

The Smallholder Innovation Accelerator

Collaborating to develop durable
smallholder supply chains: an action
research project to share lessons
and drive better practice

Since summer 2020, Innovation Forum has been running an action research project – we call it our “innovation accelerator” – to develop actionable lessons which can build durable commodity supply chains based on smallholder farming. This project was established to respond to the fact that, despite almost decades of effort by companies, campaigners, NGOs and others, considerable social and environmental challenges still remain in smallholder-based commodity supply chains.

The project brings together six varied organisations to share the lessons they have learned over many years, and also builds on a comprehensive review of various reports, papers and other written information. It also aims to look at commodity value chains in their wider context – at societal and international level. To that end, it brings in perspectives from areas of expertise such as development economics, anthropology and political economy.

Our aim is to identify the key challenges which need to be addressed, and to identify collaborative approaches to do this. We will develop a clear assessment of the challenges, and then publish a yearly Smallholder Innovation Accelerator to track progress.

RESEARCH GROUP MEMBERS INCLUDE:



For more information, contact:

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PROJECT OUTPUTS:

October 2020 Initial findings report

- > Detailing shared lessons on building genuinely durable commodity supply chains.
- > Identifying best practices in working with smallholder farmers.
- > Setting out key gaps in our understanding.

December 2020 Country case study report

- > Our next step will be to conduct a deep dive exploration of the challenges in specific geographic locations. Using the initial findings as a guide we will look in more granular detail at what challenges exist at local level, and what best practice looks like to address these.

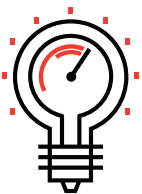
February 2021 Publication of report

- > Key findings based on first round of research. This will include a clear agenda of the key issues to be addressed if smallholder supply chains are to become genuinely durable. For example:
 - Looking at practice beyond the farm: from farm gate to FoB.
 - How to engage procurement and other corporate functions.
 - Collaboration with government in origin countries.

March 2021 onwards Next iteration of report

- > Working with existing research group members and new ones, to create the next iteration of the research, likely based on further research on specific geographies.
- > During 2021 we will also work with group members to support them in implementing the project's findings in their own organisations.

PROCESS OUTPUTS INCLUDE:



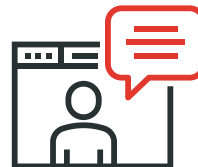
Our annual state of play Smallholder Innovation Accelerator report

Looking at the fundamentals and where resources need to be applied.



A series of workshop and webinars

Held virtually, with research group members and other experts, to both inform and add value to the process.



A series of podcasts and blog posts / articles

Across various platforms on the findings as they develop and the annual report, with recommendations for action.



Significant media outreach to mainstream media

With business publication and consumer friendly headlines and practical findings aimed at informing the debate, world-wide.

NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER PROJECTS:

We have recently developed a sister research project exploring the challenges faced in apparel supply chains. Details are available on request.

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