



**Training Manual Guide**  
***Market-Led Value Chain and Business-Oriented  
Production for SMEs and Cooperatives***



**Client:** National Agricultural Export and Development Board  
(NAEB)

**Presented by:** NIRAM Ltd

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMOUS

### Abbreviation    Meaning

<b>NAEB</b>	National Agricultural Export and Development Board.
<b>RAB</b>	Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board.
<b>VCT</b>	Value Chain Thinking.
<b>SCT</b>	Supply Chain Thinking
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise.
<b>B2B</b>	Business-to-Business (buyer–seller meetings).
<b>GAP</b>	Good Agricultural Practices.
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure.
<b>QC</b>	Quality Control.
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator.
<b>SLA</b>	Service Level Agreement.
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding.
<b>BCR</b>	Benefit–Cost Ratio.
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion.
<b>UR</b>	University of Rwanda.
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>HACCP</b>	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
<b>RACI</b>	Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed
<b>SACCO</b>	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization
<b>MFI</b>	Microfinance Institution
<b>E-soko</b>	Electronic market information/price system
<b>KoBo</b>	KoBoToolbox (digital data collection platform)
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
<b>4Ps/7Ps</b>	Marketing mix frameworks (Product, Price, Place, Promotion / + People, Process, Physical evidence)
<b>PPT</b>	PowerPoint (presentation file)

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

Item	Description
<b>Client</b>	National Agricultural Export and Development Board (NAEB)
<b>Service Provider</b>	NIRAM Ltd
<b>Target Audience</b>	430 trainees (cooperative leaders and big farmers, SMEs owners and staff and big private farmers)
<b>Training Duration</b>	2ays (Modular and participatory)
<b>Languages</b>	English and Kinyarwanda
<b>Training Tools and Materials</b>	Posters, leaflets, factsheets, flip charts, PPTs, audio-visual videos, podcasts, brochures, infographics, and mini-guides
<b>Venues and Logistics</b>	14 sites in different districts with meeting room, transport, meals and refreshment
<b>Learning Method</b>	Participatory and experiential: field visits, focus groups, case studies, and B2B simulations
<b>Training Objectives</b>	<p>The overall objective of this course is to strengthen trainees' capacity to promote market-oriented horticultural production especially for onion, tomatoes, avocado and passion fruit crops. Specifically, the training aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Build participants' knowledge and facilitation skills in Value Chain Thinking.</li><li>- Enable trainers to guide cooperatives and SMEs in planning, budgeting, and marketing based on buyer demand.</li><li>- Promote adoption of gender-responsive and youth-inclusive agribusiness models.</li><li>- Support the creation of a pool of certified trainers for NAEB horticultural capacity-building initiatives and other stakeholders.</li></ul>

### Policy and Strategic Method Alignment

This training manual supports Rwanda's National Export Strategy III, Agriculture Transformation Strategy (PSTA 5), and NAEB's Horticulture Export Roadmap 2022–2027. It is designed to operationalize NAEB's objective of promoting market-oriented horticultural production and building the capacity of cooperatives and SMEs to meet export standards. The course contributes to the national goals of job creation, youth empowerment, and increased value-added exports.

## **Course Purpose**

To equip cooperative leaders, SMEs, and agribusiness individuals with the knowledge and tools to plan, produce, and market horticultural products (tomatoes, avocados, passion fruits and onions) based on **market demand, business orientation, and value chain integration** while fostering **gender equity, innovation, and partnership building**.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:

1. Develop market-oriented production plans responsive to buyers' demand.
2. Apply value chain thinking to reduce waste and increase income.
3. Build sustainable business relationships through contract farming and B2B engagement.
4. Understand customer behavior, pricing strategies, and sales planning.
5. Apply postharvest, digital marketing, and financial management practices.
6. Integrate gender equity and youth inclusion into agribusiness models.
7. Produce actionable market-linkage plans for cooperative/SME growth.

## **Gender, Youth, and Inclusion Mainstreaming**

The training integrates gender and youth perspectives in all modules to ensure inclusive participation and equitable benefits. Group exercises, examples, and case studies will feature successful women- and youth-led agribusinesses. Facilitators will ensure gender balance in group work, speaking turns, and leadership roles. Modules also highlight how digital marketing tools and innovation can empower youth and women to access better markets.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This training manual equips trainers to lead cooperatives/SMEs through a practical, market-led transformation of four horticultural value chains—tomato, avocado, passion fruit, and onion—by applying Value Chain Thinking (VCT). VCT takes a whole-of-chain view in which products, money, and information move through relationships; partners align skills, resources, and behaviors to deliver what specific buyers require, reduce waste, and share financial returns fairly enough to sustain commitment. The course shifts participants from “selling what we produce” to “producing what we can sell,” linking on-farm decisions to buyer specifications, service levels, and seasonality so that production, postharvest handling, and marketing reinforce each other.

Who this is for and what it covers. The manual targets experienced, literate trainers and outlines a modular, experiential program for 140 trainees that blends group exercises, field observation, B2B simulations, digital marketing labs, and mentored action planning. Participants learn to (i) analyze customers vs. consumers and map opportunities/waste; (ii) plan production to demand windows; (iii) run the business of farming (budgeting, records, break-even, finance/insurance); (iv) meet RAB/NAEB quality standards and cut losses; (v) negotiate and formalize partnerships/contract farming; (vi) deploy digital tools (WhatsApp Business, E-soko, KoBo); and (vii) integrate gender/youth inclusion to improve market performance.

**How the manual is organized.** Chapter 1 introduces the audience, course principles/framework, and gender sensitivity. Chapter 2 presents the training structure and facilitation notes (before/during/after), assessment, and certification. It shows session-ready modules 1–8, each with objectives, tools, step-by-step activities, outcome tables, and trainer tips (including field visits to NAEB Masoro/UR Rubirizi, B2B negotiation clinics, and digital marketing practicums). Chapter 3 provides coaching tool package.

Deliverables and results. The program produces a complete Coaching Tool Package, a Sales Strategy and Customer-Base Expansion Guide, an SME/Cooperative Market Strategy Framework (SWOT, marketing mix, action steps), and bilingual farmer training aids (factsheets, green/yellow pest lists, flip charts, audiovisuals, posters, brochures, podcasts, concise value-chain manuals). Progress and early outcomes are captured in a Training and Mentorship Report for the full cohort, enabling NAEB/NIRAM and partners to scale what works and institutionalize market-oriented practices across targeted value chains.

## **Chapter I: TRAINING COURSE BACKGROUND**

### **I.1. Intended audience**

This course is designed for intermediate, literate trainers from training, research and extension services providers. While prior knowledge of value chain principles or practice is not essential, however, course participants need to be experienced, trained and enthusiastic about how developing Value Chain Thinking (VCT) will supplement smallholders' (tomato, avocado, passion fruit and onion) production and postharvest skills and increase their income.

While the course can be given based on the activities identified in Chapter Three, it would be helpful if the trainers have the ambition, knowledge and confidence to adapt the generic material to suit their local circumstances (culture, market, products, etc.). Additionally, it would be helpful if those selected for this training have some understanding of how gender issues could enhance or impede the application of Value Chain Thinking within agri-food (tomato, avocado, passion fruit and onion) supply chains. During the training, it is necessary to recognize that gender constraints may prevent men and women from benefiting equitably from participation in high-value agri-food chains.

### **I.2. Course Principles, Framework and Relevance**

#### **I.2.1. Principles behind VCT Close**

**Build participants' capacity:** One of the core objectives of tomato, avocado, passion fruit and onion Value Chain Thinking is moving farmers from an attitude of "Selling what I produce" to "Producing what I can sell" i.e., do not grow as much as possible, nor grow just more of the same, but rather grow what can be sold most profitably. However, there is no single 'right answer'; what is best for each participant will depend upon their own situation, for example, the balance between growing for their family's own consumption and growing for sale, and the land, labour, finance and other resources to which they have access. Market opportunities are dynamic, so participants need the skills to adapt to the future. Accordingly, this trainer's course provides a framework for individuals to make their own decisions and action plans.

**Adapt to local conditions:** The course needs to reflect farmers' circumstances in terms of production environment; market opportunities and constraints, especially routes to market; and the culture of their operations. Trainers should reflect on their local knowledge and try different approaches, then record what they tested and what they concluded so they can build on their own experiences. This should include the topics, issues and activities covered; the exercises and examples used; the value chain maps produced

and the action plans which resulted. This may well include the need to train other members of value chains.

**Participative:** The manual is designed around exercises, not lectures. This is in line with the saying: “What we hear, we forget; what we see, we remember; what we do, we understand.”

**Built-in flexibility:** When we tested the manual, it became clear that rather than a linear design, which prescribed trainers to work through all nine activities in turn, the course needed to allow trainers to select activities based on the needs of the trainees and their own confidence and comfort with the material. Hence, the structure was revised, as set out in the next section.

### **1.2.2. Course Framework**

The course structure is based on participants learning about tomato, avocado, passion fruit and onion Value Chain Thinking and then developing their own Action Plan (Figure 1.1) respectively. How many of the activities are covered will depend on the trainer’s experience, the trainees’ needs, and the time and resources available.

**Figure 1:: Value Chain Thinking Course Framework**



### **1.3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Certification**

Learning progress will be assessed through pre- and post-training evaluations, practical exercises, and group presentations. Each participant will develop a Market Linkage Action Plan (MLAP) showing how they will apply the tools learned to their enterprise or cooperative. Trainers will compile session outputs, photos, and case stories into a Training and Mentorship Report. Participants who successfully complete all modules will receive a Certificate of Competence endorsed by NAEB and NIRAM Ltd.

### **1.4. Context and Rationale**

Rwanda's horticultural sector continues to expand as a key export earner, especially for high-value crops such as avocado, tomato, passion fruit, and onion. However, producers and cooperatives still face challenges related to market orientation, inconsistent supply, limited quality control, and weak linkages with buyers. This training responds to NAEB's strategic goal of promoting market-driven production and value addition by equipping SME owners, cooperative leaders, and individual farmers, with practical skills in Value Chain Thinking (VCT). Through this, participants can align production and marketing decisions with evolving domestic, regional, and export market needs.

### **1.5. Expected results/Outputs**

By the end of this chapter 1, we expect:

- 430 participants from cooperative leaders, SME owners and individual farmers to be trained in market-oriented horticulture including market led production, product marketing, access to market and linkages, cost benefit analysis and production planning with a focus on tomatoes, onion, avocado and passion fruit value chain crops.
- Development of horticulture value chain, specifically in market linkage and action plans.
- Strengthened understanding of contract farming and buyer requirements including quality assurance
- Production of training materials including training manual
- Increased collaboration between producers, buyers, and NAEB support programs.

### **1.6. Training Approach and Methodology**

This course will apply participatory and experiential learning techniques, recognizing that adults learn best through experience and interaction. Activities include group discussions, case studies, field visits, and B2B simulations. Trainers facilitate rather than lecture, allowing participants to analyze, plan, and make decisions collaboratively. Each session integrates real-life examples, reflection, and digital tools to reinforce practical learning.

### **1.7. Gender and Youth Mainstreaming**

Gender equality and youth inclusion are central to achieving equitable and sustainable value chains. Trainers will ensure that both men and women actively participate and share experiences, while youth are encouraged to explore innovation and digital solutions. Gender-sensitive facilitation and case studies will be incorporated throughout the sessions to highlight barriers and opportunities for inclusive growth.

### **1.8. Institutional Linkages and Stakeholders**

The training is implemented by NIRAM Ltd under the leadership of the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), in collaboration with RAB, private exporters, financial institutions, and agribusiness associations. These partners contribute technical insights, field demonstration sites, and mentoring support to strengthen practical linkages between farmers, markets, and institutions.

## **I.9. Duration, Structure, and Logistics**

The training will be delivered over 2 days in modular sessions. Each module focuses on a specific topic—from market analysis and production planning to postharvest and marketing. Venues, meals, , and transport will be covered by NIRAM.

## **I.10. Evaluation and Certification**

Participant learning will be assessed through pre- and post-tests, group exercises, and review of individual or cooperative market linkage plans. Certification will be awarded to those who complete all sessions, actively participate, and submit an approved action plan. Feedback will be used to improve future training cycles.

## Chapter 2: TRAINING MODULES AND LEARNING METHODOLOGY

### Overview

This chapter presents the training modules, learning methodology, facilitation flow, and required inputs designed to strengthen participants' skills in market-led production, postharvest handling, and production marketing. The approach combines participatory adult learning, practical demonstrations, peer learning, and digital engagement. Each module builds on the previous one, ensuring progressive skill development from market understanding to production, postharvest handling, and marketing linkages.

### Training Flow and Module Interlinkage

The training follows a sequential learning pathway designed to take participants from basic understanding to practical application.

- Module 1: Introduces value chain thinking and market-led production.
  - Module 2: Builds marketing and digital communication skills.
  - Module 3: Focuses on postharvest, quality management, develop and implement a Market Linkage Action Plan (MLAP).
  - Module 4: Guides participants to cost-benefit analysis
- Each module builds upon the previous one, ensuring knowledge integration and application.

## MODULE 1: MARKET LEAD PRODUCTION

### Unit 1.1: Training on Value Chain Philosophy

**Objective:** To introduce participants to the principles of Value Chain Thinking (VCT) and market-led production, enabling them. building their capacity to align production and postharvest decisions with specific market demands.

#### **Key Topics:**

#### ***1.1.1. Concepts and Philosophy of Value Chain Thinking***

##### **Overview:**

Value Chain Thinking (VCT) views agriculture as a system of linked activities—from input supply to production, aggregation, processing, marketing, and consumption—where each stage adds value and influences the final product.

##### **Key Learning Points:**

Value chains connect multiple actors (farmers, traders, processors, transporters, retailers, consumers).

Each actor contributes to the overall value created.

Collaboration and coordination are essential to reduce inefficiencies and improve quality.

Value chain thinking promotes shared benefits and long-term competitiveness.

##### **Example:**

In the avocado chain, improving postharvest handling by farmers can increase export quality and benefit everyone, including exporters and pack houses.

### **1.1.2. Shifting from “Selling What We Produce” to “Producing What We Can Sell”**

**Overview:**

This unit emphasizes a mindset shift from production-driven to market-driven agribusiness. Farmers must first understand market demand before deciding what and how much to produce.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Market demand determines production planning.
- Knowing buyers’ needs helps reduce unsold stock and waste.
- Access to market information and price trends supports decision-making.
- Production based on demand improves profitability and sustainability.

**Example:**

A tomato grower who aligns planting schedules with supermarket demand earns more than one who plants randomly and faces price drops at harvest.

### **1.1.3. Market Orientation and Buyer-Led Production**

**Overview:**

Market orientation means producing goods that meet the expectations of specific markets and buyers. It involves analyzing buyer requirements and tailoring production to match.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Understand buyer preferences—size, packaging, certification, timing.
- Maintain consistent quality, quantity, and delivery schedules.
- Build long-term relationships with buyers through reliability.
- Focus on both domestic and export markets.

**Example:**

An exporter may require passion fruits of uniform size and color. A farmer who meets this specification secures repeat contracts.

### **1.1.4. Understanding Consumers vs. Customers**

**Overview:**

Agripreneurs must distinguish between consumers (end-users) and customers (immediate buyers). Both groups influence marketing decisions differently.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Customers buy directly from producers (e.g., traders, supermarkets, exporters).
- Consumers use or eat the final product.
- Understanding both helps improve product design, branding, and satisfaction.
- Customer feedback is crucial for business improvement.

**Example:**

In a cooperative supplying eggs, the customer is the restaurant or retailer, while the consumer is the person eating the meal. Both expect freshness and quality.

### **1.1.5. Buyer Intelligence and Market Segmentation**

**Overview:**

Buyer intelligence involves collecting information about buyer needs, purchasing habits, and market trends. Market segmentation divides the market into groups with similar characteristics.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Gather data through surveys, visits, and digital platforms.
- Identify target market segments (e.g., hotels, export buyers, schools).
- Tailor marketing messages and pricing for each segment.
- Use buyer intelligence to anticipate changes in demand.

**Example:**

A vegetable farmer may sell premium-grade French beans to exporters and medium-grade ones to local restaurants, maximizing income from both segments.

### **1.1.6. Mapping Opportunities and Waste along the Value Chain**

**Overview:**

This unit focuses on analyzing where value is created or lost throughout the chain to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and identify investment opportunities.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Map each step from input supply to final sale.
- Identify “bottlenecks” such as postharvest losses or transport costs.
- Explore opportunities for innovation or new products.
- Use mapping results to prioritize interventions.

**Example:**

In chili production, poor drying methods can lead to waste. Introducing solar dryers adds value and reduces losses.

### **1.1.7. Integrating Gender and Youth Equity in Value Chain Mapping**

**Overview:**

This unit explores how gender and youth roles affect participation and benefit-sharing in the value chain, promoting inclusive economic growth.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Recognize how men, women, and youth contribute at different stages.
- Address barriers (limited access to finance, land, or training).

- Promote equitable participation in decision-making.
- Value chain upgrading must include gender- and youth-sensitive strategies.

### **Example:**

Training young women to manage aggregation centers increases efficiency and creates equitable employment opportunities.

### **1.1.9. Practical Tools and Session Flow**

#### **Overview:**

This unit provides hands-on tools for value chain analysis, group exercises, and facilitation techniques to make learning interactive and results-oriented.

#### **Key Learning Points:**

- Use participatory tools such as value chain mapping, stakeholder analysis, and SWOT.
- Guide participants through problem-solving and planning sessions.
- Encourage teamwork and sharing of real-life experiences.
- Produce actionable outputs such as market linkage plans and improvement strategies.

### **Example:**

Participants map their own value chain, identify waste points, and design interventions (e.g., improving packaging or transport coordination).

**Practical Tools:** Value chain maps; stakeholder flow charts; quality requirement checklist; flip charts, stick notes, sample photos

**Duration:** 4 hours

**Session Type:** Participatory, mapping- and discussion-led session

**Facilitator Role:** Guide, timekeeper, and synthesis lead

## **Training Methodology Guide**

Participants learn **Value Chain Thinking (VCT)** vs. supply chains, shift from “*selling what we produce*” to “*producing what we can sell,*” or market-driven production, analyze buyer/consumer preferences, and **map market opportunities, quality/quantity requirements, and waste points** across tomato, avocado, passion fruit, and onion chains; outputs will feed into later modules on business planning, postharvest, and market linkages.

### **Trainer Role:**

- Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions.
- Ensure equal participation and capture group findings on flip charts.
- Provide constructive feedback and link discussions to real market cases.

**Participant Role:**

- Engage actively in group work, field exercises, and digital demonstrations.
- Share practical experiences from their enterprises or cooperatives. Document insights in personal action-planning sheets.

Outputs expected	Description	Indicators of Achievement
<b>Crop-Specific Value Chain Map</b>	Flip chart mapping to include actors, activities, info/chain flows	Actors, activities, and flows are correctly sequenced from inputs to the end consumer.
<b>Waste and Value Hotspots Overlay</b>	Note causes and possible solutions.	Waste points labelled with causes; at least 3 actionable improvements identified.
<b>Buyer Requirement Matrix</b>	With a flip chart design matrix per value chain (either tomato, avocado, passion fruit, or onion)	For 3+ buyer categories: grades/specs, packaging, volumes, delivery, and payment terms <b>are</b> listed.
<b>Market Opportunity Note</b>	Brainstorm market opportunities at a selected value chain	One prioritized market opportunity per group with rationale (fit to capacity and seasonality).
<b>Challenges and Assumptions Log</b>	One mapped on a flip chart, specific to the value chain. Map supply constraints and assumptions	Top 5 supply constraints and assumptions recorded for follow-up in later modules.

**Group Activity Steps:**

- Form groups of 3-5 by crop; assign target market.
- Build a chain diagram using sticky notes.
- Mark waste (W) and value (V) points; note causes/solutions.
- Add buyer matrix with grades, packaging, delivery, payment.
- Rank buyers by attainability; list supply challenges and data gaps.
- Present maps in plenary; compare routes-to-market and lessons learned.

**Trainer Tips:**

- Push for specifics (kg per delivery, frequency, payment days).
- Keep maps modular for quick updates.
- Invite a buyer if feasible for live feedback.
- Capture photos of outputs for action plans and coaching.

**Practical Tools Required:**

- Flip charts, markers, sticky notes, **value chain map** and **stakeholder flow** templates

- **Buyer requirement checklist** (quality grades, packaging, frequency, price, payment)
- Sample photos of good/poor practices (to spark discussion)

### Mapping Waste/Opportunities and Buyer Requirements (Group Work):

#### Steps:

1. Form groups of 3–5 by crop; assign a **target market** per group.
2. Build a **chain diagram** on flip charts using sticky notes (actors, activities, info/cash flows).
3. Mark **waste points (W)** and **value-creation points (V)**; note causes/solutions.
4. Add a **buyer matrix** (category, specs/grades, packaging, delivery frequency, payment terms).
5. Rank **buyers by attainability**; list **supply challenges** and data gaps.
6. Plenary: groups present maps; compare routes-to-market and lessons learned.

#### Trainer Tips:

- Push for **specifics** (e.g., size/grade, kg per delivery, frequency, payment days).
- Keep maps **modular** with sticky notes to quickly refine as new info emerges.
- Invite a buyer (if feasible) for **live feedback** on requirements and service expectations.
- Capture photos of outputs for inclusion in **action plans** and coaching sessions later.

*Having brought the groups back together, ask them to explain the maps they have prepared, and encourage discussions by comparing value chains for different products and markets. Can participants see any advantages in being part of particular chains compared to others?*

## Unit 1.2: Market Analysis and Production Planning

**Objective:** To build participants' capacity to align production with specific market segments through systematic market analysis, buyer engagement, and demand-driven production planning.

### Overview:

This module helps participants understand how to link production to real market demand through market analysis, planning, and buyer engagement.

### Key Learning Points:

- Learn how to assess market opportunities and constraints.
- Align production calendars with buyer needs and seasonal trends.

- Strengthen decision-making based on reliable data and price trends.

**Key Topics:**

### **1.2.1: Introduction to Market Analysis and Planning Framework**

**Overview:**

Introduces the basic framework for analyzing markets and planning production in a structured, evidence-based way.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Understand the relationship between production and market signals.
- Identify the main stages of market analysis: data collection, interpretation, and planning.
- Use market data to guide planting, harvesting, and investment decisions.

**Example:**

A cooperative plans chili production after analyzing buyer needs in the Kigali wholesale market.

### **1.2.2: Steps in Conducting Local Market Surveys**

**Overview:**

Guides participants on how to collect real-time market data from traders, markets, and buyers.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Develop survey tools (questionnaires, checklists).
- Collect data on prices, volumes, quality preferences, and packaging.
- Analyze and summarize key findings for decision-making.

**Example:**

Farmers use KoBo Toolbox or simple forms to collect weekly prices for tomatoes and onions.

### **1.2.3: Identifying Profitable Buyers and Market Segments**

**Overview:**

Focuses on selecting the most profitable and reliable buyers and dividing the market into manageable segments.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Identify buyers by size, product type, and payment reliability.
- Evaluate potential partnerships based on price stability and contract terms.
- Segment markets (retailers, exporters, processors, institutions).

**Example:**

Passion fruit farmers supply exporters for higher margins while maintaining local buyers for stability.

### **1.2.4: Understanding Buyer Specifications and Quality Requirements**

**Overview:**

Teaches producers how to interpret and meet specific buyer standards.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Understand quality standards (size, color, moisture, residue levels).
- Learn packaging, labeling, and certification needs (RAB, NAEB, or GLOBALG.A.P.).
- Communicate effectively with buyers to clarify expectations.

**Example:**

NAEB exporters require avocados of 250–300g, clean and free of bruises for EU markets.

### **1.2.5: Developing Market-Based Production Plans**

**Overview:**

Focuses on preparing production plans based on confirmed market demand and buyer requirements.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Match planting calendars with market windows.
- Estimate inputs, labor, and cost based on expected sales.
- Use contract farming or forward agreements to secure markets.

**Example:**

A cooperative plans to produce 10 tons of French beans for an exporter during peak demand months.

### **1.2.6: Linking Seasonal Production to Price Dynamics and Demand Cycles**

**Overview:**

Shows how to use market seasonality data to time production for maximum profit.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Track seasonal price variations using E-soko or market boards.
- Identify peak and low supply periods.
- Plan harvests for periods of high prices and demand.

**Example:**

Onion growers plant off-season using irrigation to sell during high-price months.

### **1.2.7: Creating Value from Buyer Behavior and Feasibility Mapping**

**Overview:**

Helps participants understand buyer behavior and assess feasibility before investment.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Observe how buyers make decisions and what influences their choices.
- Analyze feasibility (cost, skills, logistics, profit margin).
- Prioritize products and buyers with the highest return on investment.

### Example:

Mapping feasibility shows that producing chili for export yields higher net margins than selling to local markets.

### 1.2.8: Drafting Market-Based Production Calendars and Buyer Requirement Matrices

#### Overview:

Introduces practical tools for aligning production timelines with buyer requirements.

#### Key Learning Points:

- Create production calendars showing planting, harvest, and delivery timelines.
- Develop buyer requirement matrices to track standards and volumes.
- Use these tools for planning, monitoring, and coordination.

### Example:

A cooperative develops a shared production calendar to synchronize supply for institutional buyers.

## Training Methodology Guide

**Duration:** 3 hours

**Session Type:** Participatory market-intelligence and planning lab **Facilitator Role:** Buyer-FGD moderator, planner for production calendars, synthesis lead

**Tools:** Market survey template, production calendar, buyer requirement matrix.

**Output:** Each group drafts a simple “Market-Based Production Plan”.

Participants turn real buyer/consumer intelligence into **market-based production plans**: distinguish customers vs consumers, extract concrete **specifications** (grades, packaging, frequency, payment), and align volumes/timing with seasonal price dynamics; this builds on Activity 2 (*What do buyers want?*) and Activity 3 (*Creating value and purchasing behaviour*).

#### Session management:

- Opening recap and objectives
- **Activity 2: What do buyers want?** (mini-FGD/role-play + matrix)
- **Activity 3: Creating value from buyer behaviour** (value-lever mapping and feasibility)
- Draft **market-based production calendar/plan** (per group)
- Plenary: prioritise buyers and next steps to B2B (link to Module 5)

- **Room and materials:** U-shape + breakout tables; flip charts, markers, sticky notes.  
**Templates:** market survey guide, **Buyer Requirement Matrix**, production calendar sheets.  
**Optional:** invite 1–2 buyers (or do role-play) for live specs/prices.
- **Group formation:** 3–5 persons per crop (tomato, avocado, passion fruit, onion); assign a target market per group.
- **Inclusion and quality:** Ensure women/youth speak first in rounds; insist on **quantified specs** (kg/delivery, grade, days-to-pay). Keep sticky-note blocks modular so maps and plans can be quickly revised later.

### Trainer Role:

- Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions.
- Ensure equal participation and capture group findings on flip charts.
- Provide constructive feedback and link discussions to real market cases.

### Participant Role:

- Engage actively in group work, field exercises, and digital demonstrations.
- Share practical experiences from their enterprises or cooperatives. Document insights in personal action-planning sheets.

## Activity 1: What Do Consumers/Customers or Buyers Want

**Introduction of the activity:** The key message is to distinguish between customers and consumers. Consumers are individuals who eat the final product, while customers/buyers are business actors along the chain who buy the products and sell them to the final consumers. Value chain thinking approach advocates starting the process by understanding what the final consumers of food products really value in terms of quality attributes. These could be production systems used (organic vs conventional production systems), size, colour, nutritional value or even post-harvest practices such as packaging, processing, etc. Often producers lack this kind of information and assume that buyers value the same attributes when in fact some consumers are willing to pay a premium price for additional quality.

**Purpose:** Convert buyer/consumer preferences into a **Buyer Requirement Matrix** that guides production choices (what/when/how much).

**How to facilitate the discussion:** Conducting a field visit to assess consumers’ preferences at marketplace would be ideal otherwise given the context, trainers should organize a focus group discussion where potential customers/buyers share what they look for in various crops/products, what prices they can pay, and when, and get the producers to reflect on this information and share their experiences. This knowledge should inform farmers’ Action Plans about what to grow, how much and of what quality, and:

- How to create additional value (Activity 3), including postharvest activities (Activity 4)
- Which customers/buyers will enable them to target those market opportunities, and how to secure their business (Activity 5)

Trainers could also use existing market analysis as a basis for discussion.

Outcomes	Description	Achievement Indicators
Buyer Requirement Matrix (per crop)	For ≥3 buyer types (e.g., hotels, wholesalers, schools): list grades/specs, packaging, delivery frequency, minimum volumes, payment terms, price ranges.	Matrix complete for ≥3 segments with numeric specs and terms captured.
Consumer vs Customer clarity	Teams articulate differences and implications for specs and timing (farmgate brokers vs end-market preferences).	One slide/note per group contrasting needs; implications for quality/volumes stated.
Seasonal demand cues	Identify <b>when</b> each buyer pays premiums; map to harvest windows.	At least two high-demand windows per crop are noted with evidence or buyer quotes.
Data gaps for B2B	Open questions to verify in Module 5 (e.g., defect tolerance %, delivery lead times).	3–5 specific questions logged for B2B follow-up.

**Value Creation Activity:**

- Map activities that create value (grading, packing, timing, transport, certification) along the value chain.
- Identify feasibility, cost, and cooperative pooling strategies.
- Mark key activities with “V” (value levers).

**Activity 2: Creating Value and Customer/Buyer Purchasing Behavior**

**Introduction of the activity:**

After understanding factors that influence customers/consumers purchase behavior (*in other words their desired product characteristics, volumes, frequency of delivery, packaging, quality certificates, payment modalities and most importantly pricing*) which as indicated in the previous sections vary depending on which

customers/ buyers of target and that can be anywhere along the value chain segments; producers can then set out to focus their resources towards creating such value. Producers can also pull their resources together in order to deliver the value through cooperatives or farmer groups.

**Purpose:**

Decide **which chain activities** (grading, packing, timing, transport, certification) create value for the targeted buyers and avoid **costly over-spec** buyers don't pay for.

**Using the same value chain maps** as produced in Activity 1 about reducing waste, course participants should identify how/where consumer value is created, and what activities are critical to delivering the service the final customer needs. **Back in small groups**, the first step is for participants to list what they learnt from Activities 1 and 2 about what consumers and customers value about the products they are producing.

**How to facilitate the discussion:** The trainer should **organise group discussions**, putting participating customers/buyers in separate groups (s) to help highlight major supply chain constraints that they grapple with and propose potential solutions. **Give a chance to the participants to compare different challenges** and determine which ones would suit producers' resources and capacity. The trainer is **also encouraged to form a separate group for producers to discuss the availability of resources** that would be required to meet those requirements and compare it with the fact that the customers/buyers are willing to compensate them for additional investment.

Then, they should discuss which activities influence those product characteristics or services.

They could be identified anywhere along the value chain, such as:

- Input (fertilizers, pesticides) in case a certain group of buyers prefers organically produced products
- special attention to some farming practices or postharvest processing such as grading, sorting and packing
- Transport means – this could be the case if producers are hoping to supply niche markets such as supermarkets, hotels and restaurants.
- Or even cropping patterns (seasonality), which influence producers' ability to supply the market during specific seasons within a year.

Or other product characteristics which buyers care about, such as quality certification (eg, GAP) or producers' ability to deliver the identified value in terms of speed (volumes). Then

each important activity should be marked with a V. Encourage groups to present their conclusions to each other, and share what they have learnt.

Outcomes Expected	Description	Achievement Indicators
Value-Lever Map (tag “V”)	Map activities that directly raise willingness-to-pay (e.g., size/grade sorting, clean packaging, on-time delivery, GAP steps).	≥5 value levers tagged “V” with why/how they influence price/loyalty.
Feasibility and cost notes	For each lever: inputs, skills, time, cost; who will do it (individual vs cooperative).	Feasibility table filled; unaffordable/non-valued specs flagged for removal (waste).
Cooperative supply strategy	How groups <b>pool</b> volumes, <b>stagger</b> planting/harvest, or adjust transport to meet frequency/volume promises.	A short operations note showing the pooling/staggering plan and delivery rhythm.
Certification/assurance pathway	If buyers require GAP/traceability: first practical steps and timeline.	3–5 immediate steps listed (records, hygiene, basic traceability).

### **Unit 1.3: Postharvest Handling, Value Addition and Quality Management**

**Objective:** To strengthen participants’ ability to meet market standards, minimize postharvest losses, and increase income through improved quality management and value addition practices.

**Overview:**

Introduces practical tools for aligning production timelines with buyer requirements.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Create production calendars showing planting, harvest, and delivery timelines.
- Develop buyer requirement matrices to track standards and volumes.
- Use these tools for planning, monitoring, and coordination.

**Example:**

A cooperative develops a shared production calendar to synchronize supply for institutional buyers.

**Key Topics:**

1.3.1: Introduction to Postharvest Management and Market Standards

**Overview:**

Provides a foundation for understanding the importance of proper postharvest management and compliance with quality standards.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Learn basic postharvest handling principles.
- Know key RAB/NAEB standards for fruits and vegetables.
- Appreciate the impact of quality on pricing and market access.

### **1.3.2: Understanding Postharvest Losses and Quality Benchmarks (RAB/NAEB Standards)**

#### **Overview:**

Focuses on causes and prevention of losses along the postharvest chain.

#### **Key Learning Points:**

- Identify common causes: poor harvesting, transport, and storage.
- Apply quality benchmarks set by RAB/NAEB.
- Use improved handling and grading to minimize losses.

#### **Example:**

Proper sorting of avocados by size and maturity reduces rejection rates at packhouses.

### **1.3.3: Packaging, Sorting, Grading, and Storage Best Practices**

#### **Overview:**

Provides hands-on guidance on packaging and storing fresh produce safely and attractively.

#### **Key Learning Points:**

- Use clean, ventilated crates instead of sacks.
- Grade produce by size and color.
- Maintain storage temperature and humidity.
- Label and track products for traceability.

### **1.3.4: Hygiene, Traceability, and Compliance with GAP Principles**

#### **Overview:**

Emphasizes hygiene, record keeping, and compliance with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).

#### **Key Learning Points:**

- Maintain cleanliness during harvest and handling.
- Record pesticide use and field operations.
- Ensure product traceability for buyer confidence and export readiness.

### **1.3.5: Identifying Value Addition Options: Drying, Processing, and Oil Extraction**

#### **Overview:**

Explores practical methods for value addition to extend shelf life and increase product value.

#### **Key Learning Points:**

- Understand value addition opportunities in drying, processing, and packaging.
- Assess equipment, investment, and market potential.
- Add value through branding, labeling, and improved presentation.

**Example:**

Drying chili or extracting avocado oil creates higher-value products for niche markets.

**1.3.6: Field Visits and Observation Checklists (NAEB Packhouse & UR Rubirizi Centre)****Overview:**

Encourages experiential learning through guided field visits.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Observe real-life postharvest operations and standards.
- Use observation checklists to capture lessons.
- Reflect on how to apply improvements on participants' farms.

**1.3.7: Feasibility Clinic: Evaluating Cost, Skills, and Market Potential****Overview:**

A practical session where participants assess feasibility of selected value addition options.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Analyze production costs, skills, and market demand.
- Rank potential enterprises based on profitability and capacity.
- Develop an implementation roadmap.

**1.3.8: Developing a Postharvest Improvement Action Sheet****Overview:**

A planning exercise to consolidate learning and outline next steps.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Identify priority postharvest challenges.
- Propose practical actions and responsible persons.
- Set timelines and indicators for improvement.

**Training Methodology Guide**

**Duration:** 4 hours

**Session Type:** Field-observation + standards clinic + planning workshop

**Methodology:**

- Field visit to NAEB/UR packhouses to observe handling practices.
- Map pre- and postharvest losses, compare good vs poor practices.
- Identify feasible value-add options (drying, processing, oil extraction).
- Draft Postharvest Improvement Action Sheets for each cooperative.

**Facilitator Role:** Safety/standards brief, observation guide, and action-plan reviewer

**Trainer Role:**

- Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions.
- Ensure equal participation and capture group findings on flip charts.
- Provide constructive feedback and link discussions to real market cases.

**Participant Role:**

- Engage actively in group work, field exercises, and digital demonstrations.
- Share practical experiences from their enterprises or cooperatives. Document insights in personal action-planning sheets.

### **Activity: Value Chain Postharvest Opportunities for Farmers**

**Introduction of the activity:** Based on buyers' feedback and also general market experience, farmers should discuss which post-harvest processing activities appeal to high-value buyers or allow them to earn a higher income.

**Objective:** The objective is to encourage participants to think about what postharvest activities would increase their potential income, and/or make them preferred suppliers for higher value markets. This might involve doing some activities more effectively, like grading, processing or because producers could use this as an opportunity to target different market segments based on the quality of the products. ***For instance, avocados that are not export-size could be sold on the local market, including to avocado oil exporters.***

Participants will learn to **meet buyer standards and cut losses** by practicing good handling (sorting, grading, packaging, storage), **hygiene/traceability (GAP)**, and **value addition** options (drying, processing, oil extraction); includes structured **packhouse field visit** (NAEB Masoro / UR Rubirizi) and a feasibility clinic that converts observations into a cooperative **Postharvest Improvement Action Sheet**.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Identify and correct **loss points** from harvest to buyer delivery; apply **RAB/NAEB** quality benchmarks.
- Implement **sorting/grading/packaging** routines that align with buyer specs and reduce rejects.
- Set up **basic hygiene and traceability** records (lot codes, cleaning logs, movement sheets).

- Select **viable value-add** options and plan investments, roles, and timelines.

**Session Management:**

- Safety + standards briefing (quality specs, hygiene, traceability)
- **Field Visit Walkthrough** (packhouse/centre) with observation checklists
- Group debrief: map good vs. poor practices; quantify avoidable losses
- **Activity 5: Value-Add Feasibility Clinic** (choose options; cost/skills/logistics)
- Draft and peer-review **Postharvest Improvement Action Sheets** (per coop)

**Room and Materials:** PPE as required, observation checklists, grading cards, defect photos, sample labels, flip charts/markers.

**Group Formation:** By crop (tomato, avocado, passion fruit, onion), 4–6 persons/group.

**Inclusion and Quality:** Ensure women/youth lead at least one station; insist on **quantified** targets (e.g., ≤3% mechanical damage).

**How to facilitate the discussion:** Using the same value chain map already produced, participants should discuss whether post-harvest activities make business sense based on customers/buyers’ feedback. They can also discuss and compare the attractiveness and availability of the market in terms of size and willingness to compensate them for additional investment.

Trainers should also organise trainees in groups based on their value chain to make a field visit to the NAEB Horticultural Packhouse, Masoro Horticultural Packhouse, East African Centre of Horticultural Excellence at the University of Rwanda-Rubirizi Campus, and other possible centres for them to gain a realistic experience on postharvest handling. On this, each group will highlight on a flip chart what are their pre- and post-harvest implications from this field visit observation.

**Output Table (a): Field Observation and Standards Compliance (Packhouse/Centre)**

Outcomes	Description	Achievement Indicators
Loss and Defect Map	Identify where losses occur (harvest, transport, reception, grading, packing, storage) and why.	≥5 loss points listed with root causes; baseline % loss estimated.
Standards Checklist	Translate RAB/NAEB buyer specs into practical checks (size/grade, cleanliness, packaging, temperature, stacking).	Completed checklist; non-compliance items flagged with corrective actions.

Hygiene and Traceability Setup	Define simple cleaning SOPs, tool sanitation, staff hygiene, and lot/batch coding.	Cleaning log, lot code format, and traceability flow sketched for one crop.
Handling SOP Cards	Draft step-by-step cards for harvest, transport, grading, packing, and storage.	4 SOP mini-cards produced and photographed for team use.

**Output Table (b): Value Chain Postharvest Opportunities for Farmers**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Achievement Indicators</b>
<b>Value-Add Options Shortlist</b>	Compare options (e.g., drying, puree, avocado oil, cut and pack) vs. market willingness-to-pay and volume realities.	≥3 options scored on price uplift, demand, quality needs, and compliance risk.
<b>Feasibility and Cost Notes</b>	Inputs, skills, equipment, unit costs, break-even volumes; cooperative roles (who does what/where/when).	One-page feasibility sheet; at least one option marked “go” with next steps.
<b>Service Level Commitments</b>	Define delivery frequency, lead time, defect tolerance, and packaging specs matched to target buyers.	Service table completed and aligned with buyer requirements.
<b>Risk and Compliance Pathway</b>	Identify food safety/quality risks and first compliance steps (GAP, basic HACCP elements, record-keeping).	5 risks with mitigations; starter compliance checklist attached.

## **MODULE 2: PRODUCTION MARKETING**

**Objective:** To strengthen participants' capacity in digital and traditional marketing tools for improving market linkages, enhancing product visibility, and promoting data-driven agribusiness decisions.

**Key Topics:**

### **Unit 2.1: Introduction to Agricultural Marketing**

#### **2.1.1: Definition and Importance of Marketing in Agribusiness**

Marketing in agribusiness refers to the process of planning, organizing, and managing the flow of agricultural products and services from producers to final consumers. It encompasses activities such as identifying customer needs, product planning, pricing, promotion, distribution, and relationship management along the value chain.

In the horticulture context (tomato, avocado, passion fruit, and onion), marketing ensures that production decisions are driven by market demand rather than by chance or habit. It bridges the gap between farmers, traders, processors, and consumers, transforming agricultural products into value-added goods that meet specific market standards.

#### **Importance of Marketing in Agribusiness**

1. Links production to demand: Marketing helps farmers and cooperatives understand buyer needs, seasonality, and quality preferences, ensuring production is aligned with profitable market opportunities.
2. Increases income and reduces waste: Through better planning, branding, and postharvest handling, marketing minimizes losses and enhances farm gate prices.
3. Encourages value addition: Marketing stimulates product differentiation, packaging, grading, and processing, which increase competitiveness.
4. Facilitates market linkages: It creates opportunities for contract farming, partnerships, and B2B relationships that guarantee reliable markets.
5. Improves decision-making: Marketing provides information on prices, trends, competitors, and consumer preferences, guiding investment and production choices.
6. Promotes innovation and digital transformation: Using digital platforms (E-soko, WhatsApp Business, social media) enhances visibility and customer engagement.
7. Supports gender and youth inclusion: Marketing empowers women and youth to participate in higher-value activities such as branding, sales, and agribusiness innovation.

#### **2.1.2: Types of Marketing: Traditional vs. Digital**

Marketing in agribusiness can be broadly classified into Traditional Marketing and Digital Marketing. Both approaches aim to connect producers with consumers, but they differ in tools, reach, and efficiency. Modern agripreneurs increasingly combine both methods for maximum market impact.

##### **1. Traditional Marketing**

Traditional marketing refers to the use of physical or face-to-face methods to promote and sell agricultural products.

Examples include:

- Local markets and open-air stalls (e.g., isoko rusange)
- Cooperatives and collection centers
- Word-of-mouth promotion and personal selling
- Flyers, posters, brochures, and radio announcements
- Exhibitions and agricultural trade fairs

**Advantages:** Builds trust and personal relationships, especially in rural markets; immediate feedback from buyers.

**Limitations:** Limited market reach, higher transaction costs, and less efficient information flow on prices and demand trends.

## 2. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing uses online and mobile-based platforms to promote, sell, and manage customer relationships.

**Examples include:**

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X/Twitter) for brand awareness
- WhatsApp Business for direct sales and customer communication
- E-soko, Rwanda Trade Portal, and digital marketplaces for market information and pricing
- Websites and e-commerce platforms for showcasing products
- SMS and email marketing for client engagement

**Advantages:** Expands market reach nationally and globally, reduces marketing costs, enables real-time communication, and supports data-driven decision-making.

**Limitations:** Requires digital literacy, reliable internet access, and consistent online engagement.

## 3. Integrating Both Approaches

Successful agribusinesses combine traditional and digital marketing. For example, farmers may build trust through physical sales at cooperative markets and use digital tools to share price updates, advertise harvest availability, and negotiate with new buyers.

The training will expose participants to both systems and help them design a blended marketing strategy suited to their target customers and resources.

## Unit 2.2: Core Marketing Principles

**Definition / Overview:**

Covers the essential foundations of agricultural marketing and how SMEs/cooperatives can effectively promote and sell their products.

**Importance:**

Understanding marketing principles helps producers move from subsistence to profitable business orientation.

**Key Learning Points:**

- Marketing as a business driver in agriculture.
- Aligning production, quality, and branding with customer expectations.
- Understanding the full value chain from farm to market.

### **2.2.1: The Marketing Mix (4Ps/7Ps)**

**Definition:**

The marketing mix includes Product, Price, Place, and Promotion (and, for services, People, Process, and Physical Evidence). This is used to attract and satisfy customers.

**Importance:**

Helps agribusinesses design effective marketing strategies and align all aspects of business delivery to attract and retain customers.

**Example:**

Tomato cooperatives decide on packaging (product), price per crate, market outlets (place), and use WhatsApp posts for promotion.

**Key Applications for SMEs:**

- Product: Select varieties and packaging that buyers prefer.
- Price: Competitive and fair pricing considering production costs.
- Place: Identify channels (markets, cooperatives, exporters).
- Promotion: Communicate value through signs, WhatsApp, social media.

### **2.2.2: Market Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP)**

**Definition:**

STP helps businesses divide the market into segments, target the most promising ones, and position their products uniquely.

**Importance:**

Efficient use of resources and higher profits by focusing on customers who value your product most.

**Example:**

Avocado farmers target exporters requiring Hass variety instead of local traders buying mixed quality.

### **2.2.3: Branding and Product Differentiation for Smallholders and Cooperatives**

**Definition:**

Branding is creating a unique identity for products, while differentiation makes products stand out through quality, packaging, or story.

**Importance:**

Improves recognition, builds trust, and supports premium pricing.

**Example:**

A youth cooperative sells “Rwamagana Fresh Onions” with consistent grading and logo-labeled bags.

## **Unit 2.3: Market Research and Buyer Analysis**

### **2.3.1: Conducting Local Market Surveys and Customer Profiling**

**Definition:** A market survey collects data on buyer needs, prices, preferences, and competitors. Customer profiling creates a detailed picture of ideal buyers.

**Importance:**

- Prevents overproduction or producing items buyers do not want.
- Improves negotiation and planning accuracy.

**Tools:** Interviews, focus groups, and digital surveys (KoBo Toolbox, Google Forms).

Unit 3.2: Understanding Buyer Specifications, Preferences, and Trends

**Definition:** Learning what buyers expect in terms of quality, quantity, packaging, and delivery frequency.

**Importance:**

- Ensures production matches market demand.
- Helps farmers adapt to changing preferences.

**Example:** Exporters require avocados 250–300g, free from defects.

### **2.3.2: Using Market Intelligence Tools (E-soko, KoBo Toolbox, Google Forms)**

**Definition:** Using digital tools like E-soko, KoBo Toolbox, and Google Forms to collect, analyze, and monitor market data.

**Importance:**

- Provides real-time insights for informed decisions.
- Helps track prices, buyer behavior, and competition trends.

### **2.3.3: Competitor Analysis and Benchmarking**

**Definition:** Assessing competitors' products, pricing, and strategies to improve your own offerings.

**Importance:**

- Encourages innovation.
- Helps identify market gaps.

**Example:** A tomato cooperative analyzes packaging and delivery methods of nearby competitors.

## **Unit 2.4: Developing a Market-Oriented Strategy**

### **2.4.1: Linking Production to Market Demand and Seasonality**

**Definition:** Aligning planting, harvesting, and supply to periods of high demand.

**Importance:**

- Maximizes profits by selling when prices are high.
- Reduces waste and storage costs.

**Example:** Tomatoes harvested for Kigali during dry months when demand is high.

### **2.4.2: Building a Marketing Plan: Target Market, Pricing, Channels, and Promotion**

**Definition:** A plan detailing target markets, pricing, sales channels, and promotion activities.

**Importance:** Provides clear direction and coordination between farmers and buyers.

### **2.4.3: Setting Market-Oriented Objectives and Measurable Indicators**

**Definition:** Defining clear, quantifiable goals like number of buyers, revenue targets, or delivery volumes.

**Importance:**

- Enables monitoring of progress and informed decision-making.

## **Unit 2.5: Digital Marketing and Data Utilization**

### **2.5.1: Overview of Digital Marketing Platforms (Social Media: Whatsapp Facebook, X/Twitter)**

**Definition:** Introduction to online tools like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter) for promoting products.

**Importance:**

- Expands reach and reduces transaction costs.

### **2.5.2: Creating and Managing Online Product Catalogues and Portfolios**

**Definition:** Developing digital portfolios with product details, photos, prices, and contacts.

**Importance:**

- Facilitates buyer access and increases transparency.

### **2.5.3: Digital Content Creation: Visual Storytelling and Copywriting**

**Definition:** Using visuals, videos, and copywriting to attract buyers.

**Importance:**

- Improves visibility and persuades buyers.

### **2.5.4: Price Tracking, E-Payment Systems, and Digital Logistics Coordination**

**Definition:** Monitoring market prices, using online payment methods, and managing delivery.

**Importance:**

- Increases efficiency, security, and trust.

## **Unit 2.6: Activity: Omnichannel Go-Live - E-Soko, and Buyer Tracking**

**Definition:** Practical application of digital marketing, catalogues, and buyer management.

2.6.1: Designing and Publishing Online Product Catalogues

2.6.2: Simulating Real-Time Price Updates and Buyer Feedback Systems

2.6.3: Integrating E-soko Data with Cooperative Digital Profiles

2.6.4: Developing Buyer-Tracking and Feedback Forms (KoBo Toolbox)

## **Unit 2.7: Cooperative and Group Marketing Approaches**

**Definition:** Collective marketing to pool resources, increase bargaining power, and ensure quality consistency.

**Importance:**

- Reduces costs, improves market access, and supports joint branding.

2.7.1: Advantages of Collective Marketing and Bulk Selling

2.7.2: Governance, Transparency, and Shared Quality Standards

2.7.3: Joint Branding, Packaging, and Promotion Strategies

## **Unit 2.8: Marketing Risk Management**

**Definition:** Identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks in market access, price fluctuations, and product quality.

**Importance:**

- Protects income and ensures sustainable operations.

2.8.1: Identifying and Mitigating Market, Price, and Product Quality Risks

2.8.2: Building Resilience through Diversification and Multiple Buyer Relationships

2.8.3: Adapting to Evolving Consumer Preferences and Market Dynamics

## **Unit 2.9: Developing a Marketing and Promotion Plan**

**Definition:** Step-by-step process to create a seasonal marketing plan, including budgeting, timelines, and KPIs.

**Importance:**

- Guides SMEs to plan, execute, and track marketing activities effectively.

2.9.1: Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a Seasonal Marketing Plan

2.9.2: Budgeting, Timeline Setting, and Performance Tracking

2.9.3: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptation for Continuous Improvement

## **Unit 2.10: Expected Outputs and Learning Outcomes**

2.10.1: Digital Product Catalogue (Photo + Price + Contact)

2.10.2: Cooperative WhatsApp Business and E-Soko Integration

2.10.3: Completed Marketing Plan and Campaign Launch Checklist

## Training Methodology Guide

**Tools:** Simple dashboard templates, marketing post design checklist.

**Methodology:**

- Practical hands-on exercises using digital tools.
- Participants design online catalogues, simulate real-time price updates, and integrate buyer feedback.
- Group work to build cooperative-level marketing portfolios.

**Output:** Each cooperative sets up a digital product portfolio (photo + price + contact).

**Session Type:** Practical, technology-driven learning session

**Facilitator Role:** Demonstrator , coach and technical support for digital tools.

**Trainer Role:**

- Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions.
- Ensure equal participation and capture group findings on flip charts.
- Provide constructive feedback and link discussions to real market cases.

**Participant Role:**

- Engage actively in group work, field exercises, and digital demonstrations.
- Share practical experiences from their enterprises or cooperatives. Document insights in personal action-planning sheets.

### **Practical Activity: Omnichannel Go-Live: Catalogue, E-Soko, and Buyer Tracking**

This session introduces participants to **digital marketing platforms** and **information systems** used in agricultural market linkages. It emphasises creating product visibility, improving customer communication, and integrating real-time data systems (like E-soko and KoBo) to enhance decision-making and business competitiveness. Participants will engage in **hands-on exercises** to design and publish online product catalogues, simulate real-time price updates, and develop cooperative-level digital marketing portfolios.

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Create and manage digital marketing content for their agricultural products.

2. Use **WhatsApp Business**, **Facebook**, **X (Twitter)**, and **KoBo Toolbox** for promoting, reporting, and collecting market data.
3. Understand how to leverage **E-soko** and similar platforms to monitor prices and identify new buyers.
4. Integrate customer feedback and digital analytics to refine their sales strategies.

Expected Output	Output Description	Indicators Achievement
<b>1. Product Catalogue Portfolio (Digital)</b>	Each cooperative or SME develops a <b>digital product catalogue</b> (in PowerPoint, Canva, or mobile format) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Product photos and descriptions (quality grades, packaging sizes).</li> <li>- Unit prices (per kg or per bag).</li> <li>- Cooperative contact details (WhatsApp, phone, email).</li> </ul>	One complete catalogue per cooperative shared on WhatsApp Business, Facebook, or X.
<b>2. Cooperative WhatsApp Business Profile</b>	Each trainee sets up or optimises a <b>WhatsApp Business Account</b> , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profile photo, business description, working hours.</li> <li>- Predefined catalogue items (with pictures and prices).</li> <li>- Auto-reply and broadcast features configured.</li> </ul>	90% of trainees successfully publish 3+ catalogue items.
<b>3. E-soko Market Integration</b>	Participants demonstrate how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access and interpret daily price data for tomatoes, onions, avocados, and passion fruit.</li> <li>- Use that data to update their cooperative price boards.</li> </ul>	Trainers verify screenshots of E-soko data entries or cooperative pricing sheets.
<b>4. KoBo Market-Tracking Form</b>	Participants build a <b>simple KoBo or Google Form</b> for buyer tracking and feedback collection. It includes the buyer's name, product bought, quantity, price, and remarks.	Each group shares a functional link or QR code to their KoBo form.
<b>5. Social Media Marketing Post</b>	Each group creates one <b>sample promotional post</b> for Facebook or X (Twitter) featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A product photo, a brief caption (≤ 150 words), hashtags, and a location tag.</li> </ul>	Posts reviewed for quality, clarity, and market relevance.

<b>6. Cooperative Digital Action Plan</b>	Groups draft a <b>Digital Marketing and Reporting Plan</b> outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How often will they post product updates?</li><li>- Who manages online responses and analytics?</li><li>- How digital tools link with recordkeeping and customer service.</li></ul>	One (1) written plan per cooperative submitted to the facilitator (Word or handwritten).
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**Practical Tools Required:**

- Smartphones (participants own or shared)
- Laptops/tablets for demonstration
- Internet access (mobile hotspot or Wi-Fi)
- Projector for live demo
- Flip charts for listing platform pros/cons
- Pre-prepared sample catalogue templates and KoBo forms

**Trainer Tips:**

- Encourage peer assistance during account setup for participants with limited digital literacy.
- Assign digital champions per group to ensure continuity post-training.
- Reinforce data privacy and ethical online behavior.
- Link this session's outputs to Module 8 Action Plan, ensuring each cooperative's digital marketing plan aligns with their business goals.

## **MODULE 4: ACCESS TO MARKET AND LINKAGES**

**Objective:** To facilitate structured business relationships between producers and buyers through contract farming principles, negotiation skills, and sustainable partnership development. Participants learn to move from spot trading to repeat business and formal agreements, building shared value and risk-sharing mechanisms across the value chain.

### **Key Topics:**

### **Unit 4.1: Introduction to Market Access and Linkage Building**

**Definition:** Understanding pathways for linking producers to buyers and markets.

#### **Importance:**

- Builds sustainable income streams.
- Strengthens cooperation among chain actors.

#### **Importance of Linking Producers to Buyers**

**Importance:** Strengthens market trust and sustainability

**Example:** Linking passion fruit cooperatives with processors

#### **Overview of Market Systems and Value Chain Relationships**

**Importance:** It Clarifies roles, benefits, and fairness. Example: Export avocado contract templates

### **Unit 4.2: Principles of Contract Farming and Partnership Models**

**Definition:** Frameworks for formal agreements between producers and buyers.

#### **Importance:**

- Clarifies roles, responsibilities, and benefits.
- Reduces risks for both parties.

4.2.1: Definition, Types, and Benefits of Contract Farming

4.2.2: Roles and Responsibilities of Chain Actors

4.2.3: Conditions for Effective and Fair Partnerships

### **Unit 4.3: Negotiation and Sales Strategy Simulation**

Learning to communicate, negotiate prices, and meet quality standards. It builds confidence and deal-making skills.

4.3.1: Understanding Buyer Expectations and Service Levels

4.3.2: Price Setting, Quality Standards, and Delivery Terms

4.3.3: Communication and Persuasion Techniques in B2B Negotiations

### **Unit 4.4: Activity: How to Pick Partners and Build Relationship Opportunities**

Tools to assess compatibility and commitment of buyers, suppliers, and other partners.

4.4.1: Identifying Strategic Partners (Buyers, Input Providers, Logistics, Finance)

4.4.2: Assessing Partner Compatibility and Commitment

4.4.3: Applying the “Five Rules of a Good Supplier” Framework

4.4.4: Building Win–Win Relationships and Shared Value Models

### **Unit 4.5: Designing Partnership Agreements and MoUs**

Practical steps to draft agreements including scope, service levels, and dispute resolution.

4.5.1: Essential Clauses in Buyer–Seller Contracts (Scope, Service Levels, Dispute Resolution)

4.5.2: Drafting and Reviewing Simple Partnership Templates

4.5.3: Risk and Safeguard Provisions in Contract Farming Arrangements

### **Unit 4.6: Partner Mapping and Collaboration Frameworks**

Diagramming value chain actors and their roles to optimize market access.

4.6.1: Creating Partnership Maps and Value Chain Linkage Diagrams

4.6.2: Defining Roles, Responsibilities, and Coordination Mechanisms

4.6.3: Leveraging Collective Action for Better Market Integration

### **Unit 4.7: Risk Management in Market Linkages**

Identifying common buyer-supplier risks and mitigation strategies.

4.7.1: Identifying Common Risks in Buyer–Supplier Relationships

4.7.2: Mitigation through Diversification, Transparency, and Performance Monitoring

4.7.3: Case Examples of Partnership Success and Failure

## **Unit 4.8: Developing a Partnership Action Plan**

Integrating partnerships with production and marketing plans for continuous improvement.

4.8.1: Steps for Building and Sustaining Market Relationships

4.8.2: Monitoring Partnership Performance and Review Mechanisms

4.8.3: Integration with Production and Marketing Plans (Modules 1 & 2)

## **Training Methodology Guide**

**Tools:** Sample contract templates, negotiation guide, and “5 rules of good supplier” checklist.

**Output:** Draft partnership agreement or MoU for at least one buyer category.

**Duration:** 3-4 hours

**Session Type:** B2B simulation + contracting clinic + partnership design lab

**Facilitator Role:** Deal-room moderator, contracts coach, partnerships synthesis lead

### **Tools:**

- Sample contract/MoU templates
- Negotiation guide
- “5 Rules of a Good Supplier” checklist
- Flip charts, markers, sticky notes

### **Learning Approach:**

- Participants practice negotiation and sales strategy through role-play or live simulation, drafting fair and feasible contract/MoU terms.
- Emphasis on moving from spot trading to repeat business and formal agreements.
- Value chain thinking is applied: participants learn that shared objectives, complementary resources (skills, land, finance, equipment, market access), and joint behaviors create higher returns on production investments.
- Facilitation ensures gender and youth voices lead discussions, encourages quantified commitments (volumes, frequency, prices), and documents outputs for follow-up coaching.

### **Trainer Role:**

- Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions.
- Ensure equal participation and capture group findings on flip charts.
- Provide constructive feedback and link discussions to real market cases.

**Participant Role:**

- Engage actively in group work, field exercises, and digital demonstrations.
- Share practical experiences from their enterprises or cooperatives. Document insights in personal action-planning sheets.

**Activity I: How to Pick Partners and Build Relationships Opportunities**

**Introduction of the activity:** Value chain thinking requires a collective decision by key chain members to:

- Focus on delivering target customers' needs
- Provide better service to customers/ or buyers,
- Reward producers for delivering additional quality (Better prices example, for first-grade tomatoes).

Accordingly, critical partners are those who:

- Are committed and able to reduce waste and create value,
- Supply important input (Extension, credit, BDS, etc), and/or
- provide access to higher value markets. Trainers should **emphasise the critical importance** of getting all relevant chain members to work together towards a **common goal** of increasing income by delivering the required value and underscore that this is a complementary effort (not a single chain member can achieve this in isolation).

**Objective:** Value Chain Thinking involves a **deliberate decision** by chain members to work together to improve their incomes by delivering better services to each other and the type of product their consumers/buyers want. It does not just happen, and it is not easy, but it does increase the return on investment made during production. Accordingly, **farmers need to build relationships with those chain members** who are critical to the success of their Action Plan. In return, those partners also need to recognise their interdependence and so develop commitment and share benefits to take advantage of market opportunities.

**Steps:**

- Identify strategic partners.
- Map partner compatibility and commitment.
- Apply the “Five Rules of a Good Supplier” framework: Negotiate, Commit, Deliver, Monitor, React.
- Build win–win relationships and shared-value models.

### Learning Objectives:

- Explain **contract farming principles** and when/why to use them.
- Conduct a **B2B negotiation** (price, grades/specs, delivery rhythm, payment terms, dispute resolution).
- Apply the **five rules of a good supplier** (Negotiate, Commit, Deliver, Monitor, React) to sustain trust.
- Map **partners and roles** (inputs/finance/logistics/quality) and draft a **partnership MoU**.

### Session Management:

- Mini-lecture: contract farming & partnership ladders (spot → repeat → contract → close partnership).
- **Activity A: B2B Negotiation Clinic** (role-play with templates & price sheets)
- **Activity B: Working as Partners** (partner mapping, roles, benefits/risk-sharing)
- Drafting room: **Contract/MoU** per target buyer segment
- Plenary sign-off: key clauses, red flags, next-step checklist

**Room & Materials:** Breakout tables (buyer/seller), sample **contract templates, negotiation guide, supplier 5-rules checklist**, price sheets, flip charts/markers.

**Group Formation:** By crop & target buyer; assign buyer/seller teams.

**Inclusion & Quality:** Rotate spokespersons; require **quantified** terms (kg, grade, % defects, delivery days, days-to-pay).

### Trainer Tips:

- Anchor every clause to **buyer requirements** gathered in earlier modules; avoid promises the group cannot reliably deliver.
- Push for **measurable** service levels and **simple dispute pathways**.
- Capture photos/scans of all drafts for refinement before real B2B meetings.

**Participants practice negotiation and sales strategy**, draft fair and feasible contract/MoU terms, and design partnership structures that deliver buyer requirements while sharing risks, costs, and rewards across the chain; emphasis on moving from spot trading to repeat business and formal agreements. The foundations for strong relationships amongst value chain partners are shared objectives and motivations, and then complementary resources (skills, land, finance, equipment, access to market, etc). These foundations need to be built upon by partners' attitudes and behaviors.

**Activity 2: Outcome Table:**

Outcomes	Description	Achievement Indicators
<b>Deal Terms Sheet</b>	Agreed draft on product, grade/spec, volume, delivery frequency/lead time, price formula, payment terms, QC/inspection, returns.	One-page terms sheet completed with numbers and responsibilities.
<b>Draft Contract/MoU</b>	Populate template clauses: scope, service levels, force majeure, dispute resolution, termination, review cadence.	Draft signed by both role-play teams; missing clauses flagged for legal review.
<b>Supplier Performance Plan (5 Rules)</b>	Team plan to Negotiate, Commit, Deliver, Monitor, React across the season.	Checklist filled with concrete actions (e.g., grading SOP, feedback loop cadence).
<b>Red Flags and Safeguards</b>	Identify risks (price swings, side-selling, late payments) and safeguards (escrow, staged deliveries, bonuses/penalties).	Risk mitigation table attached to the draft contract.

**Activity 3: Outcome Table:**

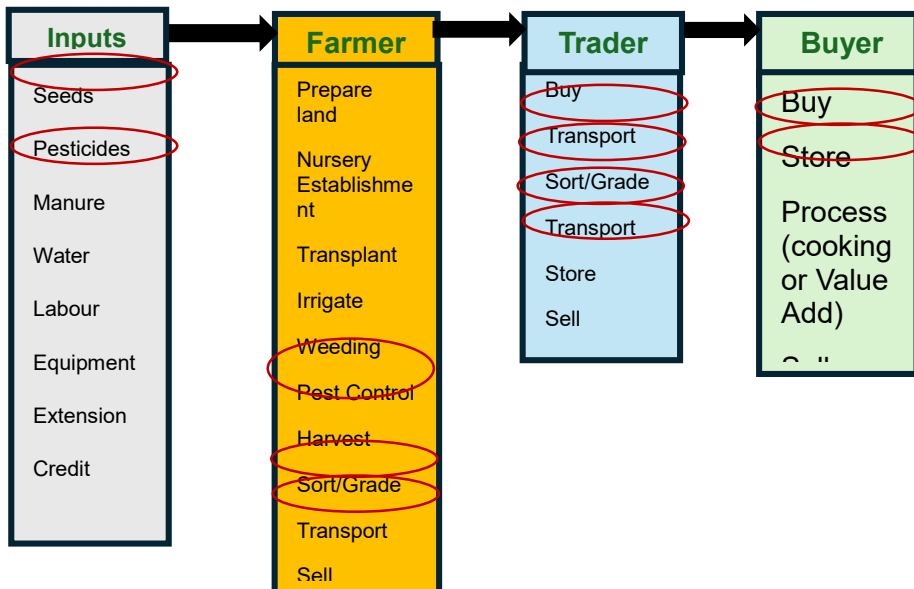
Output	Description	Achievement Indicators
<b>Partner Map and Roles</b>	Map <b>critical partners</b> (inputs, extension, credit/BDS, logistics, packhouse, buyers) with roles and handshakes.	The Swimlane map shows who does <b>what/when</b> , information and money flows.
<b>Shared-Value Model</b>	Define <b>benefit-sharing</b> (quality bonuses, on-time incentives) and <b>cost/risk-sharing</b> (inputs on credit, transport pooling).	Table of incentives/penalties aligned to buyer specs and service levels.
<b>Partnership Operating Rhythm</b>	Calendar for <b>forecasting, aggregation, QC checks, deliveries, invoice and payment cycles</b> , and quarterly reviews.	Operating calendar published; owners and deadlines assigned.
<b>Partnership Readiness Checklist</b>	Minimum readiness (records, grading, volumes, comms channel, dispute process) before signing.	All items checked or gaps assigned with deadlines.

**Practical Activity: Steps to Connecting Farmers to New Markets**

Figure 2: 7 Steps to Connecting Farmers to Markets



**Example of a Value Chain Map**



## **MODULE 5: COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

**Objective:** To equip SMEs and cooperatives with a business mindset and practical financial planning skills that support profitable, risk-aware, and data-driven agribusiness operations.

**Key Topics:**

### **Unit 5.1: Introduction to Agribusiness Financial Planning**

Basics of budgeting, cost management, and linking profits to market decisions.

5.1.1: Importance of financial management in agricultural enterprises

5.1.2: Linking profitability with market-led production decisions

### **Unit 5.2: Understanding Cost–Benefit Analysis (CBA)**

Analyzing input costs, gross margin, net returns, and break-even points.

5.2.1: Concepts, purpose, and components of CBA

5.2.2: Calculating gross margin, net return, and benefit–cost ratio (BCR)

5.2.3: Conducting break-even analysis to determine viable price and yield levels

### **Unit 5.3: Budgeting and Input Cost Planning**

Seasonal budget preparation and allocation for production, marketing, and logistics.

5.3.1: Preparing seasonal production and postharvest budgets

5.3.2: Allocating costs across production, marketing, and logistics activities

5.3.3: Setting realistic profit margins based on market price variations

### **Unit 5.4: Record-Keeping and Profitability Monitoring**

Tracking revenue, expenses, and cash flow to guide decisions.

5.4.1: Maintaining basic records: cashbook, sales log, and input ledger

5.4.2: Tracking revenues, expenses, and cash flow for informed decisions

5.4.3: Using Excel or manual templates for simple performance monitoring

### **Unit 5.5: Access to Finance and Crop Insurance**

Understanding SACCO, MFI credit, and insurance options for agribusinesses.

5.5.1: Exploring credit options (SACCOs, MFIs, buyer advances)

5.5.4: Understanding agricultural insurance products and eligibility

5.5.3: Integrating financial services into agribusiness sustainability plans

## **Unit 5.6: Risk Identification and Mitigation Strategies**

Managing financial risks including price volatility and yield loss.

5.6.1: Recognizing common risks (price volatility, yield loss, input delays)

5.6.2: Planning for diversification and contingency funds

5.6.3: Linking financial risk management to production and marketing cycles

## **Unit 5.7: Practical Activity – Risk, Finance, and Profit Safeguards Clinic**

Hands-on exercises to compute CBA, break-even points, and mitigation plans.

5.7.1: Hands-on computation of cost–benefit and break-even points

5.7.2: Drafting a financial risk-mitigation mini-plan

5.7.3: Peer review of budgeting assumptions and investment priorities

## **Unit 5.8: Developing a Cooperative Financial Action Plan**

Translate analysis into cooperative goals, monitoring, and mentorship mechanisms.

5.8.1: Translating analysis results into cooperative business planning

5.8.2: Setting financial goals and profitability indicators

5.8.3: Designing follow-up mentorship and monitoring mechanisms

## **Training Methodology Guide**

**Tools:** Farm budget calculator, input cost sheet, and Excel template for profit tracking.

**Output:** Each participant completes a mini cost–benefit worksheet for one crop.

**Duration:** 4 hours

**Session Type:** Practical, calculator/Excel-based working session

**Facilitator Role:** Coach and reviewer of individual worksheets

**Learning Approach:**

- Hands-on session shifting producers from output-driven to profit-driven decisions
- Participants budget inputs, compute break-even and BCR, track profitability, identify finance and insurance options, and draft risk mitigation plans

Facilitator ensures accuracy, realistic assumptions, and inclusion of all participants, highlighting the link to value chain thinking: “produce what you can sell” and minimize waste

### **Practical Activity: Risk, Finance and Profit Safeguards Clinic**

This activity **4 turns farm management into profit management**: participants build a crop budget, compute break-even and BCR, and link records to pricing and margin decisions. They then identify finance/insurance options and draft a simple risk-mitigation plan that protects cash flow, quality, and on-time delivery.

### **Session Description**

Hands-on session that shifts producers from output-driven to **profit-driven** decisions by practising input budgeting, record-keeping, break-even and cost–benefit analysis, and mapping viable finance/insurance options; aligns with Value Chain Thinking’s “produce what you can sell” and waste-reduction principles.

### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end, participants can:

- Build a **crop budget** (inputs, labour, services, postharvest) and compute **unit cost, gross margin, BCR**, and **break-even output/price**.
- Set up **simple records** (cashbook, sales log, input ledger) to monitor profitability and cash flow.
- Identify **finance options** (SACCOs/MFIs/buyer advances) and **crop insurance** use-cases.
- Draft a **risk-mitigation mini-plan** (price, yield, quality, and timing risks).

### **Practical Tools Required:**

- Calculators; laptops with **Excel** templates; printed **farm budget calculator** and **input cost sheets**; sample receipts/invoices; projector/flip charts.

### **Trainer Tips:**

- Start with a **worked example**, then switch to participants’ real numbers.
- Pair trainees to **peer-review** formulas and assumptions.
- Tie every budget line to **market requirements** (quality, volumes, timing) to avoid over-spending where buyers don’t pay for extra specs.

Output	Description	Indicator of Achievement
<b>Crop Cost–Benefit and Break-Even Sheet</b>	per participant, one (1) target crop	Correct BCR, gross margin, and break-even computed and checked by facilitator.
<b>Input Budget and Cash-Flow Mini-Plan</b>	Seasonal-based planning	Itemised inputs with quantities, timing, and total cost; monthly inflow/outflow table completed.
<b>Record-Keeping Pack</b>	Cashbook, sales log, input ledger-Excel or paper	All three templates are filled with sample entries; formulas work in the Excel version.
<b>Finance and Insurance Options Note</b>	One (1) page option	Sources, terms, and eligibility are listed; the chosen option is justified for the crop/season.
<b>Risk-Mitigation Checklist</b>	Flip chart mapped list	At least 5 risks listed with concrete responses (e.g., staggered planting, graded sales).

## MODULE 6: PRODUCTION PLANNING

**Objective:** To consolidate participants’ skills through guided coaching and action planning for effective, market-oriented production and cooperative growth.

**Key Topics:**

### Unit 6.1: Aligning Production with Market Demand

- 6.1.1: Translating buyer requirements into production quantities and quality targets.
- 6.1.2: Synchronizing crop calendars with seasonal price trends and rainfall patterns.
- 6.1.3: Selecting suitable varieties (tomato, avocado, passion fruit, onion) for target markets.

### Unit 6.2: Resource and Input Planning

- 6.2.1: Estimating input requirements (seeds, fertilizers, compost, pesticides).
- 6.2.2: Planning labour, irrigation, and equipment use per production phase.
- 6.2.3: Coordinating bulk input purchases through cooperatives to reduce costs.

## **Unit 6.3: Field Layout and Scheduling**

- 6.3.1: Designing crop rotation and spacing plans to optimise land use.
- 6.3.2: Setting sowing, transplanting, and harvest schedules according to market windows.
- 6.3.3: Managing staggered planting to ensure continuous supply to buyers.

## **Unit 6.4: Developing Market-Linkage Action Plans**

- 6.4.1: Preparing individual or cooperative production plans tied to confirmed buyers.
- 6.4.2: Defining roles, timelines, and expected yields per farmer or group.
- 6.4.3: Integrating marketing, postharvest, and logistics considerations.

## **Unit 6.5: Monitoring and Adjustment Mechanisms**

- 6.5.1: Tracking performance against planned targets (yield, cost, delivery).
- 6.5.2: Adjusting operations in response to climate, pest, or market shifts.
- 6.5.3: Documenting lessons for the next production cycle.

## **Training Methodology Guide**

**Tools:** Coaching guide, mentorship tracking sheet, progress reporting form.

**Output:** Each trainee completes a *Market-Linkage Action Plan* (signed and dated).

### **Practical Activity: Preparing an Action Plan**

**Introduction of the activity:** To increase their income, farmers need to decide: What and how to grow, and how could they improve their returns by reducing waste (Activity 1) and creating the quality of product to suit particular market opportunities (Activity 3) Whether to undertake additional postharvest activities, like processing or grading (Activity 4), and how to pick partners and build (Activity5)

The activity plan should focus on resources needed to create value in terms of training / or coaching, skills, finance, policy and regulatory advocacy (for instance, on determining an adequate crop rotation plan, enhancing cooperative governance to enable collective activities)

Having identified critical activities, ensure the Action Plan includes:

- Prioritizing further production and postharvest training and advice; and

- Identifying critical inputs, and then seeking advice on getting the type/ quality needed, for example, from extension staff, and meeting with critical suppliers, such as seeds

**Objective:** Producing a tailored action plan is the final step in this training plan. It is designed to lay out the activities producers can undertake in response to the competitive market demands.

**How to facilitate the discussion:** Trainers need to facilitate each producer or producer group to develop an action plan based on value chain thinking. The plan should:

- Be market-oriented, responding to the market opportunities identified while walking the chain
- Customized to the size of market opportunities in terms of volumes available or combined capacity in case more than one producer is willing to work together. However, producers should be encouraged to balance their ambitions with their capacity to meet buyers' demand in terms of volumes and reliability, especially given the inherent uncertainties in agricultural production. It is better to start small than be too ambitious and fail.
- Highlight each farmer or group of farmers' capacity needs, interest, and access to credits, among other key resources.
- Include what to produce, when to produce, and how to produce based on market opportunities and producers' availability of resources.
- Include which partners to bring along to collectively deliver the high-value market.
- Identifies which information will be needed before, during and after production and how that information will be gathered and used.
- Ensures that gender norms do not prevent the value chain from improving its efficiency and effectiveness or distributing the resulting benefits.
- List what external support will be needed, and how it will be obtained.
- It is dynamic and capable of adaptation with experience and changing market opportunities.

### Trainer Tips:

- Facilitate realistic and measurable action plans
- Encourage starting small and scaling with experience
- Promote cooperative collaboration for inputs, labor, and marketing
- Highlight links between Modules 1-4 outputs to ensure integrated planning

## **Chapter 3: CONCLUSION AND EXPECTED DELIVERABLES**

This program closes with a clear pathway from training rooms to real markets. By centring Value Chain Thinking and market-led production, participants move beyond output targets toward predictable, higher-value sales grounded in buyer specifications, disciplined postharvest practices, and durable partnerships. The Coaching Tool Package covering production plan implementation, market-led and business-oriented production, and practical marketing/access tools will be delivered in both soft and hard copies, ensuring facilitators and trainees can reuse, adapt, and scale methods across seasons.

Implementation quality and early results will be captured in a Training and Mentorship Report for 140 direct beneficiaries, documenting pre-/post learning, action-plan execution, B2B outcomes, and lessons for continuous improvement. To convert capacity into revenue, a Sales Strategy and Customer-Base Expansion Guide will help cooperatives/SMEs segment buyers, position products (grades, packaging, service levels), set prices, and manage negotiations, while a complementary SME/Cooperative Market Strategy Framework including SWOT, marketing mix (4Ps/7Ps), and action steps will align production calendars, quality targets, and logistics with concrete market windows.

Finally, to sustain adoption at the farmer level, tailored Training Aids in Kinyarwanda and English fact sheets, leaflets (including green/yellow leaflets), flip charts, audiovisuals, posters, brochures, podcasts, and concise value-chain manuals will standardize good practice in nurseries, fields, aggregation points, and pack houses. Together, these deliverables translate classroom concepts into repeatable systems: tools to plan, produce, and present products to market; documentation to learn and improve; strategies to expand customers; frameworks to govern decisions; and farmer-friendly materials that lock in behavior change. The result is a practical engine for competitiveness and resilience, one that equips cooperatives and SMEs to meet demand reliably, reduce losses, and grow incomes season after season. The following are the key deliverables and tools:

### **Coaching Tool Package**

- Covers production plan implementation, market-led and business-oriented production, and practical marketing/access tools.
- Delivered in soft and hard copies to enable facilitators and trainees to reuse, adapt, and scale methods across seasons.

### **Training and Mentorship Report**

- Documents pre- and post-training learning, action-plan execution, and lessons learned.
- Provides evidence of implementation quality and early impact for 430 direct beneficiaries.

### **Sales Strategy and Customer-Base Expansion Guide**

- Helps cooperatives/SMEs to segment buyers, position products (grades, packaging, service levels), set prices, and manage negotiations.

### **SME/Cooperative Market Strategy Framework**

- Includes SWOT analysis, marketing mix (4Ps/7Ps), and action steps.
- Aligns production calendars, quality targets, and logistics planning with concrete market opportunities.

### Farmer-Level Training Aids

- Fact sheets, leaflets (green/yellow), flip charts, audiovisuals, posters, brochures, podcasts
- Concise value-chain manuals for standardizing good practice across nurseries, fields, aggregation points, and pack houses

### Expected Impact

These deliverables together translate classroom concepts into repeatable, practical systems by providing:

- Planning and production tools to meet market requirements
- Documentation for learning, reflection, and continuous improvement
- Strategies to expand buyer networks and optimize pricing
- Frameworks for cooperative decision-making and accountability
- Farmer-friendly materials that reinforce behavior change and operational discipline

The ultimate result is a practical engine for competitiveness and resilience, enabling cooperatives and SMEs to:

- Meet market demand reliably
- Reduce postharvest losses
- Increase incomes sustainably
- Adapt and scale practices season after season

By linking training, action plans, market access, and financial tools, this program ensures that knowledge is converted into revenue, partnerships, and measurable business growth.