

Business Management & Marketing

In recent years, international development organizations and governments have demonstrated a renewed interest in smallholder farmers and the key role they can play in contributing to regional development and alleviating poverty and hunger. However, individual smallholder farmers in developing countries are often the first to fall prey to disruptions such as volatile global markets or extreme weather events. Collaborative development of smallholder enterprises, such as agricultural and women's cooperatives, are instrumental in addressing some of the challenges facing small producers in rural communities by helping them to benefit from the economies of scale. These cooperative enterprises also represent a powerful means of supporting marginalized groups, such as youth and women, and have proven to be highly resilient to economic and environmental shocks by adopting innovative approaches and tools.

The United Nations declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives in order to raise awareness of the important contributions of cooperatives to global socio-economic development. Cooperation between smallholder producers and large business is promising. Trade and commercial industry gains access to resources, while smallholders can depend on stable outlets as well as improved management and negotiating capacities. While there are many challenges to the successful market integration of smallholders, conditions for change are more amenable than ever before and some strategies for improving opportunities are presented below:

1. Develop “double bottom line” business initiatives that seek to provide social and economic benefits to smallholders, while generating a commercially viable revenue stream for public and private sector companies.
2. Engage national governments to improve regulations and policies that support both the public and private sector in establishing reliable and long-term supply relations with smallholder enterprises.
3. Develop markets that capitalize on the consumer interest in buying goods produced by smallholder farmers or women's cooperatives.

The IALC supports projects that promote growth in income and employment and emphasize environmentally sustainable techniques. In lesser-developed nations and in vulnerable arid regions, where livelihoods and security depend strongly on nature, improving well-being and social equality through economic growth is a priority.

See the reverse side for detailed examples of IALC Business Management & Marketing Projects

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1. Bedouin Ethnoecology, Range Science and Sustainable Pastoralism (2011).

University of Arizona, Badia Research & Development Centre (Jordan), University of Jordan

Timothy Finan (Principal Investigator)

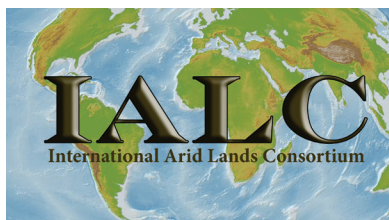
The Jordanian Bedouin have largely replaced dromedaries with trucks as their primary means of transport and have abandoned dromedaries in favor of sheep as livestock. A return to mixed species pastoralism would likely be more ecologically and economically sustainable. This project endeavors to document and assess indigenous knowledge in order to facilitate the reintroduction of dromedaries as a livestock species and for transport. Resulting mixed species operations are likely to a) enhance rangeland condition and productivity in Jordan's Badia; b) be economically viable by integration with local and regional markets and demand for meat; c) be less vulnerable to disruption by externalities, in particular global oil shortages and ensuing fuel price prices.

2. Forest Systems for Wastewater Treatment and Economic Sustainability (2002).

New Mexico State University, Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua (Mexico), National Institute for Forestry – Mexico

John Mexal (Principal Investigator)

The U.S.-Mexican border region has experienced rapid population growth in the last 30 years, resulting in natural resource degradation and increasing threats to public health. This project, based in the small border community of Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico, has demonstrated the low-cost treatment of municipal sewage effluent through the use of a wastewater land application system integrated with the production of fast growing trees for fiber and energy. This project has also served as a catalyst for economic sustainability by exploring options for the growth and sale of pulpwood by area farmers on abandoned and marginal farmland.



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