

Millennium Development Authority (MiDA)

**COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FARMER BASED-
ORGANIZATIONS (CDFO)**

**REPORT ON TRAINING AND TRAINING-RELATED ACTIVITIES
FOR DESIGNATED FBOS IN WEST MAMPRUSI DISTRICT FOR
PHASE 3 STAGE 1**

07TH DECEMBER 2009 TO 21ST JANUARY 2010



Plate 1: Picture showing a section of the members of Tisuntaaba Farmers group listening attentively during a training session and a dance with members of the group after completion of Stage one Training.

TSP's Name: Food Research Institute

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1. Executive Summary

A six-week training course was carried out for the Tisuntaaba Farmers Group in the community of Loagri No.1 in the West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region of Ghana. Tisuntaaba farmers group was one of the ten (10) farmer groups Food Research Institute trained.

The training was based on the development of Business Capacity of the farmers and some of the subject areas discussed included the following MCA Ghana Program—economic growth and poverty reduction, FBOs group formation and strengthening, rural development and commercialization, Business vision through a value chain lens, a short primer on leadership, governance and management, developing business expansion strategies, developing the action Agenda, driving the organization change and action business plan. The objective of the commercial development of farmer based organization was to change the mindset of farmers so that they do farming as a business rather than the subsistence farming which they currently practice.

Mr. Elvis Baidoo was the trainer for the Tisuntaaba group and was assisted by an interpreter Mr. Abukari who is an opinion leader in Loagri No.1 and has gone through the CDFO training with his group Suguru Viela in the same community. The training venue was one of the classrooms of the Roman Catholic Primary School, Loagri. Training Needs Assessment of Tisuntaaba farmers group was performed to identify the gaps in the farmers' commercial knowledge. The Tisuntaaba farmer based organization is made up of fifty-one (51) members made of of forty-two (42) men and nine (9) women. Some challenges faced by the trainer are dusty roads to the training center from Walewale and the unfavorable weather conditions due to harmattan.

Members of Tisuntaaba FBO were certain that they would gain knowledge through the training and also to access credit to do farming. The farmers were motivated to attend the training because of the information they had from the MOFA staff and members of other farmer based organizations that have been trained previously. The farmers treasured the knowledge they acquired and were grateful for the training on Commercialization of their farming because they were highly optimistic that it will help increase their production and profitability in their farming business.

1.0 Introduction

The Food Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research has completed a six-week training course for ten (10) selected Farmer Based Organizations in the West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region of Ghana for MiDA. The training in Business Capacity Building commenced on 7th December 2009 and ended on 21st December 2010.

Each FBO was taken through three sessions of four hour duration per week over a period of six weeks adding up to 18 training sessions. Tisuntaaba Farmer Based organization from the Loagri No.1 community of the West Mamprusi district was one of the farmer based organization trained. Loagri No.1 is located at a part of the northern region popularly known as "Overseas". The group has fifty-one (51) members made up of forty-two (42) males and nine (9) females. The group was formed in the year 2006 and is governed by bye-laws. The leadership structure of the group is made up of a Chairman (Mr. Yakubu Tahiru), Vice Chairman (Mr. Iddrisu Mahamodu), Secretary (Mr. Mahama Adam), and Treasurer (Madam Tompoa Banchinaba). Others are Men's Organizer (Mr. Fuseini Abdulai) and Women's organizer (Madam Maria Tosagri). The group has a Savings Bank account currently holding an amount of GH¢ 350 at the Bangmarigu Community Bank with account number SLOT21-047 and the signatories to the account are the Chairman, Secretary and the Treasurer. Members of the group meet twice in a month at the school premises at Loagri No.1 to deliberate on current issues and pay dues of GH¢1 per member per month.

Farming is their main occupation but in addition the off-season activities for earning a living for the women in the group are shea butter fruit collection and processing, petty trading and selling of paddy rice; the men however go hunting for game and sell their livestock. The group supports themselves by assisting each other in specific farming activities such as planting and harvesting during the major/minor cropping seasons. Members support each other in the form of donations (cash or kind) to bereaved or sick members and victims of crop failure and natural disasters.

Members of Tisuntaaba Farmers Group individually cultivate maize and millet as major season crops and cowpea, okro, groundnuts and watermelon in the minor growing season. The nearest markets are the Loagri No.1, Kubori and Fumbisi markets which operate on a 3-day cycle. Farmers sell their produce individually and therefore unable to negotiate higher prices. Members generally buy seeds from unapproved sources from the Fumbisi and Loagri markets. Majority of members of Tisuntaaba farmers group know about fertilizer application to their farms but due to lack of credit they do not apply the right amounts per acre of land. Some farmers also obtain fertilizer from unapproved sources in the markets.

2. Background of assignment including brief on training needs

Table 1. Training needs of Tisuntaaba Farmers group based on challenges

Module	No Problems	Some Problems	Many Problems	Cause of Problems / Causes	Training Needs
<p><i>Module 1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MCA Ghana Program – economic growth and poverty reduction • Commercial Development of FBOs (CDFO) • Implementation Support • Key Compact Constituencies &The Beginning of a Process 			<p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p>	<p>Little/no knowledge, about MCA and MiDA Project. Scanty information about Module 1.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Preparation • Equipment • Variety Choice & Cultural practices • Safe handling, storage and application of Plant Protection Products • Calibration of Sprayers and Pesticides application methods • Integrated methods of pest control • Irrigation /water management techniques • Post-harvest handling techniques 		<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p>		<p>Insufficient knowledge on Crop Production and best practices.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-addition techniques • Agricultural Marketing • FBO Organization and Management Practices 					
<p><i>Module 2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why FBOs are Important for Rural Development • Functions of Producer Organizations And Member Services • Unique Characteristics and Challenges of FBOs, Elements of Strong FBOs • Commercialization and Best Practices 			X X X x	Little knowledge of Topics in this Module	Yes Yes Yes Yes
<p><i>Module 3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Value Chains are Important for the Ghana Compact • Value Chain Framework & Elements of the Value Chain • Why Value Chain Growth is Important to FBO& Value Chain Thinking as a Tool for Business Strategy 			X X X	Little knowledge on this module, being introduced for the first time.	Yes Yes Yes
<p><i>Module 4:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Business Vision for an FBO Who Needs It & How FBOs Benefit from Business Vision • Business Vision vis-à-vis Business Plan & Developing Vision for your FBO • Practice Using the Value 			X X X X	Insufficient knowledge on business strategies and expansion.	Yes Yes Yes Yes

<p>Chain Lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Visioning Process & Drafting the Vision Statement 					
<p><i>Module 5:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing Concepts of Leadership, Management and Governance • Basics of Board Operation, Review of Key Organization Documents & Defining Duties and Responsibilities of Office Holders • Importance of Member Services and Meetings • Approaches to Financial Management 			<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>Little knowledge on topics on this Module</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p><i>Module 6:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Self-Assessment and Team Building • What is SWOT Analysis and How to Use It • Defining Attributes and Challenges • Brainstorming Strategies • Sources and Uses of Funds • Identifying tactics, Targets and Strategies 			<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>Poor knowledge on topics of this Module</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>

<p><i>Module 7:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Strategy to Action (Review Strategies and Tactics, Identify Requirements for Change, Move to Taking Stock) • Defining Resource Requirements (Strategy, Key Steps/tactics, Requirements for Change, Actions to Tactics and Implement Change. Resource Requirements Maximizing Sales) 			<p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>No knowledge on topics on this Module</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p><i>Module 8</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for change identified by the business planning process • What Organization Changes Need to be Made? Change agenda components • Defining Tasks/Steps (Member level, Organization level) • Ensuring carrying out of the agreed actions in the Business Plan) 			<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>No knowledge on topics on this Module</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p>

Farmers gained much knowledge and sharpened their skills after completion of the training sessions on all the modules. The Tisuntaaba FBO was very attentive and asked very relevant questions and made suggestions. Farmers of the group were happy and very optimistic that the training will help them increase profitability and production and thus move them from subsistence to commercial farming.

3. Training venues and logistical challenges

All the roads to training venues were very dusty due to the dry weather condition around the time of training. Some members of the Tisuntaaba FBO had difficulty in understanding some module topics and remembering what was discussed in previous lessons owing to high illiteracy and showing how complicated adult learning is.



Plate 2: Pictures showing challenge of dusty road conditions to training venues (Up-picture taken from the back of trainer's vehicle and showing a sea of dust at the back of the moving vehicle, Down- trainers wearing scarves and nose masks to reduce dust inhalation).

4. Trainers and Training equipment

Table 1: indicating the FBO ID #, the FBO name, the location of FBO and the trainer for the FBO

FBO Identification Number	FBO name	Location of FBO	Names of Trainer(s)
NAZ081216G02Fr	Tisuntaaba Farmers Group	Loagri No.1, West Mamprusi District	Elvis Baidoo

Materials used for training.

The materials used for training are flip charts, flip-chart board and markers. It makes teaching and learning easier because of the high illiteracy level of the farmers. None of the group members can neither read nor write except the Secretary and thus no material was given to them.

5. Lessons from Approaches and Methodology



Plate 3: Picture showing a section of members of Tisuntaaba Farmer Group at a training session.

Table 2: Table of the modules for each week.

Week /dates	MODULE NUMBER &TITLE	TOPIC (if applicable)	TRAINING METHODOLOGY
Week 1 7th,9th,11th December 2009	Module 1: MCA Ghana Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture Project structure • Commercial Development of FBOs(CDFO) • Implementation Arrangements • MiDA- Your Development Partner • Implementation Support • Key Compact Constituencies • Course objectives • The Beginning of a process 	<p>Discussion Lectures Group discussion Demonstration</p>
WEEK 2 14th,16th,18th December 2009	Module 2: FBOs, Rural Development and Commercialization Module 3: Value chain Thinking OCB Module 1 OCB Module 2 OCB Module 3 OCB Module 4 OCB Module 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why FBOs are important for rural Development • Functions of Producer Organization • Functions as member services • Unique characteristics and challenges of FBOs • Elements of Strong FBOs • Commercialization and best practices <p>Reality check: Where is your FBO starting from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group formation and development • Credit Management • Contracts • Business and technical communications • Methods for tracking FBO's progress. 	<p>Group discussion Lectures Discussion Demonstration</p> <p>Discussion Lectures</p>

<p>WEEK 3 21st, 22nd, 23rd December 2009.</p>	<p>Module 4: Business vision through a value chain lens</p> <p>Module 5: A short Primer on Producer Organization Principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why value chains are important for the Ghana compact. • Value Chain framework • Elements of the value chain • Why value chain Growth is important to FBO • Value chain thinking as a tool for business strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Business Vision for an FBO and Who needs it • How FBOs benefit from Business Vision • Business vision vis-a vis Business Plan • Practice using the value chain lens • The visioning process • Drafting the vision statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing concepts of leadership, Management and Governance 	<p>Lectures Discussion Group discussion Demonstrations</p> <p>Lectures Discussion Group discussion Demonstrations</p> <p>Lectures Discussion Group discussion</p>
<p>Week 4 7th, 8th 9th January 2010</p>	<p>Module 6: Developing Business Expansion Strategies</p> <p>Module 7: Developing the Action Agenda</p> <p>Module 8: Driving The organization change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of board operation • Review of key organization Documents • Defining Duties and Responsibilities of office holders • Importance of Member Services and meetings • Approaches to Financial Management 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Self-Assessment and Team Building • What is SWOT Analysis and How to Use It • Defining Attributes and Challenges • Brainstorming Strategies • In-depth Technical Assessment (Production Practices, Harvesting Practices, Approach to harvesting, Post Harvest Handling Practices, Primary processing, storage, value Added practices, organization and Management practices) • Sources and Uses of Funds, • Identifying tactics • Finalizing Strategies • Final check on Vision, Targets and Strategies • From Strategy to Action (Review Strategies and Tactics, Identify Requirements for Change, Move to Taking Stock) • Defining Resource Requirements (Strategy, Key Steps/tactics, Requirements for Change, actions to Tactics and Implement Change. Resource Requirements • Customizing Training and Technical Support(Technical Training and Maximizing Sales) • A note about Performance Monitoring • From Action Agenda to Business Plan • Requirements for change identified by the business planning process 	
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<p>Week 5 13th,14th,15th January 2010.</p>	<p>Module 9: Action Business Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Organization Changes Need to be made? • Change agenda components • Defining Tasks/Steps (Member level, Organization level) • Assigning and Agreeing on Responsibilities (Completing the plan, developing work plan per strategy. Meeting with RICs • Ensuring carrying out of the agreed actions in the Business plan • Directions for completing the Business Plan 	<p>Discussion Group discussion</p> <p>Discussion Group discussion</p> <p>Discussion Group discussion</p>
<p>Week 6 18th, 19th &20th August, 2009</p>	<p>Module 9: Action Business Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the Business plan (Background to action business plan, the action business plan) • Next steps • Evaluation of training • End of training 	

Module 1: The MCA Ghana Compact

FBO's Knowledge of MCA Ghana before training

From the beginning of the training the farmers had a fair idea about the MCA Ghana Compact from the Agricultural Extension Agents and other farmers who were trained previously. The objective of the session was to emphasize that Agriculture which is the backbone of the country's economy could go a long way to reduce poverty and bring about economic growth by commercialization. Methodology applied during the training was lectures and citing of examples to stress the various relevant points in the module topics. The trainees had hazy ideas about the project and understanding of the concept of the MCA Ghana Compact. The three components of the MCA Ghana Compact were not known to them and implementation arrangements and various selected zones to benefit from the Agricultural project.

Crop Budget Analysis

Tisuntaaba farmers were guided to compare the expected profits they would be making with respect to total expenditure in production of maize, rice, millet and beans. Some of the input costs were also based on the prices of the last farming season. However, the current prices of commodities as pertains on the major markets around the communities were used for costing. The FBO settled on cropping maize in the major cropping season.

Farmers' knowledge level of MCA Ghana Compact after training

After the training sessions, members of the group understood the MCA Ghana Compact and its components especially the application of knowledge of the Value Chain to improve upon produce by adding value and gaining a higher market share which represents a unique opportunity for them to reduce poverty through economic growth.

Conclusion/key Message

At the end of the training sessions of Module 1, the general consensus was that the modules had immensely increased their knowledge on the MCA Ghana Compact and are eager to learn more to commercialize their farming activities.

Module 2: FBO's, Rural development and Commercialization

Members of the Tisuntaaba Farmer Based Organization were taken through rural development and commercialization of farmer based organization. The module centered on the importance of groups and group formation, group functions and services.

Value chain

Members were introduced to the value chain concept and its relationship to economic growth and poverty reduction. Participants were taken through how the market system operates with respect to the major crops produced. They were taught how their crops move within the commodity chain and how they could transform commodity chain thinking into value chain thinking so as to take advantage of markets at different levels by strengthening their FBO positioning in the value chain.

The definition of 'Value Chain' was given as the path that a crop or product takes as it moves from field or factory to the marketplace. It was made clear that at each step along the way value (not just price) is added to the product. The farmers were made to know that each vertical step in a value chain is a market for the step below. The value chain includes all activities that it takes to bring a product to the market, including horizontal linkages to suppliers of goods and services.

Value Chains and the Ghana Compact

Value chain thinking is practiced worldwide by competitive producer groups which understand that the key to profitability is the capacity to move a product into the market at prices which both satisfy customers and carry the lowest possible expenditure. To achieve economic growth through rural agriculture, Ghana needs to increase the competitiveness of the value chains which take key crops into international markets. Participants were made to realize that Ghana's agriculture is key to the country's economic growth and that to achieve economic growth that is sustainable and reduces poverty, value chains must operate with expanded opportunities for Farmer based organizations. For this to happen, FBOs must understand value chains and be able to use this understanding to strengthen their organization and their approaches to doing business. The participants were made to understand the basic concepts behind value-added thinking by discussion, lectures and demonstration.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Participants had a fair understanding about value addition to agricultural produce. Due to lack of resources and understanding of how the market operates is what has delayed their practice of the value chain concept. After this module, members of Tisuntaaba Farmers Group had

improved in their understanding of the subject and were ready to take advantage of the opportunities in the market as regards the maize the group chose to commercialize.

Conclusion/key message

Participants learnt for the first time about rural development through rural commercial farming. The farmers appreciated the concept and were ready to add value to their produce in order to avoid the middlemen in the value chain and increase their market share.

Module 4: Business Vision through a Value Chain Lens

Members of Tisuntaaba Farmers Group were taken through the business vision concept. The elements of a good business vision were identified as a vision statement and targets for achievement. The characteristics of a good business vision are that it must be accompanied by specific volume targets and vision time bound, must be realistic and achievable. The benefits of an FBO having a business vision were looked at. These included group cohesion, ability to design activities which fulfill member expectations and ability to identify and set targets. The participants were later taken through the vision development process. The participants were guided to evaluate their current performance levels and to set targets which the group seeks to achieve over the next two years. During the business vision drafting stage participants were divided into three groups with each group presenting their vision. Participants were guided to write down draft business vision statements based on the contribution from the three groups.

Module 5: Leadership, Governance and Management

In this module members were introduced to the nature of the three concepts of leadership, governance and management. It was pointed out that individuals within an organization may play one or more of these roles but usually not at the same time. The importance of organizational leadership and how it works within organizations were also treated. Other areas discussed were what leadership roles were, characteristics of good leaders and characteristics of effective boards. Governance as the power of making and administering organization policies with regard to programs, relationships and limitations of authority were explained to participants. The methodologies used are lectures, demonstration and discussion.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Module 5 offered members of Tisuntaaba FBO the understanding on the different levels of leadership and the roles they play. The module motivated group members to involve all

members in the running of the organization by setting up committees with responsibilities and were ready to discuss with some dignitaries to serve on the board of the FBO with time.

Conclusion/ key message

Members realized the complementary nature of the leadership, management and governance concept in organization. The members of the FBO appreciated that the group will succeed in commercialization farming if they only worked together and supported those in leadership, management and governance positions.

Module 6: Developing Business Expansion Strategies

The key strategies for the FBO business expansion were discussed in this module. Members of Tisuntaaba Farmers Group were assisted to use the SWOT analysis as a tool to evaluate the factors both internal and external to the organization which can affect its ability to arrive at its vision. The SWOT analysis framework was used by members to devise internal factors such as production, marketing and selling practices, post harvest handling, management practices and credit acquisition and classify them as strengths or weaknesses. This was also done for external factors and was classified into threats or opportunities.

The trainees reviewed internal and external factors to identify attributes and challenges. Strengths and opportunities put together form the attributes which work in favor of the organization's ability to achieve its business vision. Challenges however were compiled from the weaknesses and threats which have the potential to work against the organization's ability to achieve its business vision. Members were then made to identify attributes and challenges and then a discussion on developing strategies to achieve the vision resulting in the developing of a list of strategies. A technical assessment of the group in the areas of production practices, harvesting practices, post-harvest handling practices, primary processing, storage, value-added practices, marketing practices and organization and management practices was the second form of assessment which the group examined.

A list of tactics that members thought could be used to guide the group activity in each category was listed and finalization was done using each weakness each strength taking advantage of the opportunities and getting ready to meet each threat.

Module 7: Developing the Action Agenda

Using the strategies and tactics, members developed elements of an action agenda for inclusion in their business plans. The action agenda is the specific steps the FBO will take at the member, organizational and value chain levels to achieve strategies and vision. Members were assisted to review each strategy and list the tactics which correspond to it. Members were made to

know that for a successful execution of any business plan, specific actions will be required to bring about what is expected and to ensure that the right actions have to be chosen

Module 8: Driving Organizational Change

In this module members addressed the challenges associated with identifying the ways in which the organization will tackle the job of moving forward to implement changes which are required to support the ability of the FBO to continue with their business planning efforts that a plan to manage the change is very necessary. The farmers' appreciated that implementation of the change has to be driven through the organization with leadership playing a key role. The Tisuntaaba farmers group agreed that at member levels it will be useful to appoint member committees to support implementation and communication of plans and ideas, hold meetings invite members to contribute to training design and structure member feedback channels. At the organization level, development of revenue generation plan, preparation of management plan, analysis of financial impacts of plan implementation and completion of business plan were very important.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Members of Tisuntaaba Farmers Group had a very good understanding of what the vision and strategies of their group was. The module prepared the farmers to devise action agendas to achieve their vision. They also learnt about realistic steps to address the strategies. The changes that the FBO had to go through were recognized and a management plan put in place and the farmers' knowledge and skills on the two subject areas enhanced considerably.

Conclusion/key message

The participants appreciated the importance of assessment and the changes at the member, organizational levels in order to achieve the action agenda and improve strategies for business development.

Module 9: Completing the Draft Business Action Plan

Farmers were assisted to put together their business plan. The first part of this plan dealt with the background to the plan and covered areas such as background information about the FBO, overview of current practices, description of the operating structure, and assessment of environment and opportunities. Part two of the business plan draft was based on the action

agenda and areas such as vision and targets of the FBO, action plans for implementation of each strategy and management plan.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Participants had become well informed of the concept of changing from subsistence farming into commercial farming. All the awareness and skills gained in the previous modules were uncovered on completing the draft action business plan.

Conclusion/key message

Members of the Tisuntaaba farmer group appreciated the development of the business plan and declared that they have really gained knowledge through the course.

Module 9: Completing the Draft Business Action Plan

In the final week, the last part of Module 9 was completed. The background information about the FBO, their operating structure, overview of current practices and assessment of environment and opportunities were collated and confirmed. The vision, strategies, actions and tactics were finally fed into the business plan.

Participants Knowledge and Skills Evaluation

Members of the Tisuntaaba Farmers Group were ready to apply aspects of commercial farming after going through all the nine (9) modules and were prepared with the second stage training in order to get the starter pack and the MiDA loans to improve upon their farming and entire livelihood.

Conclusion/key message

Farmers appreciated the knowledge and awareness discovered so far and displayed some of them during the discussions. The training sessions for the week were outstanding as the farmers showed confidence and readiness to commercialize their farming activities.

Follow-up activities by trainers and trainees

The Agricultural extension Agents responsible for the area accompanied the CSIR-FRI team to the communities to visit the executives of the FBOs, Chiefs, Assemblymen and elders. The AEAs assigned to the Loagri No.1 community supported during the training sessions and will do same in the second stage training. They will follow up on the performance and application of what was learned by the farmer group at the first stage training.

a. Lessons for improving future training.

Members of the group admitted that they had really gained much knowledge that will go a long way in enhancing their farm commercialization drive and proves that the content of the modules were very appropriate. The farmers agreed that the content of the modules will help them massively in their attempt at doing commercial farming and pledged to do group marketing and transportation on the produce at the next harvest. Members promised to do all of its business collectively to attain cohesion in the group. Some more of these are that the inputs committee will arrange and negotiate with input suppliers and buy all inputs in bulk to effectively reduce the cost per unit. The tractor services committee also promised to start work immediately to negotiate for the cost per acre of ploughed land.

The stage one training was very successful to trainers and very beneficial to the trainees. However it is suggested that training alone is not enough that is why the stage two training is essential to practicalize the awareness to the farmers. The Tisuntaaba farmer group will be able to successfully and sustainably become more efficient and productive after the stages one and two training and when they obtain the necessary credit and services at the right time of the farming calendar.

4.0 Tracking indicators

Table 3: Number and percentage of Tisuntaaba Farmer Group members and leadership trained on various modules.

Name of FBO	Location	District	Number FBO members trained for each module (Percentage of leadership of FBO participating)			
			Module 1	Module 2 OCB modules 1-5	Module 3	Module 4
Tisuntaaba Farmer Based Organization	Loagri No.1	West Mamprusi	49(96.1%), 6(100%)	50(98%), 6(100%)	50(98%), 6(100%)	50(98%), 6(100%)
			Module 5	Module 6	Module 7	Module 8
			50(98%), 3(50%) Module 9 50(98%), 6 (100%)	49(96%), 6(100%)	49(96%), 6(100%)	49(96%), 6(100%)

5.0 Participants knowledge and skills Evaluation

FBO	Location	District	MO DUL ES	Modal Level of Knowledge and skills before training	Modal Level of Knowledg e and skills after training	Remarks
TISUNTAABA	LOAGRI NO.1	WEST MAMPRUSI	1	Poor	Satisfactor y	Farmers followed rapt attention and were enthusiastic.
			2	Weak	Very Good	Farmers were excited about the MiDA project and were eager to

						find out more about commercialization
			3	Weak	Excellent	Discussions were very interactive and livelier and resulted in concrete practical suggestions for the group's implementation of its value chain position to achieve a higher market share for their produce.
			4	Satisfactory	Very good	Farmers contributed in discussions and followed with rapt attention.
			5	Fairly good	Good	Farmers treasured the concept of leadership, governance and management and pledged to make changes in leadership of the group accordingly.
			6	Fairly good	Very good	Farmers followed with interest and were eager to

			7	Poor	Good	implement content of the module. Members were eager to implement changes and were happy to develop tactics to achieve their vision.
			8	Fairly good	Very good	Farmers followed with much attention and were eager to implement organization changes to achieve their vision.
			9	Weak	Very good	Participation in discussions for this last module was very encouraging. Members were ready to access the MiDA loan.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations for alternative FBO capacity building strategies

The business capacity of the Tisuntaaba FBO was developed as the group's awareness was increased in commercial farming. The training methodology used and delivery were very good. Members of the group gained much knowledge and were eager to apply what they learnt. The

contents of the modules were applicable and went down well with the farmers. The business plan was completed and were ready to access the MiDA loans from banks to enable them do commercial farming. The following are some of the suggestions for alternative FBO capacity building strategies.

- The content of the training material should be in pictures to increase understanding of the modules since majority are illiterates.
- Construction of feeder roads linking communities to make purchase of inputs, service acquisition and marketing of produce easier.
- Some additional loans should be given to the farmer group in the form of equipments such as maize and rice shellers to reduce post harvest losses and improve quality of produce.