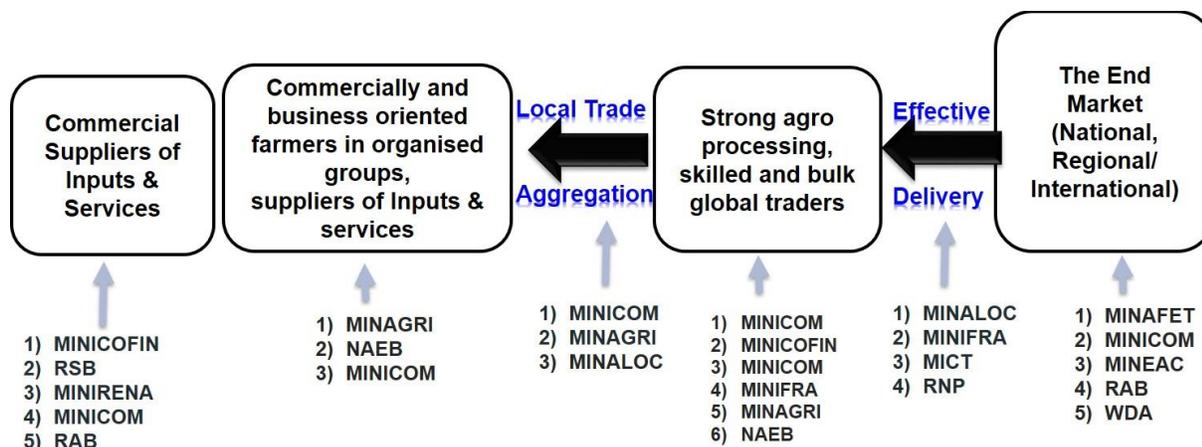


RWANDA'S PLATFORM OF CHAMPIONS FOR REGIONAL TRADE IN THE EAC ESTABLISHED

On 20th October 2016, Pioneer Champions for regional/cross-border Trade in Rwanda convened and discussed opportunities for Rwanda to take better advantage of the EAC common market. This was organized by Kilimo Trust (KT) under the IFAD Funded Regional East African Community Trade in Staples (REACTS) Program. This event culminated into the formation of a platform of champions for regional trade in EAC. The establishment of this platform contributes to **Output 3** of REACTS project “**New and /or Enhanced business linkages integrating the smallholders to cross-border markets and consumers**”.

In his presentation, Prof. Nuhu Hatibu, the CEO for Kilimo Trust emphasized the need for a multi-sectoral approach to investment in agriculture, for maximum gains. “In order to increase the wealth of a large number of people in Rwanda’s Agricultural value chains, the players involved must go far beyond the usual “members”. We must appreciate that agriculture is more than just farming, and that agribusiness is more than just agriculture.” He used the conceptual illustration of Kilimo Trust’s Consortium Approach to Value Chain Development (KTCA2VCD) - to show how different Ministries and Institutions have a crucial role to play in building an entire value chain to deliver profitably to an identified end market.

REACTS Program, which is implemented by Kilimo Trust (KT) is identifying champions for regional trade in different organizations responsible for trade in the EAC countries, and is working with them to develop and pilot strategies for working with agricultural development programs, governments and others to expand and improve regional cross-border trade in food commodities/products. Approaches to be used will include multi-stakeholder platforms, series of meetings and seminars of the champions, and strategy roundtables bringing together leaders of public institutions, the Projects and private sector associations - to enable the champions to influence changes in strategies, programs and procedures, for bigger and more sustainable impact. Below is an illustration of how the different Ministries, for example, would support the key players enabling trade all the way to the end market.



Multi-sectoral approach to supporting the entire value chain for a common end

In this 1st Champions meeting, Ms. Fiona Lukwago, the Team Leader for the REACTS Project, presented opportunities for Rwanda's increased participation in the EAC common market, especially regarding export of beans and potatoes, where Rwanda has a good comparative advantage to produce for export.

In attendance were champions from MINAGRI, USAID, EU Delegation, Rwanda Grains and Cereals Cooperation, NAEB, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Kilimo Trust.

The Next Steps

After a very productive discussion, the champions suggested and agreed to the following:

1. That this discussion be held with all other champions in all other relevant ministries especially those in charge of Trade, ICT, Transport, roads, Foreign Affairs, Health, and Police. Other Development partners who design programs should be included so that they design programs in a holistic manner.
2. Rwanda to increase its investment in market research, starting with the EAC market so as to integrate the market requirements in all extension services.
3. Rwanda needs to select a niche market and commodity where she is competitive to engage in reciprocal deals with other countries, based on their comparative advantage.
4. Publicize more the requirements and procedures for cross-border trade
5. Increase production (of single varieties and required standards) through increased productivity so as to profitably engage in cross-border trade.
6. Emphasize the building of capacity for competitiveness of Rwanda's actors in the entire value chain (specialization).
7. Invite KT to participate in Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG), to introduce this concept to the key members of this group.

The immediate action agreed upon was for all the Champions to initiate dialogue on what commodities Rwanda will specialize and invest in to increase her gains from cross-border trade (for both income and food security).