

Call for Papers
to be presented at a Regional Workshop on
Delivering Business Development Services to Rural Areas
Nairobi, 21-25 September 2009

Background

Practical Action working in Eastern Africa with financial support from the Ford Foundation is organizing a 5-day workshop to be held 21-25 September 2009 in Nairobi. The theme of the workshop will be **Stimulating and Delivering Effective and Sustainable Business Development Services to Rural Areas**, with particular emphasis on services for smallholder farmers.

Sustainable service provision is a component of rural enterprise and value chain development that received considerable attention earlier this decade. This workshop aims to review past and current rural Business Development Services (BDS) experiences in East and Southern Africa - and elsewhere - to identify best practices and share lessons learnt in the sector. This is expected to contribute to rural value chain and livelihood development strategies and programmes across the region.

The principal objective of the workshop is to share among a selected group of development practitioners, private-sector service providers and experts, their collective experience in the delivery of sustainable BDS to poor rural communities. The achievements and challenges presented by the participants will be used as the basis for identifying good practice and obstacles to BDS delivery at the community, institutional and policy levels. The case studies will also contribute to the development of a strategy for a programme in East and Southern Africa that builds capacity in this area among enterprise development practitioners.

The conference format will include facilitated themed sessions for academic and practitioner presentations together with interactive workshops and discussion panels. Additionally, the conference will provide excellent networking opportunities.

Some of the key questions that the workshop will address include:

- What services are farmer enterprises willing to pay for?
- What types of organizations are delivering BDS and what are the advantages and disadvantages of various providers?
- Which providers are most effective in delivering services and what are the most efficient means of service delivery?
- Are there services that can be provided within the community by community members?
- How sustainable are different models of BDS delivery?

Call for papers

Development practitioners and service providers from the public and private sectors in East and Southern Africa are encouraged to submit paper abstracts to be presented at the workshop. Abstracts for papers and posters must be received by the program committee by the 10th July 2009. Accepted abstracts will be published in the workshop program and will be available at the opening of the workshop. Selected full papers will be published in the Workshop Proceedings. Authors of selected abstracts will be required to submit full papers by 14th September 2009. All costs for presenters from national governmental, non-governmental and private sector institutions will be catered for. These will include; return ticket, full board accommodation and token for case study preparation.

Abstract preparation and submission

An abstract should contain a short, concise title followed by the names of authors in bold and a list of address of their affiliated institutions. The presenting author should be underlined. The text of the abstract should be in Times New Roman, font size 11 and should not exceed 300 words. The abstract should be guided by the following:-

- Keywords: List no more than 5 keywords
- Topic: What is the submission about?
- Problem: What specific problem does the submission focus on?
- Current understanding: What is known about this problem?
- Research question: What is the submission's goal?
- Design/methodology/approach: How was the study/work executed?
- Findings: What are the main outcomes?
- Contribution: What does the submission add to current understanding?
- Practical implications: Who will gain why and in which way from the findings?

Important Submission Deadlines:

- 10th July 2009: Deadline for abstract submission
- 20th July 2009: Acceptance Notification
- 14th September 2009: Final Submissions (including papers, slides, profiles & photos)

Submit your abstract by e-mail in word doc file to:

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