

Title A rapid supply chain appraisal approach for agribusiness development projects
Authors R.J. Collins, A.J. Dunne
Citation ISHS Acta Horticulturae 794:73-80. 2008.
Keywords supply chain; agribusiness development projects; Rapid Rural Appraisal

Abstract

Most development projects are framed around the findings of preliminary scoping studies, many of which are completed under the pressure of limited time, funds and other resources. Approaches such as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) have evolved in response to these pressures. RRA aims to define a problem situation quickly and in sufficient detail to ensure that subsequent activities are focused on the critical elements of the problem. There is emerging evidence that development projects involving primary producers, who are often among the poorest members of a community, are moving away from technical 'fixes' for production problems, to solutions that encompass the whole chain from production to consumption. We argue that in this situation there is a need to be able to rapidly scope the performance of the whole supply chain as a dynamic system. Such an approach has received little attention in the literature. This paper outlines a framework for Rapid Supply Chain Appraisal (RSCA) and describes its application to a scoping study of the Pakistan mango industry. The RSCA approach consists of four stages: a stakeholders' workshop; in-depth interviews with key informants from each sub-system of the supply chain; continuous analysis of data to allow rapid problem formulation and identification of the development approach; and validation of the findings with stakeholders. RSCA focuses on four sub-systems of the supply chain: product integrity; communication; value; and governance. The objective is to identify the limiting factors within each sub-system and among the sub-system interactions. Using the Pakistan case study as an example, RSCA resulted in the design of a development project that (1) focused on the supply chain as a complete system; (2) addressed limiting factors in order of their likely impact; and (3) had the endorsement of all stakeholders from primary producers and their marketers through to government extension, research and development agencies. In this case study, the RSCA approach took three days for the initial workshop, five days for in-depth interviews and three days for analysis and interpretation of results. More case studies are needed to validate and further develop the RSCA approach.