

## **Exercise 3**

# **YOUR PROBLEM IS OUR ISSUE**

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**In a nutshell:**

The purpose of ‘Your problem is our issue’ is to help participants transition from looking at their own problems in isolation to thinking about their own and other market actors’ problems as parts of blockages that affect the system as a whole.

**Estimated time:**

1 hour

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**When to use this exercise:**

This exercise is often necessary because participants will struggle to discuss blockages in the system as a whole without at least having a chance to air their problems and any grievances they might have. It is an important stepping stone towards more constructive dialogue.

This exercise is suitable to help market actors build on Milestone 1 and progress towards Milestone 2 in the participatory market mapping journey.

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**Prerequisites:**

Participants need to have a largely shared understanding about how their market system works, with an appreciation of the importance of the relationships between the market actors. ‘Map the market system’ is a good exercise to carry out before this one.

## **Objectives:**

- Participants share their experiences of the market system with each other.
- Participants understand the points of view of other market actors they are in tension with over their problems. In doing so, participants come to understand the valid challenges that other market actors face and stop blaming each other.
- Participants frame their own and each other’s problems in terms of blockages that affect the entire system.

## How it works:

Participants spend a little time on their own or in groups (e.g. farmers) to identify what they see as their most challenging problems and consider what other market actors affect and are affected by these problems. See below for some examples of steering questions that the participants can answer for themselves. Participants come back together in a single or a small number of groups and share the answers to the questions amongst themselves. Facilitators capture the main points that are discussed on flip charts.

Each time a participant mentions another participant, the other participant is offered an opportunity to present how they experience the problem. Facilitators capture the responses of these market actors on flip charts.

When this process has been completed, facilitators put the flip charts up on walls, grouping the initial problems and the responses together. Facilitators emphasise how these flip charts capture different sides of the same blockages and encourage a discussion about how participants can work together to overcome these blockages.

## Steering questions:

- What is the biggest problem that you face that stops you from being as efficient and profitable as you would like?
- Which other market actors contribute to this problem?
- Which other market actors are affected by this problem?
- How does this problem affect how the market systems as a whole works?

## Watch the time!

This exercise can be very time consuming, so keep track of time and if required, allocate a time limit for each participant to speak and respond. Make sure you give all participants an equal opportunity to speak. If you fail to do this, it may seriously compromise your impartiality.