

BASE LINE STUDY

The Zambia Honey Council ZHC is currently implementing a program plan to address honey producers and processors needs for the period 2011 to 2015. The overall goal is to contribute to a sustainable honey industry which contributes to improved income and livelihoods of honey value chain actors and national development. The program seeks to improve policies and legal frame work for the honey industry. The program will also improve market access and profitability for members and increase productivity and value addition by ZHC members.

Support for this program is being provided by the Swedish Cooperative Center (SSC), Humanist Institute for development Cooperation (HIVOS), and the Finnish Government. In order to enhance monitoring and evaluation of the effects and impact of activities carried out within the ZHC program plan, a baseline study was financed and conducted by SCC to establish benchmarks against which progress can be measured.

The baseline study was conducted in June 2011 and two district associations were selected namely; Kaoma Honey District Associations and Kapiri Mposhi Honey District Associations. In each district, the survey targeted 30 small scale honey producer members. Information was obtained through interviews, desk study, relevant literature and documents. Feedback was obtained on the number and type of services provided, which include but was not limited to information on membership, honey sales, policy lobbying activities, ZHC's capacity to self-finance its core activities, honey production and marketing activities.

This provided a platform for members to share current developments, experiences and problems faced in the honey industry. Associations which comprise of the Honey producers, traders and honey packers spoke of their challenges and achievements in developing localized, successful modern rearing methods to keep the Honey Revolution thriving.

The study indicated an increase in the number of association members and type of services received by them. Market access has improved, sales increased and greater profits obtained by smallholder farmers. Members highlighted some of the major challenges they face such as lack of protective bee keeping clothing, lack of modern bee keeping equipment, inadequate capital and their inability to produce in large quantities. Some Bee keepers were using the bulking centers for storage instead of using them for selling purposes. Bee keepers face numerous challenges with the animals in the local area such as the honey badger, chipmunks, caterpillars, snakes and wasps that either eat the honey or destroy the hives.

Members called for support from government in bee keeping as well as having functional Honey district offices in all districts. He also implored for increased networking from bee keepers, traders, processors, exporters and other market intermediaries.