & Farming Cooperative (NCAFCO) Ltd in Greyspan area had planned to cultivate 400 Ha during the 2017/18 season but only managed 77 Ha. The rains came late and hence they could not access tractors in



Discussion of Findings

time to open up the entire land (400Ha) planned.

The estimated cost of production is currently pegged at ZAR 8,000 per Ha before factoring in the 15% VAT rebate available to authorized entities, including Ibuyambo Secondary Cooperative. The subsidy scheme currently in place, requires cooperative members to raise ZAR 1,800 for every Ha of land to be planted if they are to qualify for ZAR 3,200/Ha that the government provides. In addition the balance of ZAR 3,000/Ha (ZAR 8,000-ZAR5,000) needs to be availed in the course of the production period lest critical agronomic interventions are delayed, thereby compromising the quality of produce and the expected harvest.

Production

Production processes including planting, crop management and harvesting are all mechanized save for instances where the community feels it necessary to carry out manual weeding. The primary cooperatives have all been trained on good agronomic practices necessary in sorghum production but **a refresher on-going training is needed to enhance profitability by optimizing operations.**

Fertilizer is used in planting at a recommended rate of 50kgs per Ha while the seed rate is

10kgs per Ha. Seed retails at ZAR 1,300 per 25kg bag or ZAR 52 per kg. Currently only PAR 8816 hybrid is produced which is expected to yield between 3.5 to 3.8 tons per Ha. Current yields area approximately 1.5 tons per Ha.

Harvesting:

Also mechanized using a combined harvester. Harvesting charges were cited as being between ZAR 700 and ZAR 800 depending on distance travelled from the RED Hub in Lady Frere. It costs ZAR 5 to thresh a 50kg bag of sorghum. Threshing is also mechanized at a cost of ZAR 800 per Ha.

Transportation and storage

The threshed produce is transported to the RED Hub in Lady Frere for storage where the secondary cooperative charges a handling fee for the same; ZAR 375 per Ton.

Marketing:

Sorghum is currently sold as grain to a feed manufacturer near East London. Other known markets for sorghum grain include: SAB Miller, Tiger Brands, United Breweries and local brewing.



Producer Challenges

Key challenges mentioned during meetings with the primary cooperative members include:

Limited access to finances. Primary producers cited challenges in raising enough resources to expand production despite the existence of ample land and willingness to produce more. Despite the subsidy, primary producers find it hard to raise the ZAR 1,800 required per Ha. Limited equipment, e.g. tractors to open up land in time for planting. The tractors available at the RED Hub are inadequate and therefore a critical bottleneck to increasing production. Limited interactions between producers and extension service providers. One extension service provider per ward is not adequate.

Limited alternatives. Members present, especially woman and youth expressed the desire to have alternative means of eking a living to complement sorghum production. Likely examples cited include poultry and pig rearing, dress making.

Unreliable weather patterns is yet another challenge cited by the community members the team interacted with. The erratic nature of rains (start and end dates) as well as the low amounts received are risk factors to be considered. Timely and easy access to weather related information is thus required even as risk management options like crop insurance are considered.

Unreliable weather patterns is yet another challenge cited by the community members



Three Observations

Based on the interactions the team had with the community around Emalahleni and especially representatives of the primary producer cooperative, the following are Africa Harvest observations.

1. Community preparedness:

Interactions with the community in Emalahleni confirmed that they recognize the opportunity that sorghum production offers them, especial-

ly in light of the dry conditions obtaining in the area and changes in climatic conditions. The community is well aware of the fact that only sorghum can grow well in the area and are thus ready and willing to increase production of the crop as a means to enhancing their livelihoods. Prior experience growing sorghum has also made it easier for the community to appreciate the opportunity this crop has to offer.

2. Participation of Youth in agriculture

We noted the low representation and engagement of young people in the meetings we had with the various communities and indeed, that was confirmed by the primary cooperative members that we interacted with. The general consensus seems to be that youth need options that bring in quick returns or whose pay-back period is short. Nonetheless, the few young people that were present during these discussions clearly articulated their desire to be involved in economic activities that demonstrate the ability to earn income and support individual aspirations and independence..

3. Need for livelihood diversification

Given that only one production season is currently feasible, within the context of Emalahleni, the team opines that alternative means of diversifying livelihood options would help enhance incomes, mitigate the socio-economic risks, provide increased opportunities for youth and women as well as enhance the long-term sustainability of interventions. Indeed, mention was made, in a number of instances, of the need to have an alternative source of income or livelihood option. Women highlighted the need to pursue options like poultry and pig rearing as well as other income generating activities like dress making and knitting. The quest for an alternative crop that could either be grown together with sorghum for rotation purposes should be given emphasis.



Recommendations

In light of the discussions held with representatives of the primary and secondary cooperative in Emalahleni, our recommendations are as follows:

Optimizing production and productivity in sorghum production

Current levels of production and productivity are well below the optimal levels and thus a lost opportunity to improve livelihoods for primary as well as secondary cooperative members. Out of 6,000-plus hectares of land that can be used for sorghum production, only 1,000 Ha have been made use of, at the very best, while current yields are only 1.5MT instead of 3.8MT per Ha.

In other words only 16% of the production and 39.5% of the productivity potential has been achieved. The opportunity cost is seen in sub-optimal use of installed capacity at the RED Hub in Lady Frere to say nothing of the lost

incomes if full potential were attained.

Therefore, we recommend the following:

Have a phased expansion of production starting with 3000Ha in 2018 and ramp that up to 4,000 Ha in 2019, 5,000 Ha in 2020 and 6,000 Ha in 2021. ***This will require investment in machinery and equipment, extension services, timely dissemination of weather information and crop insurance where GFADA can be looped in.***

Target increasing productivity per Ha to at least 4 Mt in the first year and a 10% annual increase thereafter. Key requirements include:

Improved seeds: both OPVs and Hybrids.,
Research/variety testing program to review varieties for improving yields (OPVs and Hybrids)- Varietal demonstration in partnership with farmers which could also act as the central training points; farmer field schools.
Other inputs like fertilizer, crop insurance,



Recommendations

timely planting and generally good agronomics as well as refresher training in extension services and Trainers of Farmers.

Strengthen primary cooperatives through capacity building in organizational/group dynamics, corporate governance, record keeping, and conflict management. This aspect will require a team of social facilitators to be trained as trainers of trainers who will impart the skills and knowledge needed. Leaders of the primary cooperatives should attend short and targeted trainings on record keeping and corporate governance. Women and youth could also be facilitated to undertake technical and vocational trainings in dress making, knitting etc.

Consider incorporating water harvesting activities e.g the use of water pans that can be used to supplement rainfall during the growing season as well as the use of alternative irrigation methods.

Bring on board all stakeholders including end users like Tiger Brands, The Grain Farmers Development Association (GFADA), Weather service providers and local processors. A sorghum production platform for Eastern Cape can be started to help organize the industry with ECRDA taking leadership and supportive role.

Diversifying market outlets and develop alternative sorghum-based products for various markets.

Market diversification through development or promotion of other value chains that use Sor-

ghum as a raw material and which can support local value addition and engagement of rural communities should be considered. Poultry and pig rearing are two of these options. Inputs from animal production scientists is in formulating feeds with optimal growth and nutritional requirements to support growth and development of poultry at various stages: Chicks, layers, broilers. Use of Sorghum in pig feeds requires to be interrogated further, from a nutritional point of view and in this case, University of Fort Hare, should be engaged in the process. Production of this line of product can be done at the Lady Frere RED Hub and distributed to poultry producers in the region, especially Youth and Women in groups.

Incentivize Youth to participate in value chain activities:

A youth affirmative agenda is required to encourage participation and catalyze their engagement in agricultural based enterprises. Options include:

Training youth and engaging them to provide services like land preparation where payment is made upfront for the same. The secondary cooperative could open up this avenue and employ the Youth as service providers while a long-term plan to have them own tractors and other equipment, alongside those owned by the secondary cooperative should be designed. Leasing arrangements could be considered here.

Engaging youth in seed multiplication where the returns are higher than in grain production could be another option. Seed companies could take up this initiative with a group of Youth within Emalahleni to pilot this initiative. Aggregation and transport services, for a fee, is yet another option to consider.

Key Points from Panel Discussion

Following the week-long scoping study in June 2018, a one-day validation workshop was held at the Miriam Makeba Hall at the University of Fort Hare (UFH) in East London. Three key outcomes were expected from the workshop: a) Presentation of the report by Africa Harvest and discussion to validate finding, identify gaps or shortfalls, forge potential project partnerships and c) agree on the way forward.

After the presentation of the report, there was a panel discussion consisting of:

- Farmers drawn from the target sorghum growing region
- Department of Rural Development and Agriculture (DRDAR)
- Commodity stakeholders
- Sorghum Buyers and Private companies
- Academia

The presenters had received the draft report earlier, allowing them to thoroughly interrogate and critique the findings. Each presenter was given 10-15 minutes to make their remarks (and comments/discussions from other participants), are summarized below:

Farmers drawn from the target sorghum growing region

There was consensus by the farmers that the report had accurately captured the challenges and opportunities. One of the recurring emphasis was the challenge of late onset of rains (in December, instead of October) which made the timing of planting difficult.

The primary and secondary cooperatives need to develop strategies of attracting the youth, especially in primary production.

Although 500 Ha of land was available in 2018, the challenges of farming the entire land remained. These relate to organizing farmers and limited equipment.

In response to an issue captured by the report, the farmers said the decline in cooperative membership can be attributed to the fact members are old and inactive. The primary and secondary cooperatives need to develop strategies of attracting the youth, especially in primary production.

During the discussions, some of the ideas proposed included the need to make agriculture a priority subject, especially at high school level. It was also suggested that municipalities ensure that schools are exposed to agriculture-based experiences.

With regard to the Maqhashu Primary Cooperative, farmers said this is the only coop started as a farmer-driven cooperative. Others formed to take advantage of the grants by the government. The lesson here is that cooperative members have to “put some skin in the game”

and see the cooperative as their own, other than something that has been formed externally to assist them.

Discussion from Academia and Research Institutes

The contribution by sorghum experts and academics was that sorghum is climate resilient as well as striga-tolerance, making it an ideal crop for most of the Eastern Cape Province. Trials had been initiated, focusing on identification of excellent germplasm development; the University of Fort Hare (UFH) had sought farmer inputs focusing on characteristics/traits preferred by farmers to enhance adoption of new varieties.

UFH has capacity in research efforts and capacity building through the department of Agriculture. However, there is need to increased varietal selection targeting specific end uses.

To address challenges related to climate change, and especially the timing of the rains, participants from academia underlined the

need for weather information access by farmers and weather advisories through DRDAR and dissemination this in a timely manner.

Experts also underlined the need for Crop Insurance to be considered especially index insurance. It was not clear what progress has been made to introduce index-based insurance in South Africa.

With regard to shortage of equipment for sorghum farming, conservation agriculture could be explored, through the partnership with UFH which is working in this space.

A representative from the UFH faculty of Commerce expressed their interest to fast-track rural entrepreneurship through capacity building in management and marketing for sorghum farmers and cooperatives.

Private sector/Buyers contribution

There are opportunities of increasing production among emerging black producers and offtake buyers are available. However securing funding is a challenge for rural-based



Key Points from Panel Discussion

black farmers. Studies show that 50% of the cost of production goes to mechanization.

Diageo is looking for 12,000 Metric tons of sorghum for brewing and an additional 24,000 Metric tons (sorghum powder) for export.

This existence of a huge market and the low production confirms there is misalignment in the value chain especially with regards to funding flow and production by smallholder farmers.

Part of the solution lies in establishing partnerships between emerging black farmers and equipment (such as John Deere) and seed producers (Pannar Seeds).

There's also need to broaden the funding partners to include international funding agencies, especially those addressing areas such as Social Development Goals (SDGs), No Poverty and Zero Hunger. The goal would be to target and implement a five-year plan, after which most of the farmers would be on their feet.

The private sector is also exploring rotational crops such as hemp, which is a natural insecticide and herbicide that enhances soil fertility. There was a call to expedite the issuance of hemp licenses as a strategy to help reduce sorghum production costs.

There was a suggestion to explore increased youth engagement through increased and better use of technology based on business models that pay on a monthly basis.

This may require financial support that enables the spreading out of payment to cover the contribution of the youth

Government, policy and research contribution

The DRDAR is already involved in the agriculture economic strategy, with specific focus to bring in youth and women in the sorghum sub-sector. DUNI as a research institute can contribute to the mix of sorghum sub-sector services like soil fertility and on-farm trials. The institute can also be involved in the income diversification by integrating other options like pig, poultry and alternative crops such as cowpea (a rotation crop for nitrogen fixation) and including hemp once it is licensed.

The Eastern Cape Government recognizes that sorghum is a smart food and to be leverage. There is need to address policy issues and also research component for early maturing varieties. There extension services have to be re-thought and possibly include the use of interns and mentors.

It was suggested that the Province explore the model of cooperatives in Kenya. The model would need to have people contributing and benefitting from the engagement and also have the cooperative as the vehicle for going to market or collective purchase.

The private sector supports the satellite hubs approach for cost efficiencies. The representative of Panaar seeds said the company was willing to provide technical know-how to fast-track new technology uptake. It was also noted that Monsanto is engaging farmers – through community-based initiatives - to produce sorghum seeds in Kwazulu Natal and the Eastern Cape Provinces.

Way Forward

The scoping study and its validation are necessary steps in the ECRDA's Project, *Sorghum Transformation Agenda (STA) - Development of Commercially Sustainable Sorghum Value Chain Among Emerging Farmers in the Eastern Cape Province*.

The goal of the STA Project is to triple current 1,000 ha under sorghum (in Emalahleni) to 3,000 ha (throughout the Eastern Province) over three to five years. Sorghum can grow wherever maize grows; it is therefore expected that apart from the RED Hub in Lady Frere, other RED Hubs will contribute 2,050 ha, bringing the new area under sorghum to 5,500, or 6,500 ha, including the current area.

Based on these projections, the project will create about 2,000 jobs based on direct sorghum producers/beneficiaries and other jobs created along the sorghum value chain (i.e. transporters, food processors and feedstock handlers). The impact of the interventions will create R55 Million in three to five years, transforming the local economies of and municipalities.

The STA directly links to the current Radical Economic Transformation initiative of govern-

ment by empowering small scale and emerging sorghum producers to participate in the local economy of their respective areas. Benefits include food and nutritional security, employment of rural women and youth, skills transfer, SME and other local enterprises strengthened.

The proposed way forward is, therefore, to review and consolidate the inputs from the validation workshop and align them to the STA Project. Ideally, this should be done as part of a follow-up workshop, whose key goal would be to form a consortium to implement the STA; this workshop should flesh out the key milestones and identify the roles of each consortium member. Africa Harvest has expertise in managing such consortiums and can be mandated to provide a working structure that will link budgets to milestone achievement.

The timing of the proposed workshop should be aligned with ECRDA's engagement with the Provincial Treasury for funding purposes. The workshop should also identify multiple funders, ensuring alignment of aspects of the project with the interest of possible funders. Given that the goal of the STA Project is the development of a commercially viable and sustainable sorghum value chain among smallholders in Eastern Cape, it would be important to engage the private sector and where possible secure off-take agreements that would jump-start increased production.

