



Hygiene integration in agriculture value chains: findings from case studies in Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda

Introduction

Agricultural value chains (AVCs) are susceptible to spreading diseases, including COVID-19. This is because the AVCs operations, settings, and practices require intensive human interaction and mobility. Equipping actors in agricultural chains to improve hygiene practices, is key to enabling communities and agriculture VCs to be more resilient to such health risks and sustain AVCs' performance. SNV Netherlands development organization has initiated a CORE Africa project that aims to contribute to enabling actors in AVCs to integrate environmental hygiene measures in AVCs in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and future related public health diseases, and also sustain VCs performance during pandemics. As a starting point, SNV undertook case studies in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to identify and document hygiene integration experiences in selected agricultural value chain (AVC) nodes. A total of 17, 12 and 8 agribusinesses undertaking crops and dairy value chain activities were assessed in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, respectively. The value chain nodes assessed in the Agribusinesses were inputs shops/production units, transportation & distribution hubs, processing centers and local retail markets for crops and dairy products. The data was collected using a hygiene risk assessment questionnaire, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations using a checklist. The assessments were done in period January to April 2021.

Findings

Hygiene high risk AVC nodes

AVC nodes that have the highest hygiene risks across the 3 countries are transport/distribution hubs and markets. In Kenya and Uganda, input/production units are also hygiene high risk nodes. The high-risk nodes have the lowest % compliance (Table 1). They are also the most crowded and in Uganda they have the highest biological hazards.

Table 1. % Compliance with covid 19 measures

	Rwanda	Kenya	Uganda
Input Shop/Production	84	30	30
Milk collection		51	36
Transportation/distribution	69	43	35
Processing centres	80	61	40
Local retail market	73	35	14

Compliance on hygiene behaviours (%)

Compliance is higher in Rwanda as compared to Kenya and Uganda (Table 2). In Rwanda, the lowest compliance is at 71% as compared to Kenya and Uganda where the compliance is as low as 15% and 16%, respectively on some covid 19 measures.

Table 2. Compliance on hygiene behaviours (%).

	Uganda		Rwanda	Kenya		Average
	Crops	Dairy	Crops	Crops	Dairy	
Proper wearing of masks	20	16	93	43	23	39
Proper social distancing	27	25	71	44	32	40
Hand washing with soap	48	64	84	10	15	44
Cleaning high touch surfaces	26	43	98	41	32	48
Proper solid waste mgt.			98	76	66	80
Average	30	37	89	43	34	

Amongst the covid 19 measures, compliance is least on: Proper wearing of masks, Proper social distancing, and hand washing with soap. The least complying group is the youth.

The reasons for low compliance are mostly similar across the 3 countries (Table 3).

Table 3. reasons for non- compliance

Reasons	Country
General fatigue. People want to revert to normal life	All
Scepticism, negative beliefs and strong social bonds in local communities	All
Poor sustenance of hygiene services	All
A don't care and being invulnerable attitude by the youth.	All
Nature of work in some nodes make it difficult to comply	All
Ineffective enforcement	Kenya and Uganda

Cost of hygiene integration in AVCs

The assessment done in Kenya shows that the cost of hygiene integration varies with the nodes (Table 4). The costs of hygiene integration and maintenance of hygiene services are higher in transport hubs and in markets. The transport hubs and markets are large public spaces that require larger investments.

Table 4. Cost of hygiene integration (Euro) in AVC nodes in Kenya.

	Cost of facilities for basic hygiene integration	Cost of facilities for comprehensive hygiene integration	O&M costs per month
Priscilla Potato production farm	629	12,635	70
Starlight firm Milk collection firm	1,307	4,063	167
Nairobi Wakulima market Transportation hub	43,138	1,066,782	449
Smart Logistics firm Processing firm	12,780	50,299	131
Ruiru local retail market	123,660	2,879,567	685

Hygiene integration success factors

Across the 3 countries key success factors for hygiene integration are:

1. Conducive policies and legislations on hygiene integration in AVCs and their enforcement. This factor is better illustrated in Rwanda, where hygiene is a legal requirement in all AVCs just like it is in the dairy sector, hygiene integration contracts are signed at all levels starting from the household level and Rwanda has set aside hygiene days where all people irrespective of rank participate in hygiene activities.
2. Strong leadership and prioritization of investments in sanitation and hygiene services. Again, this is illustrated better in Rwanda where government has prioritized hygiene awareness, provision of regular water supplies. Rwanda has also earmarked budgets for hygiene facilities and for operation and maintenance of hygiene services.
3. Professionalisation of installation and management of sanitation and hygiene services. This is illustrated in all the 3 countries whereby VC nodes charge user fees for toilets. They sub-contract sanitation and hygiene construction and management services to private sector.
4. Strong collaboration and partnerships amongst key stakeholders including govt, CSOs, development partners and the beneficiaries. This is illustrated in all the 3 countries where collaboration is leading to better results.
5. Effective monitoring and enforcements that involve both government, user groups and volunteers. This is again best illustrated in Rwanda where youth groups effectively monitor and enforce covid 19 measures and the government enforcement measures are strictly implemented.

Outstanding challenges with hygiene integration in AVCs

Most of the outstanding challenges are similar across the 3 countries.

1. Lack of/poor policies and legislations. This is the case in Kenya and Uganda where policies and legislation on hygiene integration in AVCs are not comprehensive.
2. Environmental hygiene is not integrated in the design and financing of AVC programs. This is the situation in the 3 countries and also globally. Most Agric projects focus on food hygiene and OHS hygiene. This leads to partial addressing of hygiene issues in AVCs.

3. Lack of incentives for actors to invest in hygiene integration facilities and services in AVCs. This applies to the 3 countries. Incentives that can drive AVC actors to invest in hygiene integration are still unclear.
4. Minimal compliance attributable to fatigue, scepticism, negative attitudes, and beliefs. This remains to be a challenge across the 3 countries especially in the rural areas.
5. A don't care and defiance attitude by the youth. This challenge applies to all the 3 countries. Unemployment amongst the youth contributes to these negative attitudes.
6. Sustaining functionality of hygiene services in pandemics that come in waves. All the 3 countries face this challenge. Most AVC nodes relax services when pandemics subside and are unable to quickly respond and provide the services when the pandemic peaks because most of the facilities will have been vandalised or broken down.
7. Ineffective monitoring and enforcements. This is a big problem in Kenya and Uganda where consequences of non-compliance are not severe and one can get away with non-compliance by giving a bribe.

Opportunities for enhancing hygiene integration

An analysis of the findings identifies the following opportunities across the 3 countries.

1. Lobby for proper policies and legislations for mainstreaming and integrating hygiene in AVC program designs and financing. Lobbying is required more in Kenya and Uganda.
2. Lobby scaling up public and private sector financing of hygiene integration in AVCs. This intervention opportunity is required in the 3 countries.
3. Support scaling up successful hygiene integration initiatives. Focus should be on innovative sensitization approaches, private sector management of hygiene services, provision of incentives to actors and implementation of strict enforcements that can be sustained.
4. Support/facilitate the development of training guides on hygiene integration in AVCs.
5. Strengthen multi-sectorial collaborations and learnings on hygiene integration, including formation of stakeholders' forums and participation of AVC nodes managers in the forums. The collaboration is still relatively weak in Kenya and Uganda
6. Strengthen monitoring and enforcements of hygiene integration in Kenya and Uganda where the measures that are in place are weak.

Conclusions

The findings from the 3 case studies show that hygiene risk, compliance to hygiene measures and costs for hygiene integration vary across the AVC nodes. Key success factors for hygiene integration encompass comprehensive policies and legislations, strong leadership, professionalising services, strong collaboration amongst actors and effective monitoring and enforcements. There are still many unresolved challenges towards hygiene integration in AVCs ranging from lack of policies, incentives, sustainability of services and ineffective enforcements. These challenges provide opportunities for working and innovating on to improve hygiene integration in AVCs. SNV CORE Africa project aims to support AVC projects to address some of these challenges and contribute to the resilience of the AVCs during the present and future pandemics.

IMPACT THAT MATTERS



About us

The COVID-19 Response and Resilience Initiative for Food Value Chains (CORE) ran from July 2020–December 2022. Initiated by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and led by SNV, it was set up by to strengthen responses to the COVID-19 pandemic across eight major SNV-implemented agriculture projects in Africa: BRIDGE, CRAFT, HortInvest, HortiLIFE, TIDE, MODHEM+, PADANE and STAMP+.

Based on field-level demand, CORE selected four themes that capture key structural challenges highlighted by the pandemic across agri-food systems: farmer inputs and services; consumer-oriented strategies; environmental hygiene integration; and digitalisation for agriculture (D4Ag). Each theme contributes to the structural resilience of food value chains and agri-food systems to shocks and stresses.

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Parkstraat 83
2514 JG The Hague
The Netherlands

Phone: + 31 70 3440 244
Email: info@snv.org
www.snv.org
twitter.com/SNVworld
facebook.com/SNVworld
linkedin.com/company/snv

