Dear Members and Partners,

This is yet another Member’s Update Newsletter for the month of September. During the month of September, EAGC carried out several activities. In this issue, you will note that the Secretariat undertook activities around training and capacity building among other interventions.

In our mandate as a council, facilitating efficient, structured, inclusive and profitable grain trade in the region is very core. As such, the secretariat conducted small and medium entrepreneurs trainings in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda. Among other featured updates is on policy, market information and institutional partnerships.

We hope this Members Update will serve to keep you connected and informed on the activities of the council as well as opportunities available for enabling grain trade.

EAGC has continued to partner with several grain stakeholders in the region and Africa at large. These partnerships are anticipated to benefit EAGC members grow their trade networks.

We look forward to your feedback. Feel free to contact us for more information on any of our ongoing and upcoming interventions.

Enjoy the reading,

Regional Updates
2. EAGC equips more trainers in the region as demand for capacity building rises.

3: EAGI Curriculum Write Shop workshop

4: African Green Alliance Forum 2016, Calls for More Agricultural Financing


5. i) EAGC Commissions an assessment on the role of ICTs in improving the functions of RATIN.
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Country Updates
6. Uganda i) EAGC profiles more markets and borders in a bid to increase RATIN coverage
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7. Rwanda: Farmers calls on EAGC to accelerate training on structured trade

8. Tanzania: Farmers asked to adopt structured trade practices during SMEs training in Arusha

9. Implement the new policy and procedures on grain export, grain traders tells the government

10. Kenya: Small holder grain traders asked to practice post harvest techniques to gain profitable trade.

11. Over 50 Small and Medium Entrepreneurs trained in both Kitale and Eldoret, Kenya

12. Malawi: EAGC Malawi Participates in the Pigeon Peas stakeholders meeting

OCTOBER EAGC ACTIVITIES CALENDAR
REGIONAL OFFICE

Training and Capacity Building

EAGC equips more trainers in the region as demand for capacity building rises.

Trainers of trainers (ToT) equipped with skills to facilitate competency based curriculum to the grain stakeholders

Over twenty trainees drawn from Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda were equipped with skills as trainers of trainers to facilitate capacity building and training mandate of Eastern Africa Grain Council. The three day, Trainers of Trainers workshop was held at PrideInn Hotel, Westlands, Nairobi from 19th-21st, September, 2016, facilitated by Morena Talent Consulting.

The trainees were taken through a trained on the competency based curriculum to equip them with facilitation acumen to aid in delivering the right information to the grain stakeholders.

The training will enable trainers add value and impart knowledge to improve on grain produce, post-harvest management, trade quality management, warehouse operations and management and agribusiness finance.

Recently, Eastern Africa Grain Institute, EAGI, a training division of Eastern Africa Grain Council developed and validated an overarching competency based curriculum. A training manual was subsequently developed to guide training processes to the target groups. The curriculum will offer relevant and quality courses to stakeholders in the grain industry, particularly geared to build capacity in the structured grain trade.

Informed by the need for capacity building, the EAGI curriculum is tailored to standardize the learning outcomes and modify the learning process as well as create an opportunity of interaction between academia and grain industry players.

The curriculum is also expected to improve stakeholders’ competency in agribusiness sector.

Speaking at the workshop, EAGC, Executive Director, Mr Gerald Masila called on trainees to use the knowledge acquired to grow training human resource who will work with EAGC as associate trainers in the Institute. “The Institute is now looking up to you (trainers) to facilitate a quality curriculum that will be accessible to all stakeholders.” He said. Mr. Masila added that EAGC wants to develop the grain industry because over the years, EAGC has witnessed success stories from people who have benefited immensely. “There is a ‘big good’ out of the grain industry when it flourishes,” he quipped.

Eastern Africa Grain Institute (EAGI) is a division of the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC), that provide specialized training, capacity building and consultancy services to grain value chain stakeholders for the purpose of reducing transaction costs. Among other courses, EAGI offers Structured Commodity Trade Finance, Trade Quality Management Standards, Warehouse Operations and Management, Agribusiness Finance and Web 2.0 and Social Media for development.
EAGC represented by Mr Kim Mhando, Trade Policy Analyst, participated in the Lesson-Sharing Workshop on Farm Risk Management in Africa Project, held on 6-7 September 2016 in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The objective of the workshop was to share experiences on various agricultural risk management tools being implemented in agricultural value chains in West, Eastern and Southern Africa, as well as deliberate on policy challenges and remedial measures needed to stimulate the uptake of farm risk management tools.

The Eastern Africa Grain Council in its mandate to provide Draft Manuals were subsequently prepared for four units namely; Agribusiness Management and Finance, Structured Trade Systems, Commercial grain handling, Equipment and Storage and Post Harvest Handling.

Eastern Africa Grain Council accelerated its initiatives in the training and capacity building as the demand for training demands from all grain value chain players increase.

During the official closure of the write shop, CTA Director, Michael Hailu expressed satisfaction that the training manual developed will go far much in helping execution of quality agricultural training. EAGC Executive Director, Gerald Masila, appreciated all experts for their professional input in the development of training manual.

Lesson-Sharing Workshop on Farm Risk Management in Africa Project, in Cameroon

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Cross section of the participants at the workshop in Yaoundé
African Green Alliance Forum 2016, Calls for More Agricultural Financing

Eastern Africa Grain Council, EAGC, represented by the Executive Director, Gerald Masila participated in The African Grain Revolution Forum (AGRF) 2016 held in United Nations Complex, Kenya from 5th to 9th Sept 2016. The 2016 AGRF which brought together over 1,500 delegates from Africa and beyond, was been designed to showcase examples of transformation in agriculture in action, and to promote efforts to drive and achieve scale and to foster accelerated impact. The Forum was divided into sessions and events which took place before the formal opening on Wednesday, September 7, 2016 and activities that began on the afternoon of the 7th September.

Mr Gerald Masila, Executive Director, EAGC was a moderator during a symposium on Accessing New Global, Regional, and National Markets session where keynote speaker was Ms. Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director World Food Programme (WFP).

The 2016 AGRF marked a ‘Seize the Moment’ campaign milestone which presented an opportunity for national governments, regional and global players, private sector, non-state actors and development partners to advance policies, actions, partnerships and secure investments that will accelerate Heads of States commitments outlined in the National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIP), the Malabo Declaration and the AU Vision 2063.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) which is one of key partners of EAGC commemorated the 10th anniversary since its establishment supporting small holder farmers in agriculture.

The forum was graced by high level delegates from national governments, regional and global players, private sector as well as non-state actors and development partners. Among them were; H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, The President of Kenya, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President, Nigeria, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President, African Development Bank, Dr. Rob Smith, Vice President, AGCO, Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President, AGRA, H.E. Dr. Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson, African Union Commission, Ms. Gayle Smith, Administrator, USAID, Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO, NEPAD Agency and Dr. Judith Rodin, President, Rockefeller Foundation among others.

The Sixth Africa Green Revolution Forum ended on Friday with investors being urged to deploy Sh40 trillion to unlock Africa’s food production potential. And as a quick win, donors pledged more than $60 billion (Sh6 trillion) — leaving a $340 billion (Sh3.4 trillion) deficit — to help transit Africa from a net importer of agricultural products to exporters.
EAGC Commissions an assessment on the role of ICTs in improving the functions of RATIN

EAGC is in the process of carrying out an assessment on the role of ICTs in improving the functions of its market information system, RATIN.

In order to increase the number of users of the EAGC RATIN and also improve on the access of the data, EAGC with support from Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), would like to develop and launch new mobile based ICT tools and applications.

Informed by the ever increasing development in the technology space, EAGC undertook to commission a consultancy service to carry out a detailed review of the RATIN system, service, products and solicit feedback from users on their requirements and also scope the market to establish the available and potential ICT tools and capabilities (including mobile technologies) that EAGC can consider using in developing the new RATIN ICT tools and applications that would improve the functions of EAGC RATIN particularly in increasing the speed and reduce the costs of information delivery.

The outcome of the process will in turn guide the fundamentals of the proposed AgriHack symposium through which EAGC will engage youth in Africa to participate in agriculture and trade through developing innovative ICTs and digital applications to support EAGC RATIN and broaden its functionalities.

Grain Traders asks EACG to organise more bilateral Business to Business meetings,

The Eastern Africa Grain Council, on 22nd September 2016 in partnership with Agribusiness Investment for Market Stimulation (AIMS) Program, facilitated a successful regional Business to Business (B2B) meeting, between Malawi and Tanzania traders hosted at Blue Pearl Hotel, Da es Salaam, Tanzania.

The regional B2B which brought together grain traders, producers, processors and input suppliers mainly dealing with Maize and Rice was aimed at promoting structured trading systems and cross border trade in the region. Some of the participants from Tanzania were AgroKibiti, International Tanfeeds, Musoma Foods, Dofra Enterprises.

Non–binding contracts amounting to 130,000MT of both maize and Rice were signed by the participants and witnessed by EAGC represented by Taziona Mchira, Program Officer, Malawi, Emmanuella Atito, Trade Facilitation Officer and Terry Ikunda, Country Program Manager, Tanzania.

The event catalyzed grain stakeholder engagement between the two participating countries. Owing to the importance of the B2Bs, participants urged EAGC’s to introduce its facilitating role in the contractual arrangement.

Appreciating the vital role, the bilateral B2Bs have played in promoting grain trade, the traders urged EAGC to consider hosting more of such events frequently so as to strengthen and create more opportunities for grain players. EAGC assured grain handlers that they will get more services, which among them include deliberate efforts to ensure non-binding contracts are actualized.

This bilateral regional B2B meeting is one of the key interventions of EAGC in promoting intra-regional trade through market linkages and increase access to improved market information through facilitating Buyer – Seller engagement.
**UGANDA**

**EAGC profiles more markets and borders in a bid to increase RATIN coverage**

The Marketing Information Systems program team represented by MIS Program Officers, Pausta Clessy and Titus Kisangau conducted a week long RATIN market profiling activity at Elegu/Nimule Border point, Gulu Produce Line, and Mpondwe Border market.

This comes at a tie when there has been increasing demand for more market and border price and volumes information coverage through RATIN.

**At Elegu Border:** The team noted that trade is mainly one-way with almost 95% of the grains moving from Uganda to South Sudan. The traded commodities include Maize meal (Posho), Maize grain, beans, rice, and sorghum. The team noted that there are Relief Agencies such as WFP and Catholic Relief Services which constitute some good percentage of grains crossing to Juba due to the on-going political turmoil in the world’s youngest country.

Most of the grain crossing to South Sudan is declared at the Uganda Revenue Authority Offices from where the South Sudan Border authorizes (clearing agents) pick the declaration forms for tax levying purposes “Small” quantities such as 5MT are not necessarily declared to URA.

**At Mpondwe Border:** the team noted that most grains cross from Uganda to DRC, while DRC traders bring in Palm Oil, Gonja, and Timber. Ugandan Traders have formed a Cross border Trade Association (CBTA) which help in facilitating trade within the border. It was also noted that Congolese authorities sometimes close their border for close to a week thereby paralyzing cross border business.

Currently, EAGC is monitoring trade in five border points between Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda and eight grain markets.

**Small and Medium Entrepreneurs in grain trade trained on structured trading systems**

With the rising need to structure grain trade in the region, this week, over twenty (20) Small and Medium entrepreneurs in grain business got an opportunity to be trained on structured trading systems.

The SME training organized by Regional Office and Uganda team was conducted from 28th to 30th Sept 2016 at Nile Hotel Jinja. The training attracted 20 participants who included 9 females, 11 males and 1 banker. During the training, the participants raised concerns affecting structured trading systems such as the continued existence of middlemen, warehouses offering low prices, and the malfunctioning Warehouse Receipt System.

The training was centered on grain standards, warehouse management practices, G-Soko, Market Information Systems, Trade Contracts and Warehouse Receipt Systems among other topics. The participants applauded the effort of Eastern Africa Grain Council in empowering them to realize great income from their produce by using best grain business processes.
EAGC Country program team hosted two sectoral meetings which brought together farmers processors in Kigali. The aim of the sectorial meetings was to; Identify and discuss challenges and issues encountered in the sub sector of grains and cereals in Rwanda. The meetings also created a forum for brainstorming on potential remedies and recommendations to address the identified challenges.

The farmers meeting attracted 36 farmers who actively engaged during the session in sharing their experience on field. Some of the challenges experienced were; Inadequate extension services, minimal trainings especially on post harvest techniques, lack of PHH equipment, lack of Aggregation centers and storage facilities, minimal market linkage and difficulties in accessing finance

The meeting recommended establishing a farmers committee that will hold regular meeting each period of three month and discuss with EAGC on available solutions, and how we can work hand in hand to handle existing challenges.

KOTUKA, one of the EAGC members shared a success story on how they have been called by the ministry of agriculture for an offer after being supported by EAGC to publish their activities in agriculture magazine. They encouraged other farmers organization to join EAGC so that they can gain from EAGC interventions.

During the sectoral meetings for processors, four (4) processors, attended the meeting and shared some of their challenges which are mainly related to: Lack of raw material especially rice processors, quality and standards, Drying grounds and storage facilities, Warehouse standards and certification, Product standards and grading and access to finance

The meeting recommended establishment of a network platform with processors to share useful information. Field visits and training on needs assessment were also considered as key in building capacity of farmers.

EAGC Rwanda country program team organized a successful two-day Small and Medium entrepreneurs training on Structured Trade from 26th to 2th Sept 2016.

The objective of the training was to equip SMEs with knowledge on how to utilise structured trading process profitably.

The training was held in Musanze district and attracted twenty six (26) participants who represented SMEs from Rwanda and Burundi. Among the twenty one (21), 14 members and 7 non-members) were from Rwanda while Five (5) participants were from Burundi. The training was tailored to address grain quality, information issues around markets, prices, trade policies as well as credit facility needs.

EAGC has accelerated its advocacy activities in the country to address farmers training needs to improve on grain quality.
Farmers asked to adopt structured trade practices during SMEs training in Arusha

EAGC Tanzania program team organized a successful Small and Medium Entrepreneurs training in Arusha, at the Naura Springs hotel. The training attracted a total of 25 participants representing their SMEs and FBOs. There were 7 women and 18 male from Arusha and districts around Arusha.

The participants got an overview of EAGC as a whole and then later were taken through structured trading system and its components. They were trained on the effects of inadequate storage of grain and how to overcome the problem. They were also trained on Aflatoxins and the EAC grain standards that they need to consider in order to be more competitive in the EAC regional market.

Participants were introduced to GSoko system and RATIN systems to learn how the both systems are curbing the challenge of unreliable markets and market price information. They learnt that RATIN is a tool to access important market information that will help them to make more informed decisions. Through this training EAGC reached FBOs and SMEs that have the capacity to do cross border trade but have not had the proper advice and guidance. EAGC noted that it is important to engage more stakeholders to adopt structured trade practice that will be more beneficial for them.

GSoko Uptake in Tanzania on the rise

The Eastern Africa Grain Council has continued to increase number of GSoko installed warehouses in the country. Recently, Juma Ngomuo EAGC Program Officer, accompanied the team from the Virtual City to carry out GSoko installations for the assessed warehouses under RUDI. The team started in Kilombero, Songea and Mbarali.

By linking these VACs to GSoko, EAGC will have more traders and FBOs trading in the structured system.

GSoko platform allows for transparency and competitive prices throughout the whole region.

It also guarantees market for the producers of grains and pulses. GSoko will also help in gathering information about available volumes for Regional Food Balance Sheet that serves as a tool for monitoring food security in the country but as well as the region as a whole.

EAGC is also in the process of increasing the number of inspected and certified warehouse in Uganda and Tanzania. The certified warehouses will be linked to GSoko system.
EAGC Director Mr. Silayo and Mr. David Tuhoye held a meeting with the Food Security Director Mr. Kiranga at the Ministry of Agriculture offices. The meeting was aimed to familiarize EAGC and other stakeholders on the new policies and procedures for obtaining an export permit for grains.

Recently, the government lifted the export ban on grains which had been imposed for over a period of two months. The Eastern Africa Grain Council engaged government and grain stakeholders in a bid to see the ban lifted since it had affected intraregional trade. The government heeded to the plea of the grain traders and the ban was lifted.

The lifting of the ban came with new policy and procedures. The team was taken through changes in the government policy that were effected and the reasons for the changes. The team noted that the new system now involves the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment and that the letters for the request of the permits, moving forward, will be reviewed by both Ministers in charge of Agriculture and Trade.

Mr. Kiranga informed the team that it is important for EAGC to have this knowledge because as an organization that promotes structured cross border trade, need to be able to offer advice and support to members and other stakeholders on obtaining the correct permits for export.

So far, after imposing the new regulations, two export licenses from MITI have been obtained by EAGC on behalf of two members. This is one of the new prerequisites for getting an export permit. The team asked the government to fast track implementation of the new set policies to ensure that grain traders recover faster from the effects of the export ban.

Growing institutional partnerships

Mr. Evert Lassche, Director, LMI Noord-Holland paid courtesy call to Eastern Africa Grain Council, Dar es Salaam office. He was accompanied by Mr. Juma Dikwe, a member of EAGC Country Program Committee.

Mr. Evert works with Netherlands Senior Experts and he was interested to know about EAGC and the activities within Tanzania and the region as a whole.

MIS Officer, Sharifa Chikaha made a brief introduction of EAGC and Mr. Evert identified Structured trading system and Market information systems as key areas to leverage partnership in.

The meeting also discussed on how EAGC assists SMEs and traders to export through B2B events and the knowledge and assistance we offer to them to obtain valid export permits.
Small holder grain traders asked to practice post harvest techniques to gain profitable trade.

The Kenya Country program conducted a two day training for Small and Medium Enterprises in the central rift region. The training attracted 20 Small and Medium Entrepreneurs who included Eight (8) cereal traders and 12 representatives from farmer organizations across Nakuru, Laikipia and Nyandarua Counties.

The participants were trained on post harvest handling, market information, warehouse receipt system as well as agribusiness financing. During the training, EAGC facilitated a Business to Business meeting between the traders and farmers where several trade opportunities were explored.

The training was facilitated by EAGC in partnership with Global Communities. The initiative aims is aimed at improving training capacity to the SMEs and as a result realize improved grain trade in regards to volume traded, quality of grains and increased market linkages.

Kenya Country Program Manager, Davine Minayo accompanied by Eastern Region, Field Officer, Timothy Muli issued Post Harvest Handling (PHH) equipment to several Community based organisations.

Among them, Mwakika CBO, Mbukilye Ngukilye, Menda makooka, Kyang’a and Kyambeke FBOs. Each group was issued with a digital flat weighing scales to assist them manage faster weighing of produce at the aggregation centres hence increase the volumes aggregated.

The farmer groups operates village aggregation centres (VAC) through which they are able to aggregate their produce and take to the nearby certified warehouses for storage services.

Over the years, several farmer groups have witnessed increased income from the selling their produce as group. In a VAC, farmers are able to ensure their produce is of the right moisture content, observe standards as well as pests.

Some of the VACs are Gsoko enabled and as such, farmers have been able to also access financial credit facilities from the financial institutions.
The EAGC Regional and Kenya country team represented by STS Officer, Fred Simon, Technical Advisor, Peter Wanjohi and M&E Officer, Vincent Kiplagat facilitated successful SME trainings in both Kitale and Eldoret. The two day trainings were conducted from 26th to 30th Sept 2016.

The training was aimed at equipping participants with capacity to handle challenges and opportunities that exist in the grain industry in Kenya. The participants identified key challenges as quality issues, imbalance in market supplies and price fluctuations. Facilitators asked trainees to adopt aggregation practice, adopting proper grain handling practices, and value addition.

The participants also learnt the importance of structured trading system. The session was purposed to help streamline the grain industry through proper postharvest handling of grains, aggregation of grains to enhance economies of scale, construction and certification of warehouses for grain storage, adoption of warehouse receipt system and trade contracts in business operations. These activities will help overcome part of the many challenges facing the grain industry.

During the two day training sessions, the participants also learnt about the importance of monitoring the market prices in different markets in Kenya and neighboring countries. They learnt of how to use RATIN website and how to query for market prices using RATIN SMS platform. Participants were also introduced to GSoko, which is anticipated to help in overcoming most of the challenges in the grain sector.

Representatives from Family bank informed the participants that they are able to access agricultural business loans.
EAGC Malawi Participates in the Pigeon Peas stakeholders meeting

The Eastern Africa Grain Council, Malawi program represented by Taziona Mchira, participated in the Pigeon peas stakeholders meeting on 15th September 2016 organized by the Business Innovation Facility. The event, which was graced by different stakeholders in the grain sector, was purposed to disseminate results and increase awareness of Nyonga product. Nyonga is a crop protection and fertility enhancement product developed by the Farmers Organization Ltd in partnership with Business Innovation Facility.

Ronald Chilumpha from Farmers Organization Ltd made the presentation on Nyonga product. He emphasized on the potential of Pigeon peas, current price trends and results of the product trials. Seconding him was Arthur Ngwende from Business Innovation Facility, who presented on “Commercializing the Pigeon peas in Malawi”. EAGC is a key stakeholder in the grain trade in the country and therefore its participation in the meeting was very key.

BURUNDI

EAGC Burundi Country program is representative, Yves Batungwanay participation in the Training of trainers workshop (ToT) held in Nairobi early in the month. Mr Batungwanayo was accompanied by three other facilitators from Burundi. The trainees will facilitate implementation of the new developed training curriculum in Nairobi.

Five small and medium entrepreneurs in the grain trade from Burundi participated in a three-day training workshop held in Musanze District, Rwanda 25th September 2015. The training was tailored to address grain quality, information issues around markets, prices, trade policies as well as credit facility needs.

During the month of September, the country representative hosted National Food Balance Sheet committee validation workshop in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture.
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