

Matching the potential of root crops as commercial commodities with the needs of the poor

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Abstract

The vision for cassava, presented in the Global Cassava Development Strategy at a Forum earlier in 2000 (and summarised in another paper at this Symposium), is that it will spur rural industrial development and raise incomes for producers, processors and traders and will also contribute to food security. The Strategy promotes a demand driven approach for achieving this vision.

In this paper, we demonstrate how some of theory of the GCDS has been turned into practical post-harvest projects on the ground using some examples of NRI's collaborative research and development work funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development. Specifically described are some of the techniques used (such as needs assessment, market analysis, the sustainable livelihoods framework) to ensure that the interventions not only meet specific market demands, but also meet the needs of poor people and so have a specific impact upon poverty elimination.

A range of market demands have been selected which include the commercialisation of a traditional processed cassava product, improved manufacturing of cassava flour, development of street vended foods and more industrial applications. Some of the lessons learned to date in these examples are discussed.