

Exercise 7

IDENTIFY WORKING GROUPS

In a nutshell:

The purpose of this exercise is to crowd participants around common interests and to make them commit to meet again to continue trying to address issues. This exercise helps to facilitate market actors to prioritise critical issues in the market system to act on.

When to use this exercise:

This exercise is suitable to help market actors move past Milestone 3 and progress towards Milestone 4 in the participatory market mapping journey.

Prerequisites:

Participants need to have a largely shared understanding about their market system, have discussed their problems with each other and framed them as systemic blockages. Exercises 'Map the market system', 'Your problem is our issue', 'Put myself in your shoes' and 'The mediators' can be used to reach this point.

Objectives:

Participants prioritise some systemic blockages based on their common interests and agree to meet again in more focused groups to continue working towards solutions.

How it works:

- This exercise captures something that typically happens organically and naturally when participants are ready for it. When participants begin to discuss systemic blockages during tea breaks, and beyond the times when the exercises are facilitated, the facilitators look out to see who is discussing what and with whom. Examples of issues that market actors are likely to crowd around: quality/volume/prices, taxation, coverage of extension services.
- Following this energy, facilitators make suggestions to participants that they should exchange details and plan to meet again.
- Facilitators keep records of the participants who agree so that they can help organise the further meetings and invite the relevant actors.
- Lists of working group members are put up on flipcharts and pens are provided for other participants to sign-up. It is important to ensure that these groups are open and that any market actor with an interest can join any group.

Look out for...

Unrealistic expectations:

When market actors are enthusiastic towards working groups, it is possible for their expectations to become unrealistic. As facilitators, help market actors to understand that addressing issues will take time, commitment and effort. Sometimes the facilitators may have to steer over-enthusiastic market actors away from particularly challenging issues if they think market actors are not ready to tackle them.

Domination of some actors:

The facilitators should look out for powerful market actors dominating the informal process of prioritisation of issues. Make sure less powerful actors have a time and space to discuss the issues that matter to them and seek other market actors to work with on them.