

# WEBINAR

**BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY,  
SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE  
& AGRIBUSINESS THROUGH  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**SCADEP**

**BDS**

## THEMES

**ACCESS TO FINANCE**

Identifying binding constraints &  
unlocking investments

**ACCESS TO MARKETS &**

Identifying binding constraints

**WEBINAR REPORT**

2023

Presented To  
**SCADEP**

Presented By  
**AIDE-SL**

**JUNE 2023**

# ABSTRACT



**This webinar explores the challenges and opportunities facing farmers and agribusinesses in Sierra Leone with regards to access to finance and access to markets. It further brings together stakeholders from the agriculture sector--including farmers, financial institutions, development organizations, media partners and government agencies to discuss innovative financing models and market linkages that can improve farmers' productivity, profitability, and resilience. Through panel discussions, the webinar highlights successful examples of financing and market interventions, as well as the challenges and potential solutions to scaling them up. The aim was to inspire action and collaboration among stakeholders both in the agriculture sector and other sectors to contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive agricultural system in Sierra Leone. It concludes with recommendations, feedback's, and probing questions that could be further analysed for future references.**

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# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Sierra Leone has a predominantly subsistence agricultural system with small-holder farmers producing for self-consumption and for sale in the local markets. Even though Sierra Leone has significant potential for commercial agriculture, it faces serious bottlenecks (with Access to finance and Access markets being the most prevalent) that hinder the growth of commercializing Agriculture.

In addition to this, Sierra Leone has also been affected by the emergence of COVID-19, which had a significant impact on the country's agricultural sector--leading to a decline in agricultural production and disrupted supply chains. This led to food shortages and an acute increase in the prices of food.



Despite these challenges, there have been efforts to improve the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone. The government has implemented policies and programs to increase agricultural productivity and promote commercial agriculture, such as the Smallholder Commercialization Program (SCP) and the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Program (NSADP). International organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have also provided support to the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone through funding and technical assistance



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kindly check the following website for further details on the Agricultural sector:  
<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/sierra-leone-agriculture-sector>



# AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRENDS



In 2014/2015 the Ministry of Forestry and food security supported farmers, providing them with the right inputs to aide productivity. Lots of efforts were made to facilitate this venture; however, minimal success stories were realized. This spurred the need for new strategic ways,

**Despite government efforts to change the circumventing situations, several challenges were faced:** firms with good business ideas faced stiff barriers in accessing finance. Where some had access, to finance they encountered difficulties in accessing markets. Others at the time had the drive to invest but lacked the understanding of key techniques needed (knowledge gap) in facilitating undertakings and proper coordination of issues.

**THIS WAS THE BIRTH OF THE DESIGN OF THE SCADeP PROGRAM**

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# THE BIRTH OF SCADeP

Interfaces between the government and the World Bank were set to birth an intervention that addressed these challenges/bottlenecks but with a different approach-- with a focus on with agribusinesses and smallholder farmers (SHF). To address these challenges, SCADeP was designed and established.:

A component of SCADeP was established to offer players in the sector two funding windows; a Sierra Leonean agribusiness development fund (SLADF) which works with agribusinesses who are implementing an out-grower scheme. It also had a funding window for small ASMG firms.

Another component was infrastructure support with a focus on market linkages.

An agricultural grant scheme to facilitate funding, through the provision of matching grants to agribusinesses,

These were established to inherently understand the gaps and what was missing, which were meant to be revealed by the players themselves and to possibly solved them.



# STRATEGIC PARTNERS



**WORLD BANK GROUP**

The World Bank Group is one of the world's largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries. Its five institutions share a commitment to reducing poverty, increasing shared prosperity, and promoting sustainable development.



The core mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security is to formulate agricultural development policies and to advise the Government on such policies relating to its administration and the management of the agricultural sector of the Sierra Leone's economy. This overall mandate matches the individual Divisions such as Rice Self Sufficiency, Livestock Development, Crops Diversification, Forestry, and Leveraging technology to bring Agriculture to the door step of farmers



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The main development objective of the Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project (SCADEP) for Sierra Leone is to put modalities in place and initiate the development of a detailed locale specific environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) focusing on the key activities at the commodity levels involving farmers, agribusinesses and other value-chain actors. They also seeks to promote agric. productivity through improved access to markets, improved access to finance and inclusive smallholder farmer agribusiness



We are a local non-profit organization with International experience. We offer TA and Design, Implement, or Review Projects based on client and partner needs. We actively contribute to the social and economic development of the communities, districts, and nations in which we operate. We also lay emphasis on economic development, with our greatest focus in ensuring development is done in an equitable way-where no one is left behind. We further strengthen disenfranchised groups, thus ensuring there is symbiotic equity for all groups



## A SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND NOTE OF THANKS TO:

- THE WORLD BANK AND THE WORLD BANK TASK TEAM LEADER MR. KADIR OSMAN FOR RECOGNIZING THE NEED AND FULLY SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM.
- THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
- THE SCADeP PROJECT COORDINATING UNIT
- ESSELLE MEDIA
- SOLIDARIDAD
- EMPOWER AFRICA
- THE SCADeP FIRMS
- AIDE LIBERIA TEAM
- ALL PANELISTS LISTED IN ANNEX
- MODERATOR EMILY FANDAY
- ALL PARTICIPANTS LISTED IN ANNEX

*Thank you*



# WEBINAR TOPICS & THEMES



Agriculture is the backbone of the Sierra Leonean economy, with the sector accounting for an estimated 60.7% of GDP according to World Bank and OECD national accounts data, and employing around two-thirds of the national labour force. It is endowed with approximately 5.4 million hectares of arable agricultural land, of which almost 75% is available for cultivation. The country boasts fertile soils and its ample rainfall averages roughly 3,800mm per year, making it one of the most humid countries in Africa. (<https://www.investingsinsierraleone.com/agriculture-and-fisheries/>)

**AIDE-SL with support from SCADaP, WORLD BANK and the Sierra Leone Government hosted a webinar on**

**BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**Topics:**

**Access to finance: identifying binding constraints and unlocking investments**

**Access to markets: identifying binding constraints and unlocking opportunities**

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**The webinar did an expository to two key bottlenecks that hindered the productivity of agribusinesses and the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone. This triggered deeper discussions into key challenges and possible sustainable solutions which will help resolve binding constraints in the two key topics.**

## ADDRESSING BINDING CONSTRAINTS

ACCESS TO FINANCE

ACCESS TO MARKETS

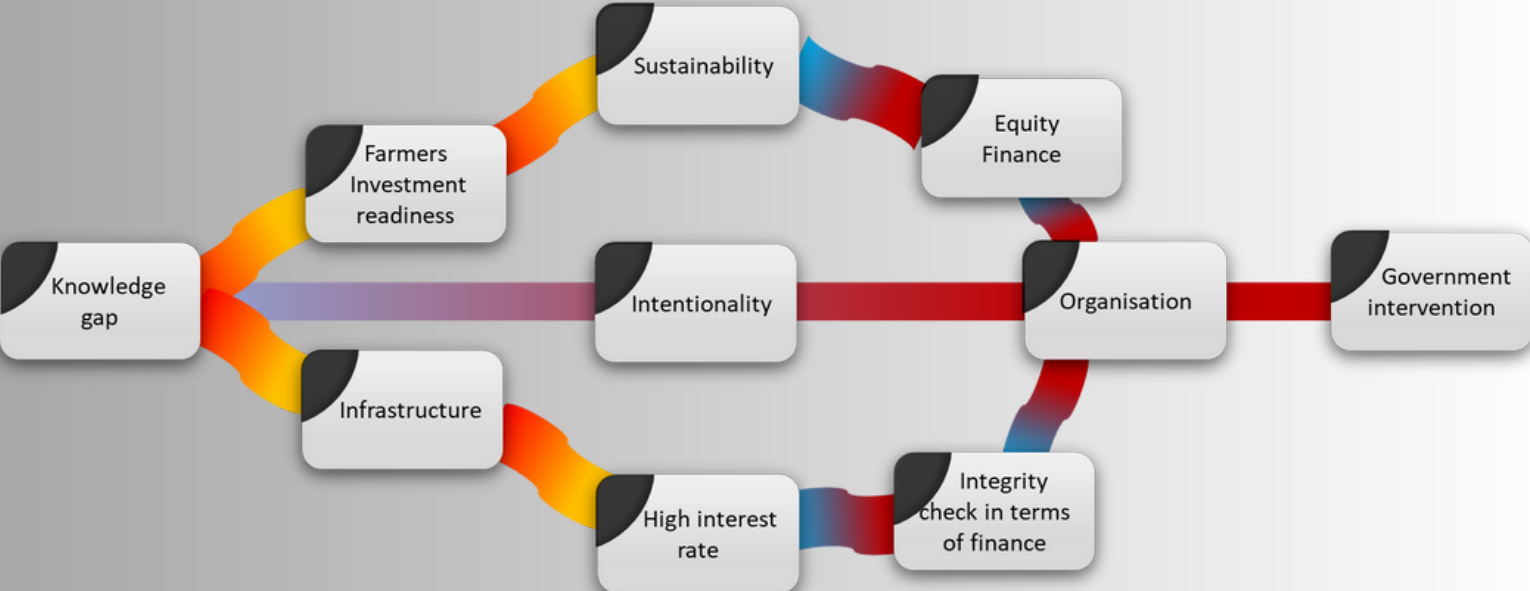
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# ACCESS TO FINANCE

Identifying binding constraints & unlocking investments



Access to Finance has been a key binding constraint towards farmers effective productivity and the freedom to acquiring tremendous output as per research. In that regard the webinar spurs out a conversation that focused around key bottle necks in the area of Accessing Finance that hinders farmers chances of productivity and possible solutions, that enhances productivity and thus expansion to diverse markets.

## KNOWLEDGE GAP

knowledge is power and is lacking among farmers. The knowledge of where to acquire resources/funding, and how to utilize money is key--instead of just going to the banks to access loans. Several components come into play when we talk about the knowledge gap: The right mindset, Knowledge on how to carry out research, how to have access to loans, how to access the market and tools needed to do that, proper data collection and insights into policies and laws. How are loans utilized, and knowing which loans to access (normal loans to pay salary or for overdraft where the interest rates are less).

## FARMERS INVESTMENT READINESS

The investment readiness of SMEs/smallholder farmers is another binding constraint limiting them to have access to finance. This poses the question, "What percentage benefited and what percentage still lacked access". When you talk about inaccessibility, it doesn't mean there are minimal capital flows into Sierra Leone, it only affirms the fact that there are binding constraints such as; having difficulties in finding the right SMEs/farmers to fund, and their readiness in terms of meeting certain legal and regulatory requirements/ i.e. the requirement for certifications on standards and quality (certified by the standards bureau) is sometimes missing. Most are not in compliance with some of the regulatory requirements

## BINDING CONSTRAINTS ACCESS TO FINANCE



## BINDING CONSTRAINTS ACCESS TO FINANCE

# SUSTAINING ACCESS TO FINANCE

Some farmers are opportune to access finance but cannot sustain this finance. To sustain access to finance farms/SMEs need the right education, information, and Business Development Support Systems. The Facilitation of trade is key in boosting access to finance e.g., Ghana trucks importing goods can export high demand products in Ghana such as for bitter kola.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure development is a binding constraint because it limits access to markets. Lack of access to markets affects post harvest management and the metrics financiers would want to assess to make a decision to fund or reject a funding application. Infrastructure discussed includes traditional infrastructure related to transportation and logistics--but also agricultural sector infrastructure such as wells, storage facilities, etc.





9th June, 2023 9:00am

### Themes:

ACCESS TO FINANCE:  
Identifying constraints  
& unlocking investments

ACCESS TO MARKETS:  
Identifying constraints  
& opportunities for access

SAVE THE DATE

## INTENTIONALITY

Agribusinesses must be intentional as to the type of funding they are looking for. As an Agri-business at the growth stage, it is a priority to know what type of funding you want. Finance is a key but not any kind of finance should be pursued. Be intentional on the type of finance you are going in for and ensure it fits your needs at a particular time. An example of blended finance could be a mixture of technical assistance, grants funds, healthy finances, debt funds, training, marketing strategy and research.

## HIGH INTEREST RATE

Agribusiness entrepreneurs often have to pay high interest rates on loans due to the perceived risk associated with the industry. The required documentation and pricing (which started at 12% and is now 28%) are constraints. This could be cushioned through Partnerships, with investors from overseas who have the intention to invest in the Agricultural sector, but lack the knowledge of this sector and characters of the players. Linkages of these big players with the banks could help spread out the interest rate risk across the financial institutions. Farms and institutions could be financed organically at a low scale with the discipline to plough back. Value chain financing should be adopted, also linking off-takers (that have the requisite finance to fund) with growers. This should be done at a discounted rate

**BINDING CONSTRAINTS**  
**ACCESS TO FINANCE**

## **BINDING CONSTRAINTS TO ACCESS TO FINANCE**

### **EQUITY FINANCING**

Having the know-how to implement but lack the funds to start. Leveraging people with the resources to collaborate with those with the know-how, and ultimately giving them stakes/shares in the business. Also inculcating Debt financing which is available for the diaspora.

**"A proper record keeping system helps a grantee or farmer demonstrate to an investor/grant firm their operations and ability to manage a grant"**

### **ORGANISATION, PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

In the area of collateral. It is one of the last things that Banks considered, however, the need for proper organisation/structure as a business is very key in attracting funds, as it projects your track record and how a firm is properly organised to attract funding. That's where BDS comes into play to keep farmers' up to speed in-terms of being knowledgeable on the processes and systems needed for funding. A proper record keeping system helps a Grantee or farmer demonstrate to an investor/grant firm their operations, i.e., this is what I make over time, or I have taken loans before and this is my repayment history. The need for an organisation- developing a proper structure as a business is key to attracting funds.





## LACK OF COLLATERAL

Many agribusiness entrepreneurs do not have assets that can be used as collateral for loans, which makes it difficult for them to secure financing from Banks and other financial institutions using collateral instead of risk/creditworthiness based lending. The financial sector needs to utilize both methods of lending and not just one.

## BINDING CONSTRAINTS ACCESS TO FINANCE

## SEASONALITY OF THE BUSINESS

Since agribusinesses are often seasonal, with harvests occurring once or twice a year, it can be challenging to generate consistent revenue throughout the year to repay traditional monthly loan installments. This can make it difficult to repay loans on time and to qualify for loans.

## LIMITED FINANCIAL LITERACY

Many agribusiness entrepreneurs have limited financial literacy, which can make it challenging for them to understand complex financial products and manage their finances effectively

## LIMITED ACCESS TO FINANCE

In some rural areas, there may be limited financial institutions or access to digital financial services, which can make it difficult for agribusiness entrepreneurs to access finance

## INTEGRITY CHECK IN TERMS OF FINANCE

To get organised in terms of corporate structure to access finance from banks and microfinance institutions. Bureaucracy, corruption, and timeliness (taking into consideration the amount of time you received loans could cause an increase in the rates which can lead to underfinancing--as a result of local prices going up.

**BINDING**  
**CONSTRAINTS**  
**ACCESS TO**  
**FINANCE**

## GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Government has to be deliberate in supporting Agric businesses, through agricultural credit facilities administered to support growers. E-voucher programs were launched to enhance growers to access fertilizers and machines to facilitate production, and also work on the FX rates (reduce pressure associated with FX rates). Government should control the rate of currency depreciation which in turn help control the interest rates. They should further provide the enabling environment such as introducing the strategy applied during corona or bringing in some sort of guarantee scheme that will spread out the risk associated with disbursing money to Agri businesses. Key decision makers and agricultural strategists can share risks across the banks for the smallholder farmers. Partnerships, BDS, Product utilization, equity investments, and supplier credits through partnership should be considered.



**Increase financial literacy:** Agribusiness entrepreneurs can improve their financial literacy by attending BDS workshops such as the one offered by AIDESL, webinars, and other training programs such as SCADeP. This can help them understand financial products and manage their finances more effectively. Additionally, a well-developed business plan and business canvas can help agribusiness entrepreneurs secure financing by demonstrating the viability of the enterprise to lenders and investors.

**Leverage alternative financing options:** Agribusiness entrepreneurs can explore non-traditional forms of financing options, such as crowdfunding, social lending, or peer-to-peer lending platforms. These options don't require collateral and can provide access to potentially large pools of capital, and at the same time offer lower interest rates and more flexible repayment terms.

**Build a good credit history:** SMEs can establish a credit history with financial institutions by applying for smaller loans and paying them back on time. Building a good credit history can translate to higher creditworthiness and larger loan opportunities.

**Establishment of a Guarantee Scheme:** When established, Such a scheme can also serve as due diligence to guarantee lenders the assurance they need to extend loans to SMEs. It will also increase provision of loans due to reduction of risks or sharing of risks.

**Strengthen Financial Institutions:** Enhance the capacity and reach of financial institutions, such as banks, microfinance institutions, and cooperatives, to provide tailored financial services to agribusinesses. This can be done by offering training programs, technical assistance, and incentives to expand their agricultural lending portfolios.

**Explore government schemes:** The governments can offer support to agribusiness entrepreneurs through grants as in the case of SCADeP, loans (e.g. Munafa Fund to Small Businesses), and other financial programs. Entrepreneurs should research the available options and apply for any support that is relevant to their business.

**Establishment of interactive invoice responses for communities banks:** Even though banks are in the business to make money, they must realize that the agricultural sector offers a big opportunity to make that profit, but they have to approach this sector differently, in an innovative way and also ensure that they are knowledgeable on farms/SMEs activities.

**Build strong partnerships:** Agribusiness entrepreneurs can build strong partnerships with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders in the industry. This can help them access financing and other resources, as well as build a strong network of supporters for their business

**Financial Inclusion Initiatives:** Encourage agribusinesses to adopt digital financial services and mobile banking solutions. This can help overcome geographical barriers and provide access to financial services in remote areas. Government support and partnerships with telecom companies and fintech firms can facilitate the developing and adoption of these technologies.

**Risk Mitigation Mechanisms:** Establish risk-sharing mechanisms, such as guarantee funds or insurance schemes, to reduce the perceived risks associated with agricultural lending. These mechanisms can provide collateral substitutes and credit guarantees, making it more attractive for financial institutions to lend to agribusinesses.

**Capacity Building and Technical Assistance:** Offer capacity-building programs and technical assistance to agribusinesses to improve financial literacy, financial management skills, and business planning. This can enhance their creditworthiness and ability to access finance. Collaborations with NGOs, development agencies, and agricultural extension services can support these efforts.

**Strengthening Market Linkages:** Improve market linkages for agribusinesses by facilitating connections between farmers, processors, and buyers. This can include supporting the development of agricultural value chains, promoting contract farming arrangements, and providing market information and market intelligence services.

**Policy and Regulatory Reforms:** Review and revise existing policies and regulations to create an enabling environment for agribusiness finance. This can involve streamlining loan application processes, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and establishing supportive legal frameworks. Additionally, fiscal incentives, such as tax breaks or subsidies, can be introduced to incentive financial institutions to lend to the agricultural sector.

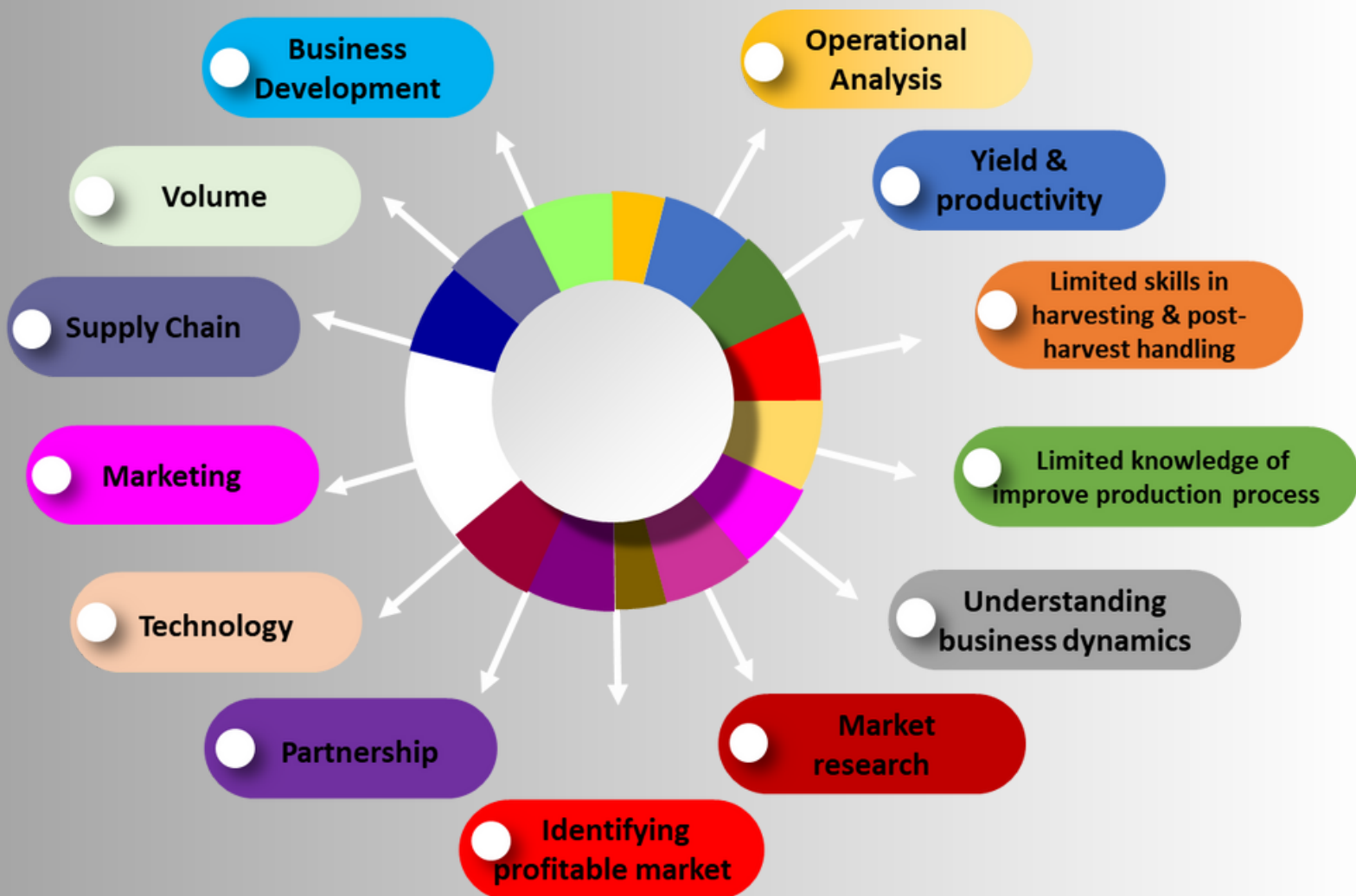
**Public-Private Partnerships:** Foster collaboration between the government, private sector, and development partners to leverage resources, expertise, and networks. Public-private partnerships can support the development of innovative financing models, create investment funds for the agricultural sector, and coordinate efforts to address the financial needs of agribusinesses.

**Access to Market Information:** Improve access to accurate and timely market information for agribusinesses. This can be done through the establishment of market information systems, the use of mobile applications, and the dissemination of market reports. Access to market information enables agribusinesses to make informed decisions, improve their competitiveness, and attract investment.

**Addressing limited access to finance by agribusinesses in Sierra Leone requires a comprehensive approach that tackles financial, technical, and market-related challenges. Collaboration between various stakeholders and sustained commitment from the government, financial institutions, and development partners are crucial to implementing these strategies effectively.**

# ACCESS TO MARKETS

Identifying binding constraints & unlocking opportunities for greater market access



Better access to both local and international markets allow producers to sell more, with better pricing and quality standards. Critical revelations were made as to some of the binding constraints limiting farmers' expansion to diverse markets, and comprehensive solutions were suggested.

## OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

**BINDING  
CONSTRAINTS**

**ACCESS TO  
MARKETS**

Operations analysis deals with the operational component of businesses in Sierra Leone and also helps farmers market their products/services locally as well as internationally. This is lacking in most farm businesses. Let's take Rice for instance. The introduction of a destoning system is lacking, which is the key reason for the presence of stone residue in most local rice production, forcing many to go in for imported Chinese rice. Furthermore, Rice is sold based on its brokerage rates. It is realised that there is no degradation in terms of sizes, 25% is slated at a different price compared to 15% or 20%, and the milling system is conditioned to plain or normal rice irrespective of the brokerage rates, which pose challenges in successfully accessing the market. To further support change, the Local Content Agency works with the standards bureau to establish national standards to make local rice production palatable for consumption. The Local Content Agency are also working on a manual to help assist SMEs market their products and take advantage of local content. The benefit that can be gained through these joint initiatives is to help certify products through standard bureaus, making rice produced in Sierra Leone matchable to the standards of imported rice into the country and be marketable and competitive with other markets outside Sierra Leone. Also, provisions are made to certify products under the ECOWAS standards, which automatically gives a farmer/SME approval to trade their products/ services in 16 countries in West Africa, which serves as a prodigy to discourage the questions of been ask for verification or proof of origin, and also an arena for a reduced tariff..Agribusiness firms need to be aware of these and have their operations aligned to these benefits.

## BINDING CONSTRAINTS

### ACCESS TO MARKETS

## YIELD & PRODUCTIVITY/ LOW & UNIMPROVED SEEDS

Sierra Leone aims to compete with international markets, especially with technology and agricultural enhancement that improve yields. Nonetheless, farmers are still struggling with access to the market, because there are limited changes in yields and productivity, and the use of unimproved cultivars/seeds that are low yielding and discourages scale up and increased productivity.

## LIMITED SKILLS IN HARVESTING AND POST HARVEST HANDLING

Farmers are getting low yields and are losing out on commercializing their farms.. When they commence harvesting, the knowledge of how to link their product to the market or potential buyers is limited. Because of the limited skills to handle post-harvest processes and improve the shelf life of the produce, deterioration and spoilage kick in--all leading to possible loss of funds. To optimize yield potential and meet productivity for scaling up, there is a need for continuous/consistent skill training before venturing to the field or planting season commences. Questions like what to do, and where to go to get optimum yield should be inculcated into their strategies. If they plant L19 for example the minimum production should be 3 tonnes, and if farmers are still lingering around 1.2 tonnes they are losing out.



## LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF IMPROVED PRODUCTION PROCESS

Farmers have little or no knowledge on improved production practices. The knowledge of when to plant, how to plant, where to plant, what input should be used and the quantity required to have 3,4,5 tones for improve cassava, rice, potatoes and other commodities is lacking.



## UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS DYNAMICS

Understanding Agricultural Production is key, and lot of farmers lack the understanding of what it takes to bring up the farm to an optimal yield as in the technology of the variety of seeds needed for planting. There is an improve version of cassava developed by SLARI that can give 45 tonnes per hectare. The technology comes with specific package, and if not followed you will not get optimum yield. lot of farmers don't even know the variety of seeds they are planting (knowledge gap), the fertilizer requirement, the inputs requirement, and the spacing requirement. With the introduction of technology into agriculture, you should be able to know how much you get per grain, and the farmers don't all know that. They should understand the ins and outs of improved practices and spacing, and how to harvest and minimise post-harvest losses.

**BINDING CONSTRAINTS**

**ACCESS TO MARKETS**



## MARKET RESEARCH

Markets are dynamic and evolving in nature, thus understanding these dynamics, participation, specialized markets, and challenges involved is key. Furthermore, checking your segments, location (where), timing (when), and knowing the products and commodities is significant. Instead of selling your product in a congested market (full of stiff competition) that will force you to lower your price standards, embark on proper market research, and find a market with fewer competitors. This will capacitate you to be able to sell at a standard price. It is also critical for firms to understand market dynamics channels E.g., harvesting rice during the main season brings about low yields, you harvest in December/January and get an appropriate storing system that could store the rice for 4/5 months to increase earnings.

Having knowledge of the volume of transactions that transpires in the eight strategic markets of Freetown, Guard Street, Kissy, Congo Market, and Dove Cut, to name but a few is key. Until research is carried out, issues cannot be addressed nationally. Insight to market information where products are available in the country; how can a farmer in one part of the country know that another farmer in another part of the country needs a particular product? Institutions need to support and strengthen the market information systems--especially ones that if shared can create significant change.



## IDENTIFYING PROFITABLE MARKETS

Most farmers are still in poverty because they lack the know-how to identify/access profitable markets, which is also important for scalability and income enhancement.

**Is it that they are not getting the right yields to suffice the demand for these markets or should they look for another market?**

**BINDING**  
**CONSTRAINTS**

**ACCESS TO**  
**MARKETS**

# PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are also key in accessing markets. Banks should not only be providers of finance, they should also help in providing the avenue to help facilitate the construction of bridges and feeder roads that could create easy access to markets. They must move beyond the traditional partnerships and look for growth opportunities that create low risk funding opportunities with high returns to the banks and the sector.

BINDING  
CONSTRAINTS

ACCESS TO  
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# TECHNOLOGY

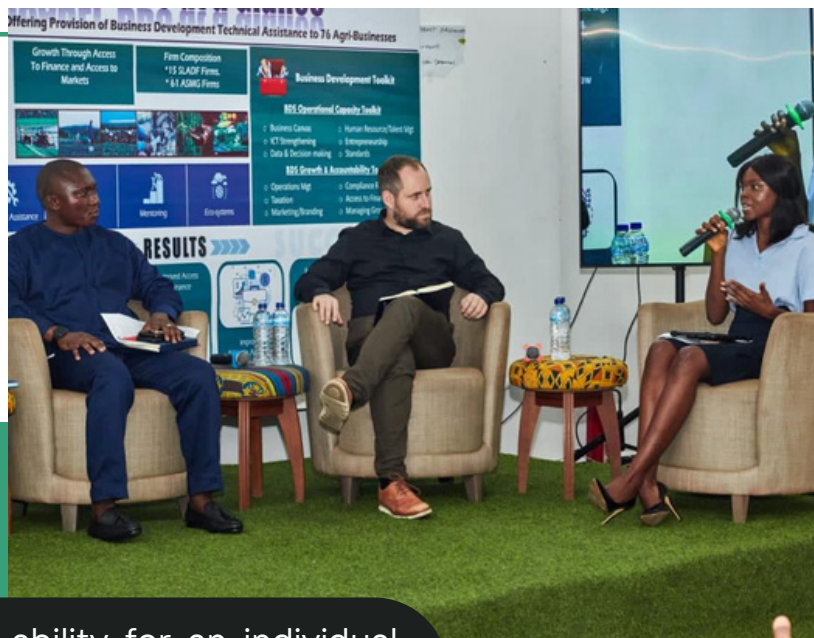
Technology should be introduced in agriculture. Recommendations for local content support and tools to be digitalised, and Market information to be made digital. Digital technology help improves the information gap. This calls out for the need to find innovative ways of doing production with less labour and be agriculture smart, SLARI and similar innovation companies and institutions can help with improving these systems. Technology can also support real time transactions by giving an advantage to firms whose operational and financial information can be retrieved on demand.

# MARKETING QUALITY GOODS

Marketing is also key. When communicating with the end user or consumer, there is a misconception that when it's from Sierra Leone it's not up to standard. How could we change this trajectory? This could be alienated through the following: through, support and feedback on products, which help improve the Sierra Leonean brand, thereby promoting local content. More importantly note that consumers has standards and farmers need to pay attention to this need.

## BINDING CONSTRAINTS

### ACCESS TO MARKETS



# SUPPLY CHAIN

Access to markets is basically the ability for an individual farmer, company, government, or firm to be able to sell their product/services within and without the borders of the Nation. One key thing to look out for is the quantitative historical data and how you source your goods and the logistics to supply the goods. Local content and other firms look out for sustainability, probing your past records, how many institutions have you supplied before, what's your budget capacity, would you be able to sustainably supply them for the next 6 months to 1 year time. Your present and future capacity to supply before going into contracts.

# VOLUME

Volume is a problem especially with a small population and sub optimal exports to neighboring countries; however, farmers need to organise themselves to show their scalability and credibility in enhancing the firm's support E.g., organised groups that could have access to resources, and information, understanding the dynamics of importing and exporting. It has its benefit and there are processes to it. When there is high demand for a product let's say rice or eggs farmers need to network with other farmers keeping standards and quality in check to meet the demand. They can also perform group purchasing. Key to addressing this challenge is networking, organisation and coordination to get the appropriate commodities to be able to sell to meet the demands of the market.

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**BDS/CAPACITY BUILDING** is kept as the last binding constraint because it is the most important of all--and it was recommended as the first, immediate, mid and last requirement in dealing with binding constraints hindering access to finance and markets. Business Development is the process of identifying new opportunities, building relationships, and creating long-term value for an organization. It involves researching and analyzing markets and industries, identifying potential customers or clients, and developing strategies to reach them. This includes mindset capacity building, maintaining standard in product development, Human resource development, which helps managed their books very well, collaborations/partnership and implementation (implementing knowledge acquired). Good out-grower schemes, sorting, and seed grading, trade associations, value addition, and environmental impacts should also be considered.



**BINDING CONSTRAINTS**

**ACCESS TO MARKETS**

# RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS TO THE BINDING CONSTRAINTS

**Build strong business relationships:** Developing strong relationships with buyers, suppliers, and other stakeholders can be a critical success factor for agribusiness entrepreneurs. Building trust and credibility with customers can help entrepreneurs secure long-term contracts and generate repeat business.

**Knowledge and skills development:** SMEs need to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills for the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural products. This can be achieved through training programs, mentorship, and partnerships with tech companies to adopt technology.

**Leverage technology:** Agribusiness entrepreneurs can leverage technology to reach new markets and increase their sales. Technology tools such as e-commerce platforms, online marketplaces, and social media can help entrepreneurs access new customers and expand their market reach

**Seek out government and development partners' support:** Governments can provide various forms of support to agribusiness entrepreneurs to help them access new markets. This support may include funding, technical assistance, and access to market information. Governments and development partners can also facilitate market access through policy support, trade facilitation, and developing regional and international trade agreements.

**Participate in trade shows and exhibitions:** Trade shows and exhibitions provide a platform for agribusiness entrepreneurs to showcase their products to potential buyers and investors. These events can help entrepreneurs network with other industry players and gain exposure to new markets.

**Logistics and transportation:** Agribusiness SMEs struggle to transport their products from the farm to the market due to poor infrastructure. Governments and development partners can invest in infrastructure development, such as roads and improved storage facilities, to enable SMEs to transport their products to the market. For example, SCADeP, as part of its objectives is connecting communities through construction of bridges, feeder roads and spot improvement. Additionally, the private sector can also play a key role in the facilitation of trade to boost access to market. For e.g., Ghana trucks high demands for bitter kola.

**Collaborate with other entrepreneurs:** Collaboration with other agribusiness entrepreneurs can help to overcome market access challenges. Entrepreneurs can share their resources, expertise, and networks to create economies of scale that can help them compete more effectively in the market.

**Quality standards:** Most markets require producers to meet certain product quality standards before they can enter the market. SMEs can overcome these challenges by improving their production and processing techniques to meet the quality standards. Quality products that meet the specific needs of their customers are highly valued in the market and can help agribusiness entrepreneurs stand out from their competitors.

# RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS TO THE BINDING CONSTRAINTS

## **Strengthen Market Information Systems:**

- Develop and enhance market information systems that provide timely and accurate data on prices, demand, supply, and market trends for agricultural products.
- Disseminate market information to agribusinesses through various channels, including mobile technology, farmer cooperatives, and extension services.

## **Enhance Infrastructure and Logistics:**

- Invest in rural infrastructure such as roads, storage facilities, and transportation networks to facilitate the movement of agricultural products from production areas to markets.
- Improve post-harvest handling and processing facilities to reduce losses and improve product quality.
- Promote the development of agro-industrial parks or clusters that provide shared infrastructure and services to agribusinesses.

## **Support Market Linkages and Value Chain Development:**

- Facilitate linkages between agribusinesses, processors, traders, retailers, and exporters through partnerships and business networks.
- Promote contract farming arrangements and long-term agreements between agribusinesses and buyers to ensure market access and stable prices.
- Encourage the formation of farmer cooperatives and producer organizations to strengthen bargaining power and access to markets.

## **Improve Product Quality and Standards:**

- Enhance the quality of agricultural products through training and capacity building programs on good agricultural practices, post-harvest handling, and processing techniques.
- Promote adherence to national and international quality standards to meet the requirements of domestic and export markets.
- Facilitate certification and quality assurance processes to ensure compliance with food safety and traceability standards.

## **Expand Market Opportunities:**

- Identify and develop niche markets for specific agricultural products, such as organic, fair trade, or specialty products.
- Explore regional and international markets through trade fairs, exhibitions, and participation in trade missions.
- Encourage agribusinesses to diversify their product offerings and explore value-added opportunities to capture higher-value markets.

## **Strengthen Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:**

- Advocate for supportive policies and regulations that foster a conducive business environment for agribusinesses, including simplified trade procedures, reduced trade barriers, and improved market access conditions.
- Engage in policy dialogues and public-private partnerships to address market access challenges and promote reforms that benefit agribusinesses.

# RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS TO THE BINDING CONSTRAINTS

## **Promote Market-oriented Skills and**

### **Entrepreneurship:**

- Provide training and capacity building programs to equip agribusiness owners and managers with market-oriented skills, including marketing, business development, negotiation, and branding.
- Foster an entrepreneurial mindset among farmers and agribusinesses to identify and seize market opportunities.

## **Engage with Development Partners and Export**

### **Promotion Agencies:**

- Collaborate with development partners, export promotion agencies, and international organizations to access market information, trade facilitation support, and export promotion programs.
- Seek technical assistance and funding to build the capacity of agribusinesses in market analysis, branding, packaging, and market intelligence.

## **Infrastructure Development:**

- Invest in rural infrastructure, including roads, storage facilities, and processing units, to improve connectivity between agricultural production areas and markets.
- Establish or upgrade marketplaces, wholesale markets, and collection centers to facilitate efficient trade and reduce post-harvest losses.

## **Value Chain Development:**

- Foster collaboration and partnerships between agribusinesses, farmers, processors, and traders to establish well-functioning value chains.
- Promote the formation of farmers' cooperatives or associations to aggregate produce, negotiate better prices, and access larger markets.

## **Market Information Systems:**

- Develop and enhance market information systems that provide timely and accurate information on prices, demand trends, market requirements, and quality standards.
- Disseminate market information through various channels, including mobile applications, SMS alerts, radio broadcasts, and farmer helplines.

## **Entrepreneurial Capacity Building:**

- Provide training and capacity-building programs to agribusiness owners and farmers on market analysis, business planning, branding, packaging, and quality standards.
- Enhance marketing skills to enable firms to identify market opportunities, develop competitive products, and effectively engage with buyers.

## **Market Linkages and Networking:**

- Facilitate linkages between agribusinesses and potential buyers, such as retailers, wholesalers, exporters, hotels, restaurants, and food processors.
- Organize trade fairs, exhibitions, and business matchmaking events to create networking opportunities and facilitate business partnerships.

## **Access to Finance:**

- Improve access to finance for agribusinesses to support their market expansion efforts, such as accessing working capital, investing in marketing activities, and adopting new technologies.
- Encourage financial institutions to offer tailored financial products, such as agricultural value chain financing or warehouse receipt financing, to address specific market-related needs.

# RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS TO THE BINDING CONSTRAINTS

## **Quality Assurance and Standards Compliance:**

- Strengthen the capacity of agribusinesses to meet quality and safety standards demanded by local and international markets.
- Promote adherence to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), food safety regulations, and quality certifications, such as organic or fair trade certifications.

## **Policy and Regulatory Reforms:**

- Advocate for policy and regulatory reforms that promote market access for agribusinesses, such as reducing trade barriers, streamlining export procedures, and providing incentives for market-oriented agricultural production.

## **Market Diversification:**

- Explore and develop new domestic and export markets for Sierra Leonean agricultural products.
- Identify niche markets or value-added products with higher profit margins to enhance the competitiveness of agribusinesses.

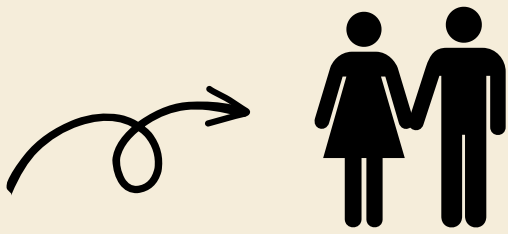
## **Support from Development Partners:**

- Seek support from development partners, international organizations, and donor agencies to provide technical assistance, market intelligence, and funding for market access initiatives.

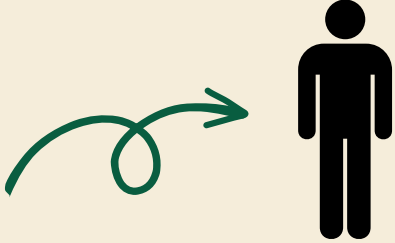
By implementing these strategies and interventions, Sierra Leone can help agribusinesses overcome the challenges of limited access to markets, promote inclusive growth in the agriculture sector, and contribute to the overall economic development of the country.



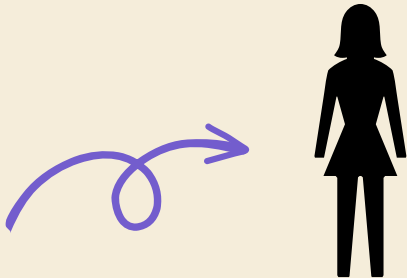
# ANALYTICS



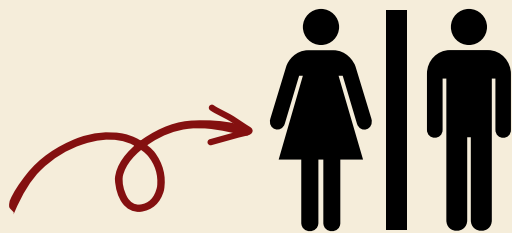
Total number of  
in person  
participants- 43



Male participants-  
29



Female  
participants- 14



Total number of  
online  
participants- 80+



TOTAL NUMBER OF  
PARTICIPANTS (IN-PERSON  
& ONLINE)

**160+**

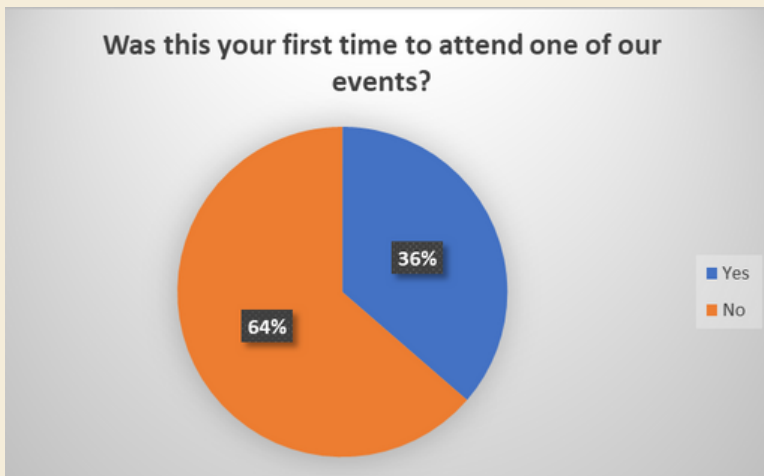
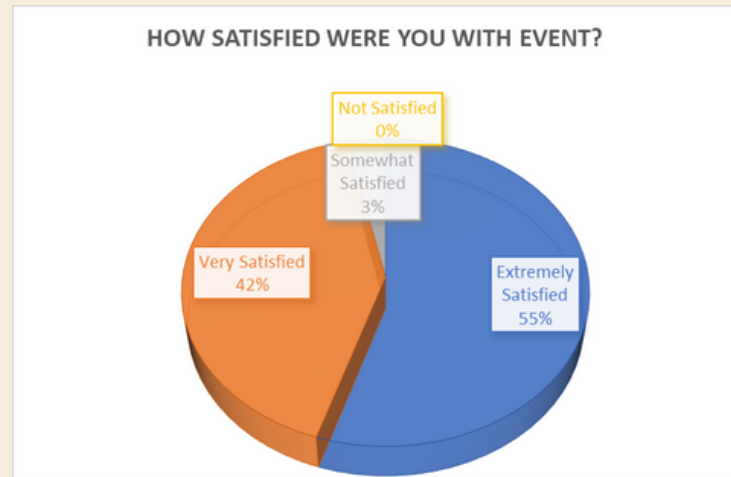
# ANALYTICS

## Overall Satisfaction with Webinar Organization

**42% were satisfied with the outcome of the event.**

**55% were extremely satisfied with the outcome of the event.**

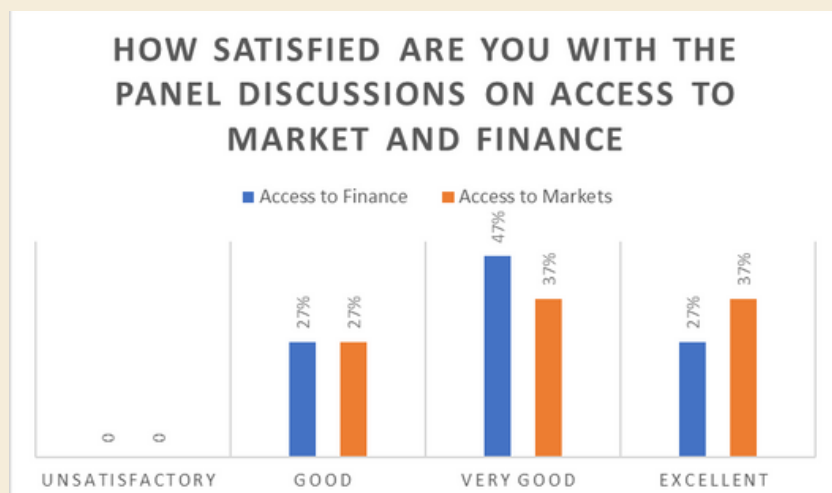
**3% were some what satisfied with the event.**



**36% stated that this was the first time attending AIDE-SL events**

**64% astated that this was not their first time attending AIDE-SL events**

**Webinar Themes: How satisfied are you with the panel discussions on the Webinar Themes below?**



# ANALYTICS



**91% said the length of the event was perfect**

**9% said it was too long**



**100% acknowledge they will join AIDE-SL and SCADeP when next a similar event is held.**

# WEBINAR FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

The following responses were noted by participants:

- The event was impactful in the agricultural sector and the knowledge acquired is a step towards improving local content in Sierra Leone”.
- panel discussions on better access to finance, and marketing and the binding constraints surrounding was insightful”.
- The webinar helped increased participant's knowledge on the topics discussed.
- The webinar was interacting with professionals in different fields of studies. lots of knowledge on how to compete nationally and internationally were shared.



- Organize similar yearly webinar programs for farmers.
- To inculcate Poultry farmers and the constraints encountered in accessing farms' vaccines.
- More time should be allocated to the question and answer session.
- For continued training on the out-grower model and agro-processor.
- More SMEs should be included as panelists as they may share practical constraints experienced.
- For AIDE-SL to keep up the good work as it has proven to be one of the best organizations in Sierra Leone”.

# KEY PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATION (ONLINE AND IN- PERSON)

## BDS AT GLANCE

- Government should create a Platform to advertise farmers' products/services for a period of 1 year.
- In carrying out training, the first thing to consider is the cost of production, know your cost of production, and the gaps and resources needed to be filled before requesting loans.
- Make available Interactive invoice responses for communities
- Banks - Even though banks are in the business to make money, they must realize that the agricultural sector offers a big opportunity to make that profit, but they have to approach this sector differently, in an innovative way and also ensure that they are knowledgeable on farms/SMEs activities.
- Government should help facilitate the reduction of FX rates and depreciation rates
- They (government) should further make accessibility to the market easier
- Inclusion of insurance firms in Agri-businesses should be considered to help spread out the risk.
- Improving business policies that could improve farmers' productivity, taking note of the fact that these policies coupled with the inflation and interest rates are hurting farmers' productivity.
- Facilitation of trade to boost access to finance





**In conclusion,** the webinar on Boosting Productivity & Sustainability in Agriculture & Agribusinesses through Business Development Services has shed light on two critical challenges faced by farmers in Sierra Leone: access to finance and access to markets. Without access to finance, farmers struggle to invest in their farms and improve their yields. Similarly, without access to markets, farmers are unable to sell their produce at fair prices, limiting their ability to generate income. However, the webinar has also highlighted potential solutions to these challenges, as highlighted above. By addressing these challenges, farmers in Sierra Leone have the opportunity to improve their livelihoods and contribute to the country's economic development.

# ANNEX

## PANELIST & MODERATOR FLYERS

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO MARKETS:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking opportunities for greater market access

*panelist*

Business and Development Specialist  
A professionally qualified Business Development Specialist with over 10 years of Program Management expertise in post-conflict, social, agricultural and economic development and vast experience in managing programs, monitoring, and evaluation with regular monitoring of field activities and leading teams.



**EDWARD J. BENTA**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**Themes:**  
ACCESS TO FINANCE:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking investments  
ACCESS TO MARKETS:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking opportunities for greater market access

*panelist*

Executive Director, AIDE-SL & Liberia  
With over a decade of experience as a top/tenor management professional, Mohamed is highly skilled and experienced in Non Profit and Development, Social and Private Sector Development, Microfinance, Mobile Money, Digital Financial Services, Lease Finance and Banking.



*panelist*

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO FINANCE:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking investments

*panelist*

Archibald is a financial inclusion expert and impact investment professional with more than 16 years' experience in the financial services sector. He is Investment Manager at Cordaid Investment Management (CIM) BV, an impact-first investor (fully owned subsidiary of Stichting Cordaid) with over 25 years legacy in financing MFIs in underserved / fragile economies in Africa, Latin America and Asia (including SME's in West Africa and specifically Sierra Leone).



**ARCHIBALD DAVID SHODEKE**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO FINANCE:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking investments

*panelist*

SME and Financial Inclusion  
Extensive experience in developing and managing multiple products for SMEs and Consumer Loan clients to facilitate access to finance.  
20 years as front-line microfinance practitioner



**SAMAI RAHMAN BUREH**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO FINANCE:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking investments

*panelist*

Baimba is the Chief Risk Officer at Sierra Leone Commercial Bank Limited with demonstrated thought leadership in Treasury Management, Credit Underwriting, Origination, and Risk Management.



**BAIMBA AUGUSTINE DOCKARIE**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO MARKETS:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking opportunities for greater market access

*panelist*

Research Scientist (Plant Breeder/Biotechnologist)/Ag Project Development & Management Officer.  
Agricultural Consultant and Deputy Lead for AIDE Enterprise Academy (AEA) Agricultural Department



**DR. ISATA KAMANDA**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO MARKETS:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking opportunities for greater market access

*panelist*

Executive Director  
Mountain Lion Agriculture SL. Ltd processed and produces parboiled, dry, destone, mill and packaged local rice.



**DONALD D.T. SMART**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO MARKETS:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking opportunities for greater market access

*panelist*

An agribusines professional with over 15 years of combined work experience in sustainable agriculture value chains, rural development, forest and natural resource management intersecting worlds of national and international Non-Governmental Organizations and the private sector in Ghana and Sierra Leone



**ANDREW KOJO MORRISON**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**PANEL TOPIC:**  
ACCESS TO FINANCE:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking investments

*panelist*

A Social Entrepreneur, businessman and philanthropist. He is the founder of Empower Africa, a values-driven company and Global business Network whose mission is to accelerate empowerment by promoting investment, trade, and job creation in Africa.



**EZI RAPAPORT**

**Webinar**  
BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY & SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
9th June, 2023 9:00am

**Themes:**  
ACCESS TO FINANCE:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking investments  
ACCESS TO MARKETS:  
Identifying binding constraints & unlocking opportunities for greater market access

*Moderator*

Emily Fanday is the founder and Business Development Lead of ConNet SL Limited. A business that utilizes FinTech to provide solutions for Sierra Leoneans



**EMILY FANDAY**

# WEBINAR REGISTRATION BANNER



AFRICA INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT & EQUITY

SUSTAINABLE & EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

## Webinar & BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESSES THROUGH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**9th June, 2023** ✦ **9:00am**

### Themes:

**ACCESS TO FINANCE:**  
Identifying binding constraints  
& unlocking investments

**ACCESS TO MARKETS:**  
Identifying binding constraints  
& unlocking opportunities for  
greater market access

SCADeP BDS Webinar/Seminar  
Registration



Register here





# SCADeP BDS at a Glance

A National Project Offering Provision of Business Development Technical Assistance to 76 Agri-Businesses



Growth Through Access To Finance and access to Markets

Firm Composition  
15 SLADF Firms.  
61 ASMG Firms



**Business Development Toolkit**

**BDS Operational Capacity Toolkit**

- o Business Canvas
- o ICT Strengthening
- o Data & Decision making
- o Human Resource/Talent Mgt
- o Entrepreneurship
- o Standards

**BDS Growth & Accountability Toolkit**

- o Operations Mgt
- o Taxation
- o Marketing/Branding
- o Compliance Rule of Law
- o Access to Finance
- o Managing Growth

## RESULTS

Improved Inventory Management

Improved Tax & Regulatory Compliance

Improved Networks

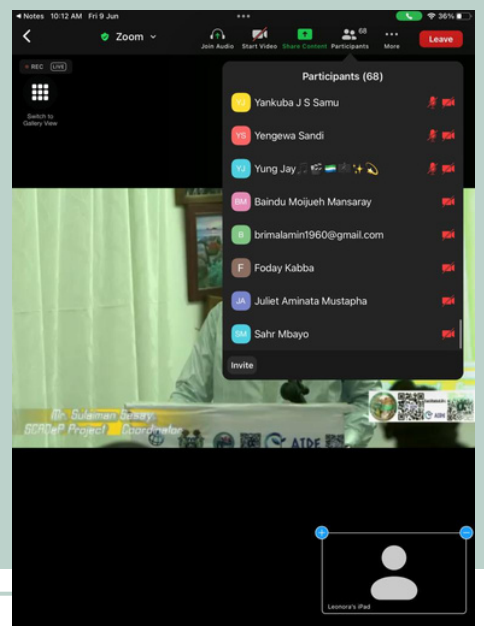
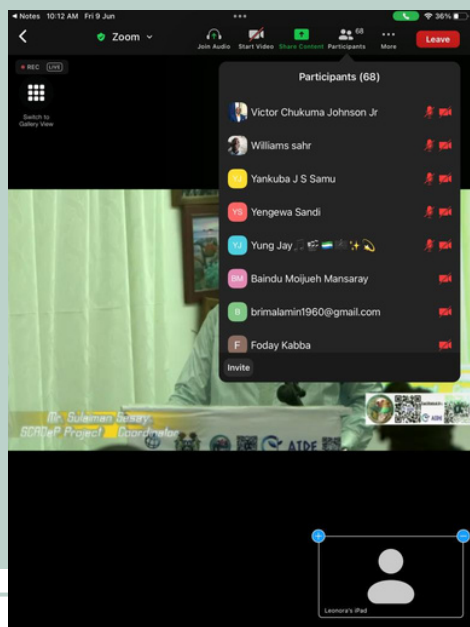
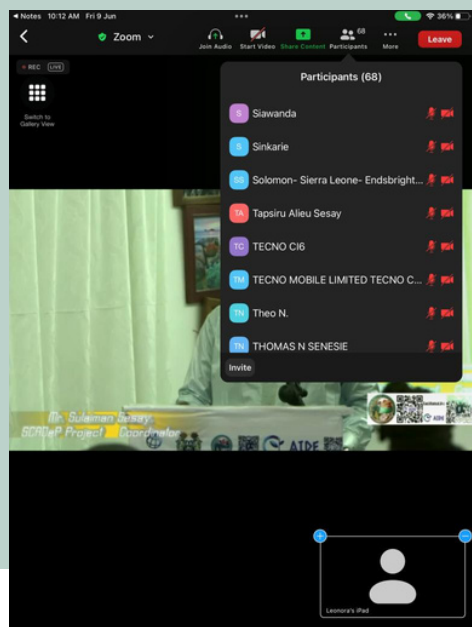
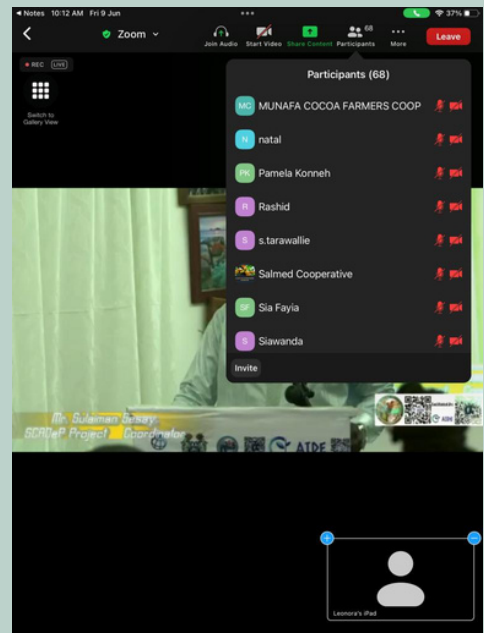
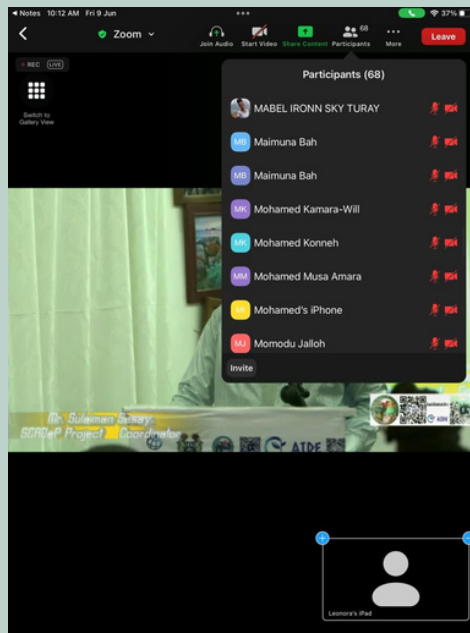
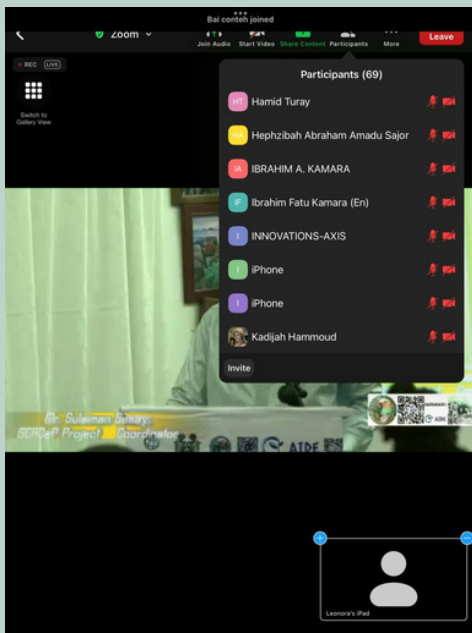
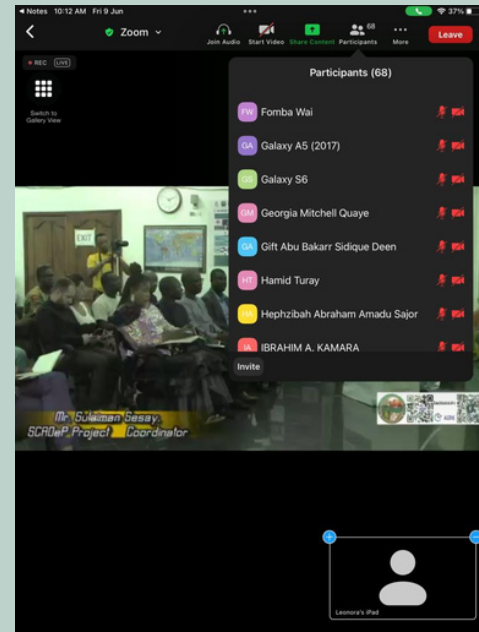
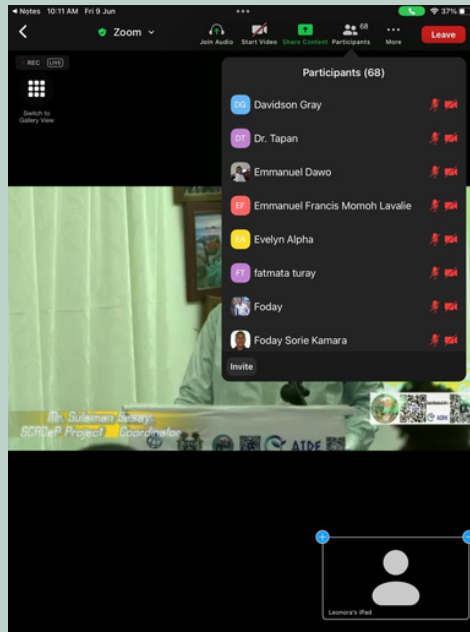
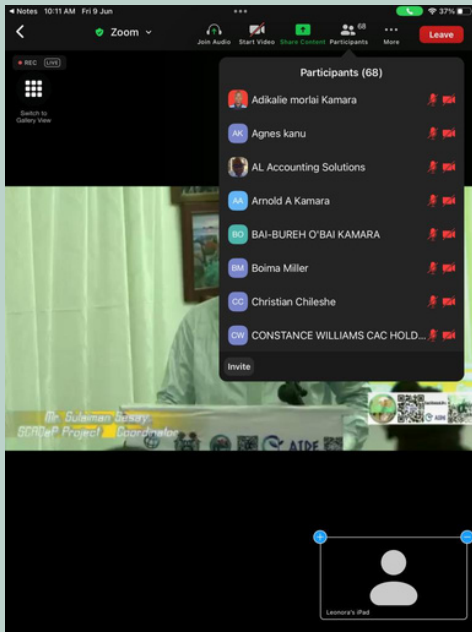
Improved Access to Finance

Improved Business Acumen & Success

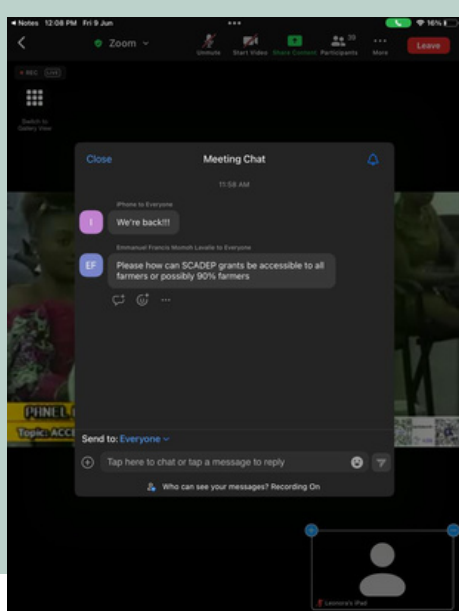
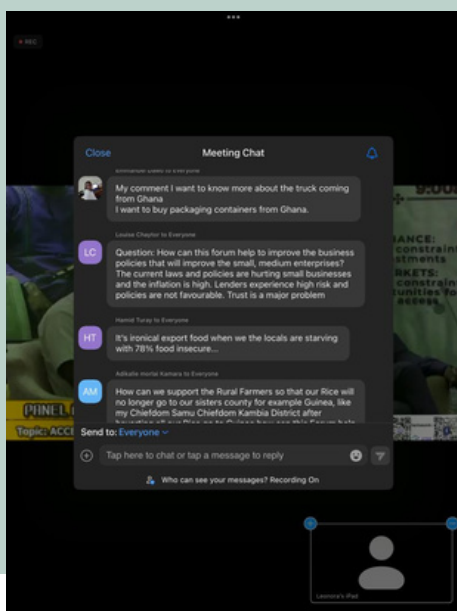
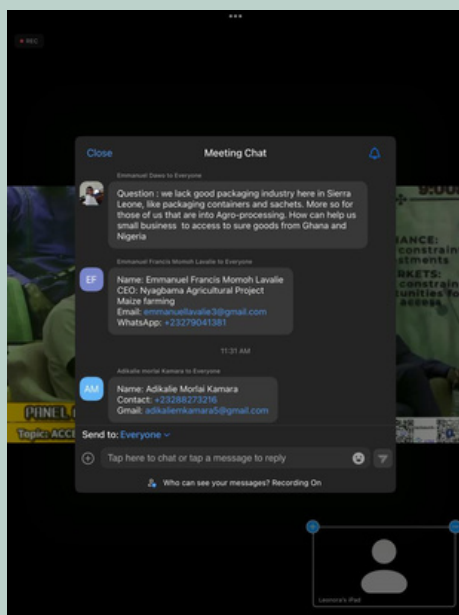
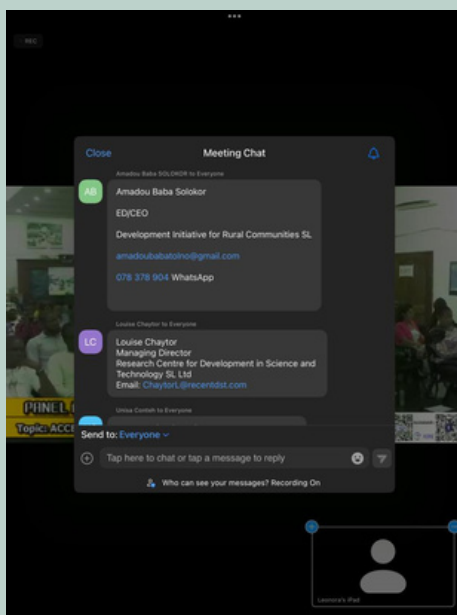
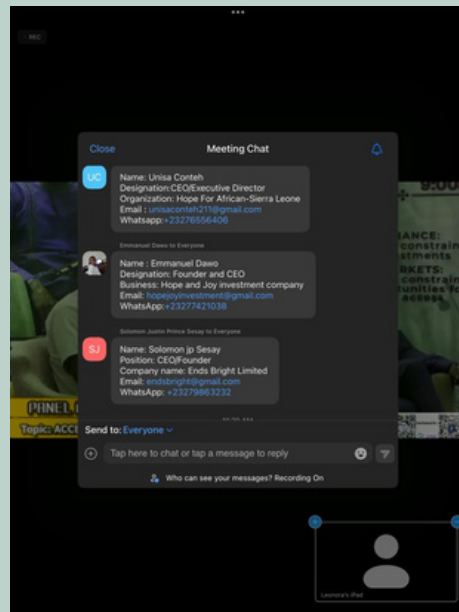
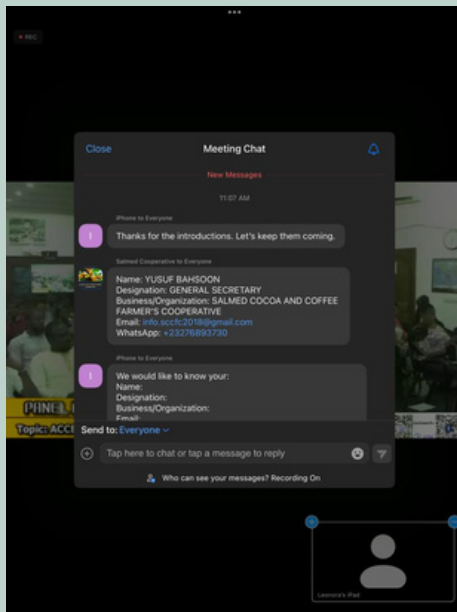
Improved Data For Decision Making

Improved Utilisation of ICT

# SCREEN SHOTS OF ONLINE PARTICIPANTS



# SCREEN SHOTS OF ONLINE PARTICIPANTS CHATS



## AGENDA

ACTIVITY	START TIME	DURATION
Breakfast and Registration	9:00 am	60 min
Introduction/ opening speech	10:00 am	5 min
SCADeP opening statement	10:05 am	5 min
SCADeP Technical and BDS rationale	10:10 am	5 min
AIDE-SL Role on BDS and video	10:15 am	20 min
PANEL DISCUSSION Discussion on the challenges facing the agricultural sector Topic 1: ACCESS TO FINANCE	10:35 am	1hour
Q&A session	11:35 am	30 min
PANEL DISCUSSION Discussion on the challenges facing the agricultural sector: Topic 2: ACCESS TO MARKETS	12:05 pm	1 hour
Q&A session	01:05 pm	30 min
Closing statement	01:35 pm	10min
Lunch	01:45 pm	45min
Networking	2:30 pm	1hr

# LIST OF SMES WHO ATTENDED THE WEBINAR

---

NAME	GENDER	BUSINESS NAME	SECTOR	EXPERTISE
Noellal Barbar	Female	Nianda	Agricultural sector	Agriculture
Mrs Cecilia Kaikai	Female	Cecilia kaikai!-Ellie-makavoray organization limited CKEMO LIMITED	Agricultural sector	Palm oil
IsatabFakai Sesay	Female	Takleneh women farmers association	Agricultural sector	Rice
Memunatu Q Bangura	Female	Am-Queen Poultry	Agricultural sector	Poultry
Aminata Abdulai	Female	Sinava Women's Agricultural Development Association	Agricultural sector	Poultry
Victor Kundu Sengu	Male	Napila Tongia Agricultural project	Agriculture sector	Oil palm production
Aiah Emmanuel Gborie	Male	Yormattah youth's farmers association	Agricultural sector	Poultry
Augustine Samuel	Male	Kafala women development project	Agricultural sector	Animal husbandry
Aisha A.B Kamara	Female	Gbendembu Agricultural Project	Sector	Oil Palm processing



**WORLD BANK GROUP**



**AFRICA INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT & EQUITY**

**SUSTAINABLE & EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Prepared For :**  
**SCADeP**

**Prepared By :**  
**AIDE-SL**