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IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDES TANZANIA COUNTRY STUDY QUALITATIVE COMPONENT

NOVEMBER 2005 – DECEMBER 2005

Contract # GEG-I-00-02-00016-00

Task Order # 02

microREPORT #134

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS

AMAP	Accelerated Microenterprise Advancement Project
BDS	Business Development Services
EUREPGAP	European Retailers Protocol for Good Agricultural Practice
FFV	Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
MSEs	Micro- and Small Enterprises

I. COLLECTING QUALITATIVE INFORMATION: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

I. OBJECTIVE

- It is essential for the interview to have clear objectives.
- Every interview should be based on a carefully constructed interview guide that directly corresponds to the objectives of the interview.
- Specific objectives may differ for each value chain analysis and for each category of firm.

In general, a qualitative interview that is part of a value chain analysis may have one or more of the following specific objectives:

- Understand the structure of the value chain in terms of the types of firms that participate and their relationships to each other. In other words, develop a value chain map.
- Identify bottlenecks in the value chain that affect industry performance and competitiveness.
- Identify the main upgrading opportunities and understand the incentives for upgrading.

II. WHAT IS “QUALITATIVE” INFORMATION?

The terms “qualitative” and “quantitative” are somewhat misleading since the primary distinction between the two is not the presence or absence of numeric information. Qualitative data collection has the following features:

- It relies on open-ended questions.
- The informant (i.e., the person being interviewed) is encouraged to use his or her own criteria for formulating answers and to elaborate on answers.
- The interview process is dynamic and the interviewer listens for and follows up on markers (i.e., words or phrases that signal the informant knows additional information related to key objectives).
- While several techniques (e.g., triangulation) can be used to increase the reliability of the conclusions, data from qualitative interviews does not have any statistical properties. It should not be used to calculate averages, percentages, etc.

III. GUIDELINES/TECHNIQUES

Honesty: Be totally honest about who you are, who you work for and the purpose of the interview. Start each interview with a clear explanation of the research purpose, using terms that are understandable and meaningful to the informant.

Rapport: Establish one-on-one communication with the informant by giving the informant your full attention. Make frequent eye contact and use non-verbal messages (i.e., nodding, leaning forward, mimicking the informant’s body position) to let the informant know that you are interested in what he or she has to say. Be sure to adjust your body language to the local culture. Ease into the interview by initially engaging in polite “small talk” and creating a

seamless transition between your initial greeting and your actual questions. Avoid bringing a “crowd” with you to the interview—go alone or with only one other person.

Deliberateness: Be very deliberate about the way you speak to the informant. Never interrupt the informant. Speak very clearly and establish a comfortable pace (which often means slowing down the way you would normally speak). Allow a space after the informant stops talking, in case he or she wants to elaborate. Choose language that is appropriate to the educational level of the informant. Never, never, never ask leading questions (never).

Launching Point: Begin each interview by establishing a common frame of reference between you and the informant so that the informant understands what kinds of information interest you. A value chain map can be very helpful for this because it immediately communicates that you are interested in learning about the value chain. It also allows the informant to understand where you think he or she fits in, and to correct you if you are wrong.

Strategic Ignorance: Make it very clear that you consider the informant to be the expert and that you consider yourself to be the learner. Conduct yourself as if you were the student of the informant, freely asking for clarification and examples. Use any language weaknesses you might have to your own advantage, as an excuse to ask for more and deeper explanations, or for alternative explanations.

Respect: Treat the informant with a high degree of respect and courtesy. If you are interviewing the informant in his or her home or place of business, be alert to signs that the informant might need a break in the interview to attend to a child, a customer, an employee, etc. Anticipate the informant’s need to keep him or her comfortable. Realize that you are taking the informant away from attending to his or her work, and make efficient use of the time.

Purposefulness: Carefully prepare your question guide before the interview and stick to your objectives. This helps to ensure you will have the information you need when you leave the interview. It is good to probe and follow-up with questions closely related to your research, but resist the urge to ask questions that are based purely on your own personal interest, curiosity, or a different line of research.

Insider’s Language: To the extent possible, pose your question using the same language and terms you think your informant would use. Listen carefully at the beginning of the interview for the words and categories used by the informant when answering. Try to use this insider’s (“emic”) language when posing subsequent questions.

Triangulation: Do not accept one informant’s opinion at face value. While it (hopefully) reflects the informant’s honest opinion, it may not be the entire story. Continue to gather information from other informants—who may have a different experience or interpretation—before reaching any firm conclusions. As a general rule of thumb, you should hear something similar from at least three distinct sources before you accept it as true and accurate.

Consider the Source: Do not ask an informant to provide information outside of his or her direct experience and knowledge. Recognize that it is common for informants to have their own hidden agendas, which will influence their answers to your questions.

Privacy: Try to interview the informant where others can not listen in. Never share information about an informant’s business with other firm owners. Avoid bringing project staff to an interview.

Quick Write-up: Schedule time for writing up your interview notes on the same day as the interview occurs. A general rule of thumb is that it will take longer to write up the interview than it will to conduct it.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

- The guide should consist of a set of carefully worded questions, along with alternative explanations and probes.
- Questions are open-ended. A good question can not be answered with one word.
- Easier and less threatening questions should come first.
- Group questions by categories to make them easier to answer. Make sure the flow is logical and as smooth as possible.

V. COMMON CONSTRAINTS

Distracting Environment: Ideally, the interview will be conducted in a location that is quiet and free of distractions, but be prepared to deal with less-than-ideal conditions:

- Make sure you are prepared to use your interview guide and take notes standing up, in your lap, in a moving car, out in the hot sun, etc.
- If it is hard to hear, try to reposition yourself closer to the informant.
- If the distractions are related to the informants' needs to attend to business or family, then be patient and allow extra time for the interview.
- If possible, attempt to reschedule the interview; but keep in mind that you may not get a second chance.

Contradictory or Confusing Information: It is almost guaranteed that your informants will confuse you or contradict each other. Expect this to happen and keep the following in mind:

- Ask for additional explanations whenever you do not understand something. Be honest that you do not understand. Ask for an example.
- Consider the informant's motivations. Is it possible that he or she has an incentive to over/underestimate or is deliberately trying to mislead you?
- Consider the informant's knowledge base. Have you asked for information that is outside of the informant's common experience?
- Be sure you can distinguish between information about something that has actually happened and conjectural information about something desired or in the future.
- In general, do not challenge the informant. Instead, ask for explanations and clarifications.
- Keep track of the contradiction in your notes. Do not discard this information just because you do not understand it. Usually the confusion will be cleared up after you have conducted additional interviews and collected additional data. Remember that it is your job to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

Informant Strays Off-Topic: If an informant seems to have completely diverged from the interview topics, first ask yourself if there is something relevant (but completely unexpected) that he or she is trying to communicate. Is there a connection you are missing? If the answer is "no" then try the following:

- Stop giving positive feedback with your body language. Break eye contact, turn partially away, and see if he or she gets the message.
- Encourage the informant to return to the questions by saying things like "You know, what I really want to know more about is..." and "What I really need for you to help me with is..."

Language Barriers and Translation: It is always better for the interviewer and informant to speak directly. If you have to use a translator, then make sure of the following:

- Maintain control of the interview. Ask the translator to stop every couple sentences and tell you what was said.
- Look directly at the informant when you speak, not at the translator.

Resistance from Informant:

- Repeat the purpose of the interview and express the purpose in different ways.
- Be sure the informant knows who you are and who you work for, so they do not assume you are a business competitor, government regulator, etc.
- Try to focus on the easiest and less threatening/private parts of the interview first.
- Ask the informant what are his or her concerns.

GUIDE I: EXPORTERS

1. Introductions, purpose of in-depth interview and research.
2. What are the main products you sell?
3. *Show and explain the high-value vegetables value chain map.* What do you think of this illustration/representation? How does it seem to you?
4. What changes or improvements do I need to make to improve it?
5. Can you identify yourself on the value chain? Where are you located?

Questions about Clients/Buyers

6. Who are your main clients (buyers)?
7. Where and how did you find your clients for the first time?
8. How do you learn about your clients preferences? (*probes:* order quantities, types of vegetables preferred, standards, quality requirements, standards, delivery dates, volume)
9. How would you characterize your relationships with your principal clients? (*probes:* independent, close, collaborative, difficult, lots of information passes between you, client is in charge, they direct you)
10. Would you say that in your relations with your clients there is a lot of trust, there is some trust, or there is no trust? Why?
11. In thinking about one or two of your principle clients, how has your relationship changed with these clients from the beginning until now?
12. Does your firm receive any assistance/help or collaboration from your clients? (*probes:* Advances, credit, information, inputs, technical assistance, recommendations)
13. What are the steps you usually take to ensure that you meet your clients' specifications, including delivery date and quality? (Normally, how difficult is it to comply with your clients' requirements? What do you have to do?)

Questions about Suppliers/Producers

14. What are all the ways you source the products you sell, how do you find your products? Who are your main suppliers?
15. Do you buy your products from individual producers, from associations (groups) of producers or intermediaries?
16. How many producers do you work with?
17. If you have different types of suppliers, how would you characterize the differences between each type of supplier? (In other words, what are the characteristics of each type of provider?)

18. How do you communicate information to your providers regarding your requirements in terms of quality of produce, size, chemical use, delivery dates, etc?
 - How do you demand that your providers meet the requirements?
 - What difficulties do your providers have in meeting your demands?
 - Do you help them? How?
19. What changes would you like your providers to make?
 - Have you communicated your wishes to them?
 - How do they respond?
 - What can you do to facilitate or demand these changes?
20. What are the difficulties producers have in making these changes?
21. How do you work with your suppliers to ensure that they satisfy your requirements for quality? What do you do to encourage them? What pressures do you apply?
22. What changes would you like to see producers/suppliers make?
23. Have you communicated this to them? How do they respond?
24. What can you (yourself) do to facilitate or demand these changes?

To Finish Up

25. What are the three most serious risks for your enterprise?
26. What do you think about the competitiveness of the value chain?
27. Do you have additional observations or comments that we have not discussed?
28. Thank you for your time. Are there other players in this value chain that you think we should talk to? Could you give me referrals?

GUIDE 2: LEADERS OF PRODUCER ASSOCIATIONS

1. Introduction and purpose.
2. How did this association form and how has it evolved over time?

Questions about Members and Services

3. How many members do you have?
4. Which crops do your members grow? Any on this list?
5. Do any specialize in certain types or stages of vegetable production?
6. What services do you provide to your members?
7. What are the advantages of being a member of this association?
8. Are all your members from the same ethnic (language) group?
9. Can someone from a different ethnic group join this association?

Questions about Sales and Markets

10. Does the association coordinate the sales of their members' products? If so, how does this work?
11. Where does the association sell their products? (*probes*: local markets, at the farm gate, tourist resorts/hotels, stores, export)
12. How do you locate new buyers?
13. Are individual members allowed to sell their products apart from the association?
14. How is the role of the association different from the role of brokers/intermediaries?

Questions about Upgrading

15. Type of upgrading: a) growing new vegetables; 2) SPS certification; 3) production techniques.
16. How do members of the association learn about product requirements and quality standards that buyers want? How do they learn about market taste? How do they learn about the changes customers want?
17. What are the difficulties producers have in making these changes?
18. In what ways (why?) are producers reluctant to make these changes?

19. Are there any costs or risks to members in making changes? Do they earn more?
20. How does being a member of this association help producers to learn about the changes buyers want and make these changes?

Other Questions

21. How does producing high-value vegetables fit in with the other activities of the household (i.e., the household economic portfolio)?
22. Is production of these vegetables usually a full-time or a part-time activity for your members? How does the part-time status of producers affect their ability to respond to orders? (*probes*: seasonality, type of income needed)
23. Can some farmers produce more rapidly/efficiently than others? If so, why?
24. How would you rate the producers in your association according to these six characteristics (explain the six competitiveness characteristics and the rating system)?
25. Would you say that it is sometimes hard for members to trust the leaders of the association? Why or why not?

To Finish Up

26. *Show and explain the high-value vegetables value chain map.* What do you think of this illustration? How does it seem to you?
27. What changes do I need to make to the illustration?
28. What do you think about the future for smallholders who grow vegetables?
29. Do you have additional observations or comments that we have not discussed?
30. Thank you for your time. Are there other players in this value chain that you think we should talk to? Could you give me referrals?

GUIDE 3: INTERMEDIARIES

1. Introduction and Purpose.
2. Show our “Products of Interest” list.

Questions about Buyers/Clients

3. What are the main products that you sell?
4. What are all the ways that you sell your products (market outlets)? To whom do you sell your products?
5. What are the differences between your clients? To whom do you prefer to sell? (*probes*: frequency, price, bargaining/negotiating costs, volume, quality, consistency)
6. How do you learn about the new products that buyers want? How do you learn about market taste and quality requirements?
7. How did you first meet your clients/buyers?
8. Do receive any form of assistance/help from your clients/buyers? (*probe*: cash advances, advances in materials, training, transport, record keeping)
9. What steps do you take to meet your client/buyers specifications, including delivery date and quality?
10. What challenges do you face when it comes to your buyers?

Questions about Suppliers/Producers

11. What are all the ways you obtain the products you sell? Who are your suppliers?
12. What are the differences between the suppliers you work with? (*probe*: quality, price, punctuality, standards, volume, costs of collecting products, risks)
13. Which type of supplier do you prefer to buy from?
14. Do you buy directly from farmers? If so, do you buy from individual farmers or from groups of farmers? What is the typical landholding of the farmers you buy from?
15. How many suppliers (of each type) do you buy from?
16. How do you first find your suppliers? (*probe*: people you know, contacts, family, neighbors, language groups)
17. What kinds of help or services do you provide to your suppliers? (*probe*: inputs, seeds, credit, irrigation techniques, technical assistance in better farming practices, help with certification)
18. How do you communicate your product requirements to your suppliers?
19. What are the difficulties suppliers have in meeting your requirements?
20. In what ways are suppliers reluctant to make these changes?

21. Are any of the farmers you source from certified under EUREPGAP, BRC, or other certification program?

To Finish Up

22. What are the three most serious risks for your enterprise?

23. Show the value chain map: What do you think of this representation?

Can you identify yourself on the value chain? Where are you located?

24. Do you have additional observations or comments that we have not discussed?

GUIDE 4: HOTELS/ RESTAURANTS/ TOURIST RESORTS

1. Introduction and Purpose.
2. Show our “Products of Interest” list.
3. Show the value chain map.
 - What do you think of this representation?
 - What changes do I need to make to improve it?
4. Which of these vegetables do you buy for your restaurant(s) and in what quantities?

Questions about Suppliers/Producers

5. We are interested in understanding how you obtain your vegetable products (those on our list). Can you please explain all the ways that you buy your supply of these vegetables? Who are your suppliers?
6. What are the differences between the suppliers you work with? In other words, what are the characteristics of each type of supplier? (*probe*: quality, price, punctuality, standards, volume, costs of collecting products, risks)
7. Which type of supplier do you prefer to buy from? Why?
8. Do you buy directly from farmers? If so, do you buy from individual farmers or groups of farmers? What is the typical landholding of the farmers you buy from?
9. Who are your most important suppliers? What makes these the most important?
10. How many suppliers (of each type) do you buy from?
11. How do you first find your suppliers? (*probe*: people you know, contacts, family, neighbors, language groups)
12. What kinds of help or services do you provide to your suppliers? (*probe*: inputs, seeds, credit, technical assistance in better farming practices)
13. How do you communicate your product requirements to your suppliers? (*probe*: quality of produce, size and appearance, chemical use, delivery dates)
14. What are the difficulties suppliers have in meeting these requirements?
15. What changes would you like your suppliers to make?
 - How do you communicate this to them?
 - Are they willing or reluctant to make these changes?
 - What can you do to facilitate or require these changes?

16. Do you pay different prices for different qualities of the same vegetable?
17. Do you know if any of the vegetables you buy are certified under EUREPGAP, BRC, or other certification program?

Questions about Restaurant Clients and Closing

18. How have the preferences for vegetables among your restaurant customers changed over time?
19. How has your selection of vegetables that you use changed over time?
20. Do you have any additional observations or comments that we have not discussed?

GUIDE 5: SUPERMARKETS

1. Introduction and Purpose.
2. Show our “Products of Interest” list.
3. Show the value chain map
 - What do you think of this representation?
 - What changes do I need to make to improve it?
4. Which of these vegetables do you buy for your supermarket(s) and in what quantities?

Questions about Providers/Producers

5. We are interested in understanding how you obtain your vegetable products (those on our list). Can you please explain all the ways that you buy your supply of these vegetables? Who are your suppliers?
6. What are the differences between the suppliers you work with? In other words, what are the characteristics of each type of supplier? (*probe*: quality, price, punctuality, standards, volume, costs of collecting products, risks)
7. Which type of supplier do you prefer to buy from? Why?
8. Do you buy directly from farmers? If so, do you buy from individual farmers or groups of farmers? What is the typical landholding of the farmers you buy from?
9. Who are your most important suppliers? What makes these the most important?
10. How many suppliers (of each type) do you buy from?
11. How do you first find your suppliers? (*probe*: people you know, contacts, family, neighbors, language groups)
12. What kinds of help or services do you provide to your suppliers? (*probe*: inputs, seeds, credit, irrigation techniques, technical assistance in better farming practices, help with certification)
13. How do you communicate your product requirements to your suppliers? (*probe*: quality of produce, size, chemical use, delivery dates)
14. What are the difficulties suppliers have in meeting these requirements?
15. What changes would you like your suppliers to make?
 - How do you communicate this to them?
 - Are they willing or reluctant to make these changes?
 - What can you do to facilitate or require these changes?
16. Do you pay different prices for different qualities of the same vegetable?
17. Are any of the farmers you source from certified under EUREPGAP, BRC, or other certification program?

Questions about Distribution and Clients

18. How have the requirements and preferences changed among people who purchase horticulture products in your supermarkets?
19. How has your selection of vegetables changed over time?
20. How many supermarkets receive fruits and vegetables from this facility? (warehouse, distribution center) Where are they?
21. How many similar facilities does your company have? Where are they?

To Finish Up

22. What are the three most serious risks for your enterprise?
23. What do you think about the competitiveness of the value chain?
24. Do you have additional observations or comments that we have not discussed?

GUIDE 6: PRODUCERS (FARMERS)

1. Introduction and purpose of in-depth interview.
2. Indicate list of vegetables of interest.
3. What crops do you currently have planted? (icebreaker)

Overview of Household

4. What is the total land area you have and how much is cultivated?
5. What part of your land is irrigated and what form of irrigation?
6. What are all the crops you have grown in past year and approximately how much land areas did you cultivate with each one?
7. Which of these crops did you sell and which crops were eaten in your household?
8. How many people live and eat with you in your home? Do you support other members of your family who do not currently live and eat with you?
9. Other sources of income for informant and household members.

Vegetable Production and Upgrading

10. How long ago did you first start growing vegetables for sale?
11. Describe circumstances leading up to first growing vegetables for sale.
(*probe*: types of veggies, challenges, demonstration effects, learning, help from buyers or other farmers, risks, immediate impacts)
12. When was the last time you tried to grow a new type of vegetable for the first time?
13. What were the reasons you decide to add that new vegetable? Describe the circumstances leading up to the decision.
14. What were some of the challenges of growing the new vegetable for the first time? What did you do to face these challenges?
15. How did you learn about the way to grow the new vegetable, e.g., when to plant it, how to plant it, how to control pests and diseases, when to harvest it, etc.
16. What is the hardest part of learning to grow a new type of vegetable?

Markets and Buyers

17. Where or to whom have you sold your vegetables in the past year?

(probe: wet market, exporter, intermediary, broker, shop or store, association)

18. Did you sell your vegetables to other types of buyers in the past?

19. What are the main differences between these types of buyers?

20. Which types of buyers do you prefer to sell to and why?

(probe: larger volume of sales, higher prices, fewer risks, repeat sales; faster payment, more trust, more assistance, easier to find buyers)

21. What forms of help or assistance do you receive from the different types of buyers?

(probe: advances of seeds or other inputs; training; technical assistance; advance contract for sale; cash credit; transport services)

22. To which type of buyer do you currently sell most of your vegetables and why? What proportion of your vegetables did you sell to this buyer in the past year?

23. Would you like to find more or different types of buyers? Why?

24. Is there anything else about selling your vegetables that you think I should know?

Association with Other Farmers

26. I am interested in knowing how farmers in this area help and cooperate with each other. Could you explain some of the ways that farmers in this area work together?

27. Do you ever cooperate with other farmers? Do you belong to any growers' associations or clubs? Please explain.

28. What are the activities you do together?

29. What are the benefits of being in this association?

30. What kinds of problems are common?

31. How does this relate to upgrading?

Closing

32. What plans do you have for your farm in the future? What changes would you like to make?

33. Why are you interested in making these changes?

34. What opportunities do you see?

35. What challenges do you face?

GUIDE 7: TRANSPORT/SHIPPING COMPANIES

1. Introductions, purpose of in-depth interview and research.
2. How long has your business been working in this location?
3. Who are your clients? (*probe*: Tanzanians, foreigners)
4. Are some of your clients more important to your business than others?
5. How important are high-value/fresh vegetables to your business?
6. Where are you sending most vegetables to? (*probe*: USA, Europe, Japan, other Central American countries)
7. Are you referring to value or volume of product?
8. *If is familiar with value of product*, Where do you get information on the value of the products you ship?
9. Suppose I am a new customer and I need to send a shipment of vegetables to the USA. What are the steps or processes that I need to follow in order to send the vegetables overseas? (*probe*: what forms do I need to complete, do I have to declare the value, what information do I have to provide)
10. What are the physical ways that your company sends products? (*probe*: sea, air, land)
11. What is the fee structure? (*probe*: is it based on weight, value, volume, method of transportation)
12. What other services do you offer to clients? (*probe*: packaging, payment transfer)
13. If you offer services directly to foreigners who reside overseas, how would you describe a typical client?
14. How do you get orders from that type of client?
15. If you offer services to Tanzanians residing locally, how would you describe your typical client?
16. What percentage of your clients who reside locally have repeat buyers?
17. Do your clients who reside locally sell fresh vegetables that they produce themselves, do they sell vegetables produced by others, or do they do both?
18. What have been the trends that you have seen in the horticulture/vegetables market? (*Probe*: are there more people sending products overseas, are there more foreign buyers who reside overseas placing orders directly)

GUIDE 8: GROUP INTERVIEW FOR VEGETABLE FARMERS

Background information

--Name of association

--Number of members

--Starting date

--Languages spoken by members

1. Greetings, welcome, introduction, and purpose. (no specific benefit)
2. Guidelines/Rules: everyone should speak, raise hands to speak, take turns and speak one at a time, speak briefly, think about what is typical, common or usual.

Members' Economic Activities

3. What types of vegetables are usually (often) grown by members of this association?
4. In addition to vegetables, what other crops are usually (often) grown by members of this association?
5. In addition to growing vegetables and other crops, what other ways do families in this area usually (normally, often) earn income and meet their expenses?
6. About how much of their total income do families usually earn from selling vegetables: all, more than half, about half, less than half, very little.

Markets and Buyers

7. I am going to name different ways to sell vegetables, and I would like to know if the members of this association ever use any of these ways to sell their vegetables: neighbors, buyers who come to the farm, market in Mgeta, markets in Morogoro, Kariakoo, small stores (dukas), hotels and restaurants, supermarkets, exporters.
8. Are there any other important ways to sell vegetables that I have not mentioned? What are they?
9. Of these ways to sell vegetables that we have listed (repeat list), which three ways are most often used by members of this association?
10. What are the main differences between these three ways to sell vegetables? (*probe*: price, cost of marketing, volume of sales, repeat sales, information, advances of seeds and chemicals, other assistance from buyer)
11. Has the association ever coordinated the sales of their members' products? If so, how does this work?

Being in Association

12. What are the advantages of being a member of this association? (How do members of the association benefit from being in the association?)
13. What have you heard are some of the disadvantages of being a member of an association?
14. We've heard that the leadership of an association is very important. In your opinion, what does it take to be a good leader of an association?

Future Vision

15. What would be the (one) most helpful change for vegetable growers in this area?
16. What is the (one) most important issue you face as vegetable growers?
17. Thank you for your time. Repeat purpose.

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