

## **EVALUATION REPORT ON CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN ZAMBIA HONEY COUNCIL OPERATING AREAS**

The Zambia Honey Council has continued to live up to its goals of developing capacities to contribute to the growth of the Honey sector so that livelihoods of the rural communities can be improved. This can be assessed in the various ongoing projects and activities that the ZHC has undertaken last year with its various stakeholders, traders, processors, suppliers and other service providers.

One particular project was the Capacity Enhancement and Service Delivery project that was implemented by Zambia Honey Council with the support of Finnish Fund for Local Cooperation from December 2009 to December 2010. The overall goal of the project was to help contribute to Zambia's economic development and reduce poverty in rural communities.

The project focused on establishing and strengthening District Honey Associations and Honey Area Associations through training in relevant areas which enhanced quality and quantity of honey harvested and getting more women to participate in the honey sector. The project also included activities with the objective of improving access to markets through bulking of honey products and the use of Short Message System (SMS) Market Information System.

It is in this respect that the Embassy of Finland engaged AMG Global Consultants Limited to evaluate how ZHC implemented through the one year project and to find out how effective programme strategies have been, including management arrangements, institutional structures and systems. It was also an effort to know the results of these programmes and what kind of changes it has brought to people's lives.

Evaluation included the review of various documents, such as project proposals, audit reports, financial documents determining inputs and outputs of resources used. Focused Group Discussions were also used to ensure effective participation of members of the Honey Council to express their views on ongoing activities in the Honey sector. Individual interviews were also conducted with persons within the ZHC and others in the Honey Sector such as processors, retailers and support organizations.

There are many factors affecting Honey production such as reduction in workforce due to HIV/AIDS, caterpillars invasions and other environmental factors, poor road infrastructure, lack of affordable and durable packaging materials, lack of bee keeping equipment and protective clothing, lack of information about the honey market, and few opportunities for affordable loans.

In order to enhance its service delivery ZHC has organized beekeepers into viable groups in districts and area associations. Developing best field practices to improve field standards and quality, introduced bulking centers at honey area associations levels to enable traders easily access viable economic quantities at once and introduce quality assurance mark as a marketing tool to increase domestic consumption levels leading to consumers gaining confidence in local honey.

This evaluation has shown how beneficial trainings in beekeeping have been and improved the lives of people in the areas together with their families and communities. The knowledge gained during the

trainings is being put to good use as evidence shows in the increasing number of bulking centers that have been built by the bee keepers own resources.

This evaluation also indicates that 85% of people interviewed stated that they felt the support from ZHC contributed to helping their lives. Only 10% felt the support did not contribute to improving their lives mainly because they had just joined and have not been able to harvest honey; and 5% did not provide any answer to the questions. The money realized from the honey has helped the respondents as most of them have used the income to buy farm inputs like seed and fertilizer to improve farm yields, pay school fees for their children and generally increase their income.

The evaluation was able to depict an increase in the number of women that have joined as a result of ZHC intervention and women have been able to access modern bee hives. It also increased the market linkages between honey producers and buyers, and the number of people using the SMS market information system. It has seen the quality of honey improve greatly.

Overall the project has been able to contribute to the quality of honey which has been on the market. This is reflected in the increase in the amount of money realized in the sale of honey. The project was both effective and efficient as within one year it was able to demonstrate marginal increase in the income from honey by the producers. The participants in the project were able to improve their standards of living but there are still constraints in terms of ability of producers to sell their honey. The project was able to identify areas that had potential for honey production and this is demonstrated in the number of persons who joined the groups willingly and cooperated to work with area associations. The targeted participants were able to engage in the training that was conducted by ZHC and found the training very useful .

ZHC has seen the need to reinforce its extension and training approach taking into consideration education levels of the target group, and match the needs and experiences of beneficiaries, in particular when introducing a new technology or training inexperienced beekeepers. It has also seen the need to stimulate local production and trade of beekeeping equipment, to reduce costs and create additional jobs and empower all the actors in the value chain.