Rapid market assessment of sweetpotatoes in Tanzania: Positioning root entrepreneurs better in the value chain

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Overview of the VISTA-Tanzania project

• VISTA -Tz: a 3 year project (2014-17) funded by USAID
• To expand production and utilization of nutritious OFSP
• Contribute to:
  • improved dietary diversity,
  • food security and incomes
  • Emphasis on HH with children < 5 years

• Promote financially viable sweetpotato seed and root enterprises
• Strengthen evidence base for promoting OFSP
• Operational in 7 districts in Iringa, Mbeya & Morogoro regions as part of USAID FtF zone of influence
Objectives of the RMA

• Assess existing and projected supply and demand of OFSP

• Assess existing consumption trends

• Determine OFSP and other sweetpotato purchase factors

• Identify gender based barriers that could constrain market engagement

• Recommend strategies to strengthen commercial producers market engagement
Methodology

• Rapid assessment of a specific market to determine the commercial potential of a new or existing product or service (Bernet, 2005)

• Surveyed 14 markets (2 each in 7 districts)

• 2 tools for traders and consumers; a checklist for key informants

• 328 respondents interviewed:
RESULTS: SWEETPOTATO PRODUCTION

• Sweetpotato not priority cash crop; popular in Ramadan for ‘futr’

• The Sukuma produce large quantities, preserve and use in dry season

• In Iringa, SP is resilient in the face of weather changes

• A local variety ‘Deji’ mostly grown and popular in markets

• Commercialization efforts just commencing

• OFSP promotion in early stages, few farmers knew about it
SWEETPOTATO TRADE

• Markets varied in size and structure: small, medium and large

• Iringa market most structured with highest volumes (25-30 t weekly)

• Only traders allowed to sell sweetpotato to consumers - Barrier

• Other medium & small markets allowed farmers to sell to consumers

• Taxes and market levies - Barrier

• No formal agreements though some traders had regular suppliers
Sweetpotato sale by variety category

- **Region:** Iringa, Mbeya, Morogoro
- **Varieties:** OFSP, WFSP, YFSP, Mixed var

- **Traders dealing in SP type (%):**
  - Iringa: OFSP, WFSP, YFSP, Mixed var
  - Mbeya: OFSP, WFSP, YFSP, Mixed var
  - Morogoro: OFSP, WFSP, YFSP, Mixed var
### SWEETPOTATO PURCHASES (TRADERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Mean (kg)</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>t-value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Male traders</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female traders</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Male traders</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>0.0012</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female traders</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Promote off season production
- Support women sweetpotato traders
Point of purchase of sweetpotato by traders

![Graph showing point of purchase of sweetpotatoes by traders.](image)
MEANS OF TRANSPORTING SP TO MARKETS

[Graphs showing different means of transportation used by traders in Iringa, Mbeya, and Morogoro.]
GENDER AND UNITS OF SALE

The diagram illustrates the percentage of traders by gender for different units of sale. The x-axis represents the type of unit of sale, including 'Heap', '100 kg bag', '20l', '10l', and 'Other'. The y-axis represents the percentage of traders. The bars are color-coded, with blue for men and orange for women. The 'Heap' unit of sale has the highest percentage for both genders, with men slightly more than women. The '100 kg bag' unit has the lowest percentage for both genders.
FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE BY CONSUMERS

- Male:
  - Once a week: 40%
  - 2-3 times a week: 30%
  - fortnight: 10%
  - monthly: 5%
  - others: 0%

- Female:
  - Once a week: 5%
  - 2-3 times a week: 60%
  - fortnight: 10%
  - monthly: 10%
  - weekly: 5%
  - others: 0%
CONSUMERS WHO HAD EATEN OFSP BEFORE

![Bar charts showing the percentage of consumers who had eaten OFSP before, categorized by region and gender.](image)
# PERCEPTIONS OF PURCHASE ATTRIBUTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>TRADER PERCEPTION</th>
<th>IMPORTANT FACTOR</th>
<th>CONSUMER PERCEPTION</th>
<th>IMPORTANT FACTOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SKIN COLOR</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td>Red/pink color</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLESH COLOR</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>Yellow fleshed</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>Yellow fleshed</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKIN DAMAGE</td>
<td>**</td>
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<td>***</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROOT SIZE</td>
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<td>Large</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>Medium to large</td>
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<td>NUTRITIVE VALUE</td>
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<td>PRICE</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
<td>**</td>
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<td>TASTE</td>
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<td>Men: sweet</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>High dry matter</td>
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<td>Women: HDM</td>
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<td>SHELF LIFE</td>
<td>*</td>
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*** very important  ** important  * not important
Need to address to lack of information to enhance OFSP demand
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR ROOT ENTREPRENUERS

• Focus on markets with high demand but with low OFSP sale

• Segment market: target mostly wholesalers who buy from Songea (competitive advantage: shorter distance, large volumes)

• Develop production and marketing plans; targeting off season sales through phased planting

• Target women traders – for continuous/all year round sales

• Establish and build relations with traders, market masters, other VCA

• Promotion and advocacy on taste and nutritive value attributes of OFSP

• Sensitization of monetary and non monetary barriers to trade
Acknowledgements