

Structure of value-chain for African indigenous horticultural crops: processing Palmyra for income generation of smallholders in Segou, Mali

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Abstract

In the Sahel region of West Africa, income generating activities for smallholder farmers are essential for rural development. While there are many factors limiting the participation of smallholder farmers in the market, considerable potential exists for various indigenous horticultural crops (IHCs) in the region. To evaluate the value chain structures of these IHCs, this case study evaluates the market for African Palmyra (*Borassus* sp.) as a potential processing product (syrup). This study was conducted in Dona village in Ségou, Mali. Syrup production, initiated with the support of an NGO, is now conducted by a group of mainly women villagers. The main actor in this value chain was the group and the majority of the value chain activities from material procurement to selling were performed by these women. The task analysis conducted at each stage of the value chain indicated that there are constraints on each stage, such as the lack of preservation facilities and shortage of labour. A cost analysis of the value chain demonstrates that the main challenge is to achieve sufficient profits to return back to group members, while a cheap price was advantageous for promotion in the market. The ratio of expenses deducted at each stage to the total net income was less than 10%. To increase this ratio, an expansion in production and/or the development of value-added products is necessary to strengthen the group's competitiveness.