CASE
Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises
“…agricultural productivity growth remains at the core of our food security agenda; we know that food security will take more than increasing yields. Productivity growth will not translate into increased incomes unless we help small farmers to access markets, sell their increased yields and thereby generate the income to pull their families and communities out of poverty. We also know that in some countries, chronic poverty and repeated hunger crises pose significant challenges and that these challenges require creative, integrated approaches that bridge humanitarian and development efforts.”

– Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator
Remarks to the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Foreign Relations (April 2010)
Sub-Saharan Africa is the world’s poorest region – roughly half of its people live on less than US $2 per day. Additionally, average population growth has outpaced the growth in agricultural productivity. The number of food-insecure people has also increased while soil fertility has fallen and natural resources have become increasingly degraded. Even though most poor people still live in rural areas, economic stagnation and a rapidly growing urban population mean that poverty and food insecurity are also impacting urban areas.
In the past, agricultural growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has been achieved mainly by cultivating larger areas – what is known as extensive farming. However, the potential for further expansion of farming areas is now limited. Some under-exploited lowland areas remain, but these are mostly marginal or forested, and destruction of such ecosystems – even for agriculture – would cause more problems than it would solve.

Agriculture is of pivotal importance in Africa and offers the continent the best opportunity to spur economic growth among the rural poor. However, such growth requires significant increases in agricultural productivity, along with expanded and sustained integration of smallholder farmers into farmers’ organizations and/or agricultural value chains so that they have greater impact in the marketplace. Farmers also need better access to services and agro-inputs. Despite increased investments in the agricultural sector, the challenges to multiply and scale up the ‘islands of success’ that have been achieved remain formidable. Persistent social, economic, political and ecological impediments – at different levels and scales – slow innovation and market integration. The global economy and climate change also put pressure on Africa’s agricultural sector.

The only way forward, therefore, is to intensify agricultural production – to boost the yield of existing farms, leading to increased food availability at the household level and larger marketable surpluses that generate higher incomes. A key to intensification is the application of more nutrients to crops as they grow in the fields. These nutrients can come from mineral fertilizers and/or from locally available soil amendments including phosphate rock and organic matter. IFDC recommends a combination of both approaches, a process known as integrated soil fertility management (ISFM).

Presently, the majority of Africa’s smallholder farmers are subsistence farmers. Through its projects, IFDC emphasizes linking these small-scale producers to markets – from connecting them to local and/or urban markets to promoting regional trade as a means to increase the availability of food and increase incomes. IFDC assists these smallholder farmers in ‘graduating’ from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture, or farming as a business.
While the challenges outlined are difficult to overcome, opportunities are emerging – economic growth rates in many African nations are climbing, there are growing private sector investments in the agricultural sector and millions of farmers have moved into small-scale commercial agriculture.

However, increasing production through the use of more intensive technologies is only one step toward food security. Other conditions must also be met if intensification is to become economically sustainable and if food is to reach post-harvest markets in quantity and on an ongoing basis. Farmers must be able to access adequate amounts of high-quality agro-inputs at the right time and at a reasonable cost. They must also have access to financial credit at reasonable interest rates. Moreover, they need to be able to sell their surplus crops at fair prices that generate profits without disrupting the market.

One solution that IFDC has used effectively across Africa is to help smallholder farmers and others integrate within value chains that increase participants’ opportunities for success. However, integrating value chains is challenging. In most Sub-Saharan countries, there are weak markets, poor infrastructure, low rates of employment and income levels and informal (often exclusive and conservative) networks of trade and information exchange.

Sustainable agricultural intensification needs a carefully assembled strategy that: links highly diverse smallholder farming systems to specialized supply chains; strengthens the competencies of the various stakeholders; and also addresses the fundamental causes of market failure. One of the most successful methods IFDC has used to increase the number of farmers moving from subsistence farming into commercial agriculture is its Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) solution. CASE was developed by IFDC over a period of nearly a decade in collaboration with many partner organizations, including producer and trader organizations.

With CASE, smallholder farmers are integrated into local, national, regional and even global value chains organized around specific commodities. A value chain links the numerous steps along the ‘chain’ that a commodity takes from the farmer to the ultimate consumer. In these commodity value chains, IFDC not only helps strengthen and professionalize smallholder farmers but supports growth in the agro-input, processing and marketing industries that facilitate agribusiness expansion.

As part of intensive farming, farmers can improve the use and recycling of nutrients by applying innovative soil and water conservation methods. However, to raise agricultural productivity substantially, these methods must be used in conjunction with ISFM strategies that combine mineral fertilizers and locally available organic amendments (crop residues, compost and green manure). These amendments will replenish soil nutrients and improve the efficiency of fertilizers and other agro-inputs (seeds, crop protection products and water).
Because organic sources used to improve soil have low or imbalanced nutrient content and are not particularly abundant, relying on these resources alone is not feasible. Similarly, using inorganic fertilizers alone may lead to short-term productivity gains but can cause longer-term problems such as soil acidification, micronutrient deficiencies and loss of soil texture, all of which lead to yield decline. The best strategy is to combine inorganic and organic soil amendments; the mineral fertilizer provides most of the nutrients while the organic fertilizer increases soil organic matter, structure and buffering capacity. The rationale for intensification based on ISFM is simple – there are synergies in using both inorganic and organic fertilizers that not only boost nutrient levels but also improve the efficiency of nutrient and water use.

In addition to ISFM and the development of competitive commodity value chains, CASE also focuses on agribusiness cluster formation and strengthening the abilities of private and public institutions to enable agribusiness and trade. Agribusiness clusters consist of well-organized groups of farmers and related enterprises, integrated into specific commodity value chains and supported by local financial, business development and extension services.

CASE strengthens the capacity of smallholder farmers and nearby small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to develop a competitive environment in order to produce a certain commodity/product for a targeted market and to overcome the risks and other barriers related to further market integration. This is buttressed with the support of business support services (BSSs), banks and/or micro-finance institutions (MFIs).

The individual and collective capacities of the participants in an agribusiness cluster are improved through collective learning and action. This improves participants’ coordination at the grassroots level and ensures informed and sustained integration in targeted value chains and markets. This empowerment is another crucial element of CASE. Empowerment can include helping farmers learn more productive farming techniques and/or be more effective advocates for information and stronger agricultural laws, better services from public organizations, protection and improvement of their rights and transparency at all levels of policy-making.

The ultimate goal of CASE is to give farmers the knowledge and tools they need to grow more abundant and more nutritious food crops and then to link them to others along the value chain. These steps help create stronger markets so farmers can sell their produce at a profit and other stakeholders along the value chain can profit as well. CASE helps develop commercial attitudes (again, farming as a business), particularly among small-scale farmers as they are linked to input and output markets. Through CASE, farmers and local entrepreneurs learn to identify agricultural production and business opportunities and invest in their own futures; capacities at every level of the value chain are strengthened. This IFDC solution addresses many of the key issues tied to sustainable agricultural advances in Africa.

Agricultural Value Chains

IFDC has helped increase the productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers in developing countries across Africa. Establishing commodity-based value chains not only empowers farmers to shift from subsistence farming to an entrepreneurial business, it gives them the tools they need to take ownership of the process and build sustainable markets.

Market-oriented agriculture encourages farmers to invest in their fields in order to increase yields while decreasing production costs. The input value chain encompasses those involved in the steps leading up to the harvest. These might include agro-dealers, who sell farmers agro-inputs and provide information on their use, or producer organizations that help farmers learn more effective farming techniques. The output value chain encompasses all the steps that an agricultural product takes, from its point of origin to the consumer.

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CASE has three components:

1. Agribusiness cluster formation – strengthening of local capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship involving a diversified array of stakeholders.

2. Agricultural value chain development – linking farmers to others in the chain emphasizes integration of all actors and strengthens the agribusiness cluster.

3. Enabling institutional environment – capacity-building that involves both public and private stakeholders and fosters improvements in the institutional environment for agribusiness development.

These three components (focal areas of capacity-strengthening in CASE) are presented schematically above.
Stimulating Agribusiness and Increasing Rural Income

With funding from the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IFDC implemented the Strategic Alliance for Agricultural Development in Africa (SAADA) program in West Africa from 2006 to 2011. A key component of SAADA was the From Thousands to Millions (1000s+) project. Working with local partner organizations, 1000s+ used CASE to facilitate the emergence of agribusiness clusters and to link smallholder farmers to markets in seven countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo.

The CASE solution was developed from real field- and enterprise-level learning experiences. CASE responds to the fact that market integration is a difficult and often risky venture for smallholder farmers. Demand for a product may not be enough to ‘pull’ smallholder farmers into a market-based response. Such a response requires the development of professional and trust-based relationships among smallholder farmers and other entrepreneurs, business support and financial services. Concurrently, sustainable market integration depends on the existence and capacity of agribusiness clusters, which act as local support systems.

CASE is based on the recognition that smallholder farmers, local processors, agro-dealers, warehouse managers and others in a value chain may not always know each other well – and they may even distrust each other. That limits their potential to work together to increase their individual and collective incomes and improve their lives. When implemented correctly, CASE helps build or strengthen those invaluable relationships.

1000s+ (and other IFDC projects) proved that many smallholder farmers have the motivation and potential to move from subsistence to commercial farming. With sufficient economic incentives and technical support, these farmers can improve the productivity of a wide range of commodities, leading to marketable surpluses and dramatically improved incomes.

Using the CASE solution, the 1000s+ project developed over 200 agribusiness clusters in the seven West African target countries. Countless value chains developed from the agribusiness clusters. Under 1000s+, approximately 700,000 farmers and over 1,000 SMEs were (and are) effectively linked to markets; these farmers have seen their agricultural productivity almost double, while their incomes increased by an average of 30 percent. For example, in 2009 they succeeded in producing a marketable surplus of 1.5 million metric tons (mmt) of cereal equivalents with an estimated market value of $500 million.
Value Chains

A value chain links the steps a product takes from farmer to consumer. It includes research and development, agro-input suppliers and finance. The farmer combines these resources with land, labor and capital to produce commodities.

In the traditional selling system, farmers produce commodities that are ‘pushed’ into the marketplace. Farmers are isolated from the end user and have little control over agro-input costs or over the funds received for their goods.

In a value chain marketing system, farmers are linked to consumers’ needs, working closely with suppliers and processors to produce the specific goods consumers want.

Under this approach, and through continuous innovation, the returns to farmers can be increased and livelihoods enhanced.

Rather than focusing profits on one or two links, participants at all levels of the value chain can benefit.

Adapted from the ACDI/VOCA World Report Fall 2006: The Value Chain Approach; Strengthening Value Chains to Promote Economic Opportunities and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development "Research Into Use" project website.
Even under the most positive conditions, value chains and markets may encounter political, social, cultural and/or economic barriers. Business cartels, undisclosed agendas of policy-makers or other powerful interests and incomplete information networks can undermine the quest of value chain members for more equality and effective participation in agribusiness development. CASE uses a transformative approach that supports local initiatives to articulate, negotiate and implement changes that improve equality, strengthen bargaining power and, in general, encourage ‘fair’ competition.

CASE features implementation strategies tailored to local conditions. It does not stipulate a specific entry point. Any local value chain member can be the driving force for cluster development (as depicted in the CASE diagram on page 7).

A key to CASE success in the 1000s+ project countries was IFDC’s on-the-ground presence. IFDC staff members have close contacts with regional and national partners, and a thorough knowledge of country-specific situations. These factors were critical in making the CASE solution successful.

IFDC staff members have the expertise to appraise business ideas – is the targeted commodity marketable and does the targeted cluster have potential comparative advantages to produce the commodity? Are the agricultural practices and other (value-adding) processes cutting edge or is there room for improvement? How are input and output markets structured? What are the relevant policies and how should farmers be organized to be most advantageous? IFDC expertise also includes the ability to co-design strategy based on knowledge of the agro-ecology, the local economy and, even more importantly, the participants and partners present.

There is no single blueprint – each cluster is unique, with its own characteristics, members and dynamics. IFDC has distilled the lessons and created a thorough, strategic manual to train staff, business support service providers and others in cluster formation methodology. Nonetheless, the labor-intensive process must be nurtured on a cluster-by-cluster basis.

There is also another kind of diversity – each cluster has a ‘driver’ or ‘champion’, but champions vary. Sometimes they are the farmers (or their organization), sometimes the processors, or the wholesale merchants (who might provide seeds to the farmers, buy their produce and/or provide credit to them). There is also diversity in the reach of the value chains that come out of these clusters. Some reach no further than the local market; others extend across a country or across a region – some even ‘go global.’

While each agribusiness cluster is different, they all share a number of similarities. Generally, the business idea at the heart of the clusters comes from the champions, and they push others in the cluster and/or value chain for their mutual benefit. All clusters are market-oriented; there are exchanges between them. Another similarity is relationship-building among value chain participants. Farmers, who are the focus of the clusters, are linked to agro-dealers and the traders who buy the produce from them or processors who process the commodities into products for the market. There are also linkages with financial institutions.
IFDC does not seek to be the central figure in the development of value chains and/or agribusiness clusters. However, IFDC does work to make certain that participants in the chains and clusters take ownership of the processes (and therefore, their own destinies), that they are empowered through capacity-building and that the clusters and chains are as sustainable as possible.

Capacities are built by and through a number of sources — business service providers, federal, state/provincial and local governments and institutions, as well as private entities such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors. This mix often also creates effective partnerships between the public and the private sector. The types of capacities built vary as well. Technical capacity to improve the efficiencies of the business model can be built (this may be for farmers but also for processors). There is also capacity-building in terms of creating, strengthening and broadening relationships. There can be capacity-building in the area of financial intermediation – taking farmers through the development of business plans. This effort builds the capacity to develop and sustain competitive alliances and strategies among themselves to reduce their cost of production and transaction costs.

Embedded in all of these activities is the concept of institutional sustainability. As the value chains and agribusiness clusters form, strengthen and grow, there is ‘institution-building’ – standards are established and put into place, and therefore sustainability is created.

**Highlights from 1000s+ include the following (all of which are continuing post-project):**

- A variety of ISFM options were developed and validated by participating farmer/producer organizations.
- These farmer/producer organizations continue to strengthen. They are becoming more autonomous and developing better relationships with local entrepreneurs.
- Gender equity was enhanced.
- Land tenure security was improved for participating farmers.
- Family incomes increased by more than 30 percent.
- Organizations involved in rural development learned new skills and methods of operation.
- NGOs and government research and extension services are collaborating more effectively, thereby improving the efficiency of services provided.
- Partner organizations are matching funds to increase the amount of capital available for investments.
- Governments, donor institutions and private sector parties now recognize that CASE delivers sustainable agricultural intensification and economic growth.

IFDC estimates that it takes an investment of about US $50 per farm family to achieve these results, which is the amount that an average European or American family spends in just one day. Because many lessons were learned in the first projects that incorporated CASE, the anticipated cost of a larger, scaled-up program is likely to be lower.
The director of BECEC, a small enterprise in Togo, stands next to machinery that processes fruits into juices.

Issues that will be addressed during the CASE scaling-up process (2SCALE project):

- Enhance the capacity of smallholder farmers and SMEs to plan, act and improve productivity and competitiveness through agribusiness cluster formation and value chain development.
- Improve the capacity of smallholder farmers and SMEs to adapt to changes in the business environment (consumer preferences, competitive forces in the industry/sector, external shocks, etc.) and to innovate.
- Build the capacity of smallholder farmers and SMEs to access credit and information, and to develop sustainable relationships with BSSs and financial institutions.
- Improve the capacity of smallholder farmers, SMEs and other value chain members to compete and access targeted regional and national agro-food market segments.
- Increase the capacity of smallholder farmers and SMEs to develop sustainable relationships with national, regional and/or international agribusinesses, accelerate value chain development and expand trade in national and regional markets.
- Improve the capacity of agribusiness cluster and value chain stakeholders (smallholder farmers and SMEs in particular) to voice their concerns and advocate for a better agribusiness environment in which to operate.

IFDC Utilizes CASE in Other Projects

CASE was introduced in Nigeria through the Cassava+ project, where it is helping value chains and agribusiness clusters centered on cassava to flourish. CASE was also introduced in Central Africa’s Great Lakes Region (CAGLR) by the Catalyze Accelerated Agricultural Intensification for Social and Environmental Stability (CATALIST) project. Agribusiness clusters in the CAGLR have adopted the value
chain approach and 250,000 farm families were involved by the end of 2011. This was a major breakthrough, illustrating that emergency aid in post-conflict regions can be turned into investments for market development. (Cassava\textsuperscript{+} and CATALIST were also funded by DGIS.)

IFDC has also performed the necessary groundwork for agribusiness cluster and value chain formation in East and southern Africa through another DGIS-funded project – Accelerating Agribusiness in Africa – Bridge (AAA-Bridge). It will be followed up by a new project, called 2SCALE, that begins in mid-2012 and is also funded by DGIS.

The 1000s\textsuperscript{+}, CATALIST, Cassava\textsuperscript{+}, AAA-Bridge and 2SCALE projects share a dynamic and grassroots-driven process of agribusiness development. However, to consolidate and scale up the emerging clusters in these projects, the inherently risky nature of linking smallholder farmers to markets must be fully recognized. Smallholder farmers, however entrepreneurial, operate within extremely small windows of opportunity. The marketed (surplus) volume of crops a smallholder may produce is often still modest and variable. Any major fluctuation – in weather, agro-input supply, production levels, post-harvest commodity prices or market access – can result in catastrophe. So, notwithstanding the encouraging results, many of the established clusters are still very vulnerable.

CASE is a cornerstone of IFDC\textquotesingle s work in Africa. It is an integrated method that stimulates farmers, entrepreneurs, financial and business development services to innovate and work together. The CASE solution has benefited over one million African farm families through the transfer of information about modern agricultural techniques, the creation or strengthening of agribusiness clusters and value chains as well as initial or greater access to agricultural input and output (produce) markets. Generally, when CASE has been used, crop yields have doubled and farmers\textquotesingle incomes from these improved agricultural yields have increased 30-50 percent.

IFDC works toward substantial and sustainable smallholder-based agricultural development. Furthermore, IFDC seeks to improve rural livelihoods and food and nutrition security in Africa and promotes private sector-driven interventions that contribute to agricultural development.

These IFDC projects have been successful because of the extensive experience of staff and the organization\textquotesingle s long-term presence in Africa, reinforced by a proven ability to be an effective facilitator and problem-solver in this highly challenging environment. In the coming years, IFDC and its partners intend to improve, deepen and broaden the CASE solution by expanding coverage to new regions (2SCALE) and by including innovative aspects that have further potential to accelerate agribusiness in Africa.

The following success stories illustrate the diversity of CASE and the agricultural value chains and agribusiness clusters that can benefit from this process.
Women Farmers in Mali Find Strength in Numbers

“Before we formed cooperatives, everyone worked separately – we bought our fertilizers and weed killers separately…when we could not afford something, we did without, but working together we get all the necessary agro-inputs. Working together has helped increase the quantity and the quality of our production,” said Rekiatou Diallo. She is the president of the Cooperative des Femmes Rizicultrices de Niena (COFRN), formed in 2006 by a group of women rice farmers in the Niena area of Mali.

Traditionally, women in Niena have been involved in crop production to help provide income for their families. Rice was an attractive crop because of its potential income. However, due to a chronic lack of resources, production had become increasingly meager and caused major financial losses instead.

“In an inventory credit system provides double benefits for agricultural cooperative members – collateral for loans and better prices for their crops.”

In response, some of the farmers applied individually for bank loans to purchase fertilizers and other agro-inputs to improve their rice production. The lenders, however, denied their applications on the basis that none of them possessed the necessary collateral to secure a loan.

To turn this no-win situation around, the Niena women joined forces. On the advice of several NGOs, they formed COFRN. By creating a women’s rice cooperative, they became eligible for a micro-finance loan using the inventory credit system (also known as the warehouse receipts system and warrantage). Under the inventory credit system, farmers store their harvests collectively and use the stockpile as collateral for loans.

In the first year, COFRN members stored nearly 6.0 mt of rice and immediately received agro-inputs proportional to the value of their stockpile. The subsequent harvest quadrupled their rice stockpile to 24 mt. Profits rose as well. “Instead of selling their rice immediately after harvest when prices are at their lowest, the inventory credit system allows COFRN members to sell their rice when market prices are high – sometimes for double the price,” said Pierre Coulibaly of Groupe de Recherche d’Etude et de Formation en Agriculture et Arboriculture (GREFA).

“At this time, the women do not owe anything to our bank,” said Joya Traore, an official of Kafo Jiginew, a savings and credit institution in Niena. “They are now prized customers – taking out loans and repaying them on time and in full.” By working together, COFRN members are able to afford the agro-inputs they need, repay their loans and better meet their families’ needs.
Dryland Farmers in Togo
Diversify and Succeed

A decade ago many dryland farmers in northern Togo considered migrating to
the capital city of Lomé in search of a better life. Over-cultivation, long dry periods
and/or flooding made it increasingly difficult to grow maize, the country’s staple
crop. To encourage young farmers to remain on the farm, RAFIA, an NGO and IFDC
partner, successfully intervened to improve the maize harvests and introduced
tomato-growing, a new source of revenue in Togo’s poorest and most challenging
region for agricultural production.

IFDC’s 1000s+ project partnered with RAFIA to further empower local farmers,
helping them process their commodities and thereby increase their incomes.
Farmers chose to test two products that they were able to process – sun-dried
tomatoes and animal feed. They decided that a women’s cooperative would
be responsible for the tomato processing and a men’s cooperative would be in
charge of the animal feed. The cooperatives grow over
1,000 hectares of tomatoes and maize. “We had so
many tomatoes at harvest time that they would rot
in the fields,” explained cooperative member Fatima
Kombate. “Also, when the tomato harvest was finished,
we had no work and we just sat,” she said.

“Now, processing the tomatoes will help us earn income
when there are no fresh tomatoes for sale,” cooperative
member Mama Azara stated. Thinking like true
entrepreneurs, the women strategically decided to sell
their new products when tomato supplies were low and
therefore prices were higher. 1000s+ provided materials
to start the venture, including custom-built equipment
for dehydration and plastic bags for packaging. 1000s+
also arranged for a chemical analysis of the products
to allow their sale in Togolese supermarkets, and later
assisted with radio advertising and other publicity
efforts.

The men of the Kanilanfei Provende cooperative were
successful as well. Farmers in the drylands cherish
their livestock, since mature animals can be used
to help feed their families or sold for relatively high
prices. However, according to cooperative treasurer
Layeme Kampatine, “It is a struggle in this region to
raise healthy animals because of the harsh environment and the lack of feed.”
This prompted the cooperative to request assistance from RAFIA and IFDC
to produce high-quality, affordable feed to increase the survival rate of their
livestock – and to produce products to sell in the marketplace.

RAFIA and IFDC helped Kanilanfei Provende produce three new formulas of animal
feed for different types of livestock. The animal feed was made by milling the
locally grown maize and sorghum. The animal feed is now sold by the cooperative
in small plastic sacks and training is also offered by cooperative members to
livestock owners on the feed’s optimal usage.

“Processing the grain into animal feed has helped the cooperative’s members
increase their incomes because grain prices rise with the increased demand for the
feed,” explained Kantami Koukou, president of Kanilanfei Provende.
Peppers are essential ingredients for meals throughout West Africa. Several pepper value chains were formed with help from 1000s+.

Opposite: Chili peppers drying in a solar drying facility.

Hot Stuff – Pepper Value Chain in Ghana

Hadzara Tamaiko is an entrepreneur in the city of Tamale in Ghana’s Northern Region. Through her efforts, an agricultural value chain was started that has changed her life and the lives of many others in and around Tamale. She has built a business and has prospered, but she has not always been in this position. She started by drying mangoes and other fruit to sell in the market. She earned a living from her hard work, but had little to show for her efforts.

That all changed one day in 2007 when she was unable to buy any chili pepper – a staple spice in the Ghanaian diet. No pepper in the market led Tamaiko to begin a new business venture, specializing in peppers. She contacted 1000s+ and told staff members she was starting a business and needed to purchase quality peppers from dependable farmers. The staff linked her to a farmers’ cooperative working with the project. Cooperative members grow and dry high-quality *adope* pepper. The long, red and hot *adope* is preferred by many Ghanaians for flavoring soups and stews.

To ensure a regular supply of *adope*, Tamaiko signed a contract with the cooperative, establishing a chili pepper value chain. She was assured of an ongoing supply of quality peppers and the farmers received a fair price for their produce. Tamaiko mills the peppers she purchases at a public mill, then packs and sells them. A good businesswoman, Tamaiko paid promptly for the prized peppers. Trust was built on both sides because the contract was fulfilled – an essential component of the CASE solution. The success of this value chain led other farmers to form similar cooperatives.

Hadzara Tamaiko has become a major chili pepper processor in Tamale, and her business continues to grow. Not only is chili pepper profitable for her and the farmers who supply her business, but local traders and entrepreneurs are now better off as well. Subsistence farmers have become commercial farmers, analyzing their costs, revenue and profits. The cooperative has doubled the amount of land on which it grows peppers. Moreover, because the farmers are using ISFM and other modern farming techniques they learned from 1000s+, they have tripled their yields. Chili peppers have become the basis for new and expanding businesses in Ghana’s Northern Region. The area is attracting agro-dealers, traders and processors. Because of Tamaiko’s success and the success of other members of the value chain, chili peppers have become the fifth-largest cash crop in Ghana.
Public-private partnerships (PPPs) overcome market failures and build relationships, trust and local capacity to improve productivity and to expand trade. The Cassava Plus (Cassava+) project is an outstanding example of a successful PPP with the potential to scale up value chains and accelerate market development on a sustainable basis.

The demand across Africa for processed cassava products (cassava cake, high-quality cassava flour, starch and glucose) is rising due to urbanization and global increases in grain prices. These factors have convinced manufacturers of national and international consumer and industrial products that cassava can be used as a substitute for higher-priced raw materials. With greater market demand for cassava, increased production can now benefit Africa’s smallholder cassava farmers.

Recognizing the important role that cassava and smallholder farmers play in African agriculture, DGIS, IFDC and the Dutch Agricultural Development & Trading Company (DADTCO) launched the Cassava+ project in 2010. The mission of Cassava+ is to shift cassava from a subsistence crop to a cash crop. IFDC and DADTCO are convinced that this project can help farmers move from the poverty cycle to the prosperity cycle.

Because of Cassava+, an opportunity is being created for African farm families that currently grow cassava for home consumption and sale in local markets. In Nigeria, where the project was first implemented, between seven and eight million farm families grow cassava. While it is a key dietary staple, cassava has remained a subsistence crop because it spoils rapidly after harvest, and there has been an inadequate/irregular supply to ‘feed’ the few processing facilities, most of which are hampered by inefficient processing methods. Working with governments, the private sector and smallholder cassava farmers, IFDC and DADTCO are changing those dynamics.

Due to its initial success, Cassava+ has been expanded into Mozambique and South Sudan.
Agricultural value chain development connects farmers to others who can help them grow, process, package, market and eventually buy the food they produce. The CATALIST project successfully increased the productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers in the CAGLR by facilitating the development of competitive and sustainable agriculture value chains. CATALIST staff members focused on capacity-building – working within value chains to foster productivity, greater professionalism and effectiveness. CATALIST strengthened producer and trade associations and developed market information systems that serve producers, traders, processors and consumers.

For example, the Confederation of Agricultural Producer Associations for Development (CAPAD) agricultural federation is comprised of 25 associations and is a key CATALIST partner in Burundi. CAPAD’s members come from more than 20,000 households in 11 of the country’s 17 provinces. Several crops (including cassava, potatoes, maize and rice) were selected by CAPAD members for value chain development during the confederation’s 2006 general meeting. Since then, cooperatives in communes across Burundi have organized into farm groups around these commodity value chains. “Our strong partnership with CATALIST is self-evident. For example, all nine of CAPAD’s rice-producing cooperatives are together in a value chain,” stated Ildephonse Nahimana, a contract officer at CAPAD.

Similarly, increasing production was the first step in the process for Central Agricultural Cooperative of North Kivu (COOCENKI) members seeking to improve their lives. The next step was developing greater access to markets by building an agricultural value chain. COOCENKI’s leaders understood that the best way to raise incomes was to participate in a value chain, particularly by introducing processing. Increasing involvement in the value chain generates additional profits and greater employment opportunities (such as work in transportation, labor, mechanics, etc.). One example – COOCENKI members entered a new market segment by processing maize flour, generating new opportunities for increased income.