



# ACCESS TO MARKETS

## Introduction

Women and men smallholders can greatly benefit from gaining access to markets, and is the underlying reason why Oxfam works on market-based livelihoods. For women and men smallholders to benefit from this access, they must have the power to negotiate with buyers, service and credit-providers, the confidence to demand support from government, and the ability to produce the quantity and quality of goods that the market demands. This dynamic of relations requires improvement of farmers' technical skills, organizational capacity of farming communities to work together, an understanding of market needs and public services, and the building of trust between these stakeholders. But while markets are based on supply and demand, the ultimate goal of market-based livelihoods projects is to provide *sustainable* access to markets that *empower* women and men; market demand must be balanced with addressing household and community level issues, managing farmland, fertilizer and local ecosystems such that the land remains productive, and mitigating risks such as flooding, drought or disease. This requires a range of technical and organizational skills together with socio-cultural measures.

The following tools are your start to identifying specific traits of the communities you're looking to work with, and will help shape the types of interventions you will design later on.

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## Impact group classification

The type of project you design should be determined by the characteristics of the audience you are looking to support. Markets can serve a wide audience of those living in poverty depending on their particular needs, which are in turn defined by their age, gender, skills, access to and ownership over resources or assets. Women and men smallholders are not one homogenous group, so it is important to be aware of what kind of market access can best serve them; depending on their degree of poverty, priorities may focus on greater food and nutritional security (food markets), finding decent work (labour markets), selling their produce (product markets) or all three, depending on the time of year or impact of shocks such as drought or flooding.

The impact group classification tool will help you define the different needs and barriers that the community you want to work with is facing, and so helps provide you with the information you need in the next stage of market selection.

## Market selection

The audience(s) you are looking to support will have different needs, and will vary at different times of the year. Choosing the right selection of market options based both on their needs as well as the market opportunities available will not only help you laying down the framework for your project, but also providing useful analysis for the entire project lifetime. The market selection tool will help guide you to select a long list of potential markets and, based on types of criteria, drill down to 1-3 specific markets which you can do further analysis on with more in-depth market mapping. The market selection tool includes consideration of market selection in both stable as well crisis situations.

## Private sector engagement

Establishing relationships between private sector actors – be it buyers, input service providers, financiers or other entities – is a key requirement for projects to ultimately succeed. The relationship can be established between Oxfam and the private sector actor(s) as well as with partners and directly with the farmers, and can be based on local-level interests – such as purchase of goods – or longer strategic interests through multi-stakeholder platforms to determine a common vision in the sector. The private sector engagement tool will help you start this relationship and better understand the factors that motivate your private sector counterpart.