

Title Linking small horticultural producers with markets: Indian experiences and lessons
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Abstract

Linking small producers with markets has been identified as one of the major issues in policy and practice in improving livelihoods for millions of poor in the developing world. Small producers have many competitive advantages like lower costs, but they face threats from the demand for standardised products in global and national markets, and large volume requirements of modern markets. However, there are opportunities in organic, fair and ethical trade markets, which are particularly suited for small producers and which offer higher prices. There have been numerous experiments by different stakeholders across the developing world, including India, in linking small primary horticultural producers with markets. The focus of this paper is to review the experience with such linkages as promoted by different agencies in India, problems encountered therein, and lessons learnt. This paper examines the experiences in potato, tomato, grapes, mango, and fruits and vegetable (F&V) crops in general for different regions of India that have different institutional and market structures. The paper brings forth lessons for leveraging resources of the state, the private sector, and other development agencies, and for making use of mechanisms like contract farming. The paper concludes with lessons for policy and interventions to create more effective market linkage-building for quality production and better livelihoods.