**EXERCISE 7B. MARKET SURVEY**

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| *OBJECTIVE*  **After this exercise the participants will be able to:**   * Gather information about demand and markets for their products. | |
| *EQUIPMENT NEEDED*   * Survey questionnaire * Large sheets of paper, colored marker pens, notepads, pens or pencils * Transport to and from market * Refreshments | *EXPECTED OUTPUTS*   * Information about market demand for priority products. |
| *TIME*  Varies depending on the number of products and markets, and distance to the market.  **Single product**   * *Day 1***.** Select a product and plan questions. * *Day 2***.** Morning: visit market; afternoon: analyze information; evening: discussion.   **Several products, several markets**   * *Day 1***.** Decide which markets to visit, prepare a questionnaire or checklist. * *Day 2.*Visit markets to gather information. * *Days 3–5***.** Analyze information. * *Days 6–7.*Present findings to group. | *PREPARATION*   1. **Organize a team.** Ask the group to choose a small number of farmers who know about the product to visit the market and collect information. At least one should be able to write, and one should have good communication skills as they will report their findings back to the group. 2. **Decide what types of information to collect.** This will depend on the nature of the product and the market. Check the results of the market mapping exercise (Exercise 7A) for ideas. 3. **Decide where and when to visit.** List the market sites to visit (village market, assembly market, town wholesale market, retail market, processing factory, shop), and the best dates and times to visit them. Check the results of the market mapping exercise for ideas. 4. **Plan the number of interviews in each market.** Plan to interview several traders or buyers individually so you can compare their answers. Pairs of team members can conduct interviews, with one person asking questions and the other taking notes. 5. **Prepare a questionnaire or checklist,** based on the types of information you want to collect. See Table 19 for an example. You can plan to ask all these questions, or just the most essential items (starred in the table). Adapt the questionnaire by adding or removing questions to suit your own needs. 6. **Prepare an introduction** explaining why you are doing the survey. 7. **Rehearse.** Discuss the interview procedure with the team, and rehearse it with different farmers playing the roles of interviewer and interviewee. 8. **Arrange interviews.** If necessary, contact the people you want to interview beforehand to arrange a suitable time. 9. **Arrange transport.** If the market is a long way away, you may also need to arrange for the team to stay overnight. |

*A market survey is an important way for farmers to gather information about the markets for their products. A simple market survey focuses on a single product in one market. A more complex survey may cover several products in several different markets.*

*SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:*

1. **Visit the market** with the team of farmers. Make contact with any market officials, to tell them what you are planning to do in the market. If the place is unfamiliar, walk through it to find out where your products are traded and who the team might interview.
2. **Conduct interviews**. Approach the person you want to interview, introduce yourselves, and ex-plain why you want to talk to him or her. Follow the interview plan you have worked out, and make sure you collect the information you need. Make sure to explore interesting topics that you had not anticipated.
3. At the end of the interview, thank the interviewee for their time and information. Make sure your notes are in order before going to interview the next person.
4. Afterwards, collate the information you have collected so you can analyze it and present it (see Exercise 7c).

*QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION:*

* What do we need to know about the product and how it is marketed? What do we know already? What information do we need to check?
* How many people should we interview? What types of people – traders, managers, transporters, processors, consumers…?
* What is the best way to approach people we want to interview? Should we take notes during the interview, or immediately afterwards?
* What kind of information might be sensitive or difficult to get ahold of? Can we find out this information from any other sources?

*NOTES*

Some of the questions (e.g., about prices) may be sensitive, and interviewees may be reluctant to answer or give accurate responses. During an interview, start off with non-sensitive questions, then move on to the more difficult questions later. Ask about prices towards the end of your interview.

Be sure that the person you are interviewing has time (if not, arrange to come back at a better time). Do not take more than 15–20 minutes with each person. Stop asking questions when the person is dealing with customers.

Always thank the person you have interviewed for their time at the end of the interview.

Adapt the interview guide or questionnaire (Table 19) as necessary. The survey team can ask all of these questions for each product, or only the most important questions (marked with \*).

TABLE 19. EXAMPLE OF A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A MARKET SURVEY

|  |  |  |
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| **THE INTERVIEW** | | |
| **Place, date** | **\*** |  |
| **Type of product (e.g., maize)** | **\*** |  |
| **Interviewer(s)** | **\*** |  |
| **PERSON INTERVIEWED** | | |
| **Name** | **\*** |  |
| **Type of activity in chain (e.g., trader)** | **\*** |  |
| **Position, name of company** | **\*** |  |
| **Phone number** | **\*** |  |
| **Address** | |  |
| **PURCHASES OF PRODUCT X** | | |
| **How much of product X do you buy in all each day? Each week? Each year?** | **\*** |  |
| **How often do you buy product X?** | **\*** |  |
| **Who do you buy from?** | **\*** |  |
| **What is your main source of product X?** | |  |
| **TERMS OF PURCHASE** | | |
| **What is the smallest amount of the product that you would buy? The largest amount?** | **\*** |  |
| **What varieties of the product do you need? How old or ripe? What size? What quality grade?** | **\*** |  |
| **How do you want sellers to package the product?** | **\*** |  |
| **What are your terms of payment? (e.g., full or partial payment on delivery, payment after a delay, provision of credit)** | **\*** |  |
| **Would you be interested in buying from a farmers’ group? What amounts? At what price?** | **\*** |  |

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| **PRICES** | |
| **What price do you pay? (per kilogram or sack) \*** |  |
| **How does the price change from season to season?** |  |
| **Do prices vary for different varieties, ripeness, size or class?** |  |
| **THE VALUE CHAIN** | |
| **What do you do with the product after you buy it? E.g., do you sell it, process, package it, etc?** |  |
| **What price do you sell at?** |  |
| **What are your main marketing costs?** |  |
| **Who do you sell it to?** |  |
| **What do they do with it?** |  |
| **Who are the end users?** |  |
| **THE MARKET FOR PRODUCT X** | |
| **Is demand for the product growing, stable, or declining? Are sales this year higher, the same, or lower than last year? Why the changes?** |  |
| **How many other traders are there like you in the market?** |  |
| **How much of product X is bought and sold at this market each day? In the peak season? In the low season?** |  |
| **Who is the largest trader in this market for product X?** |  |
| **OTHER PRODUCTS** | |
| **What products are in highest demand?** |  |
| **What products are very scarce?** |  |
| **What new products are being sold in this market?** |  |
| **What would you advise farmers to grow to earn more money?** |  |