

## COWPEA Fact Sheet

### Challenges of cowpea in Nigeria

Whereas Nigeria is the highest producer of cowpea worldwide - estimated to be over 2.3 million metric tons per annum - yields remain very low compared to world average. Most cowpea processing is done at the household level while industrial processing is only slowly beginning to emerge. The consumption remains traditional where every household goes through the tedious and time consuming process of having to soak, dehull, wash, and mill the beans manually at home.



Though a number of high yielding and more nutritious varieties of cowpea have been developed by research, the majority of farmers lack access to these and other necessary inputs. Farmers produce their traditional varieties based on the seeds at their disposal, without targeting specific markets. This reduces their competitiveness and hence ability to attract additional income. MARKETS is working to improve the productivity of cowpea through the introduction of improved practices, establishing linkages between the farmers and source of inputs, and establishing market linkages. Ultimately, the intervention will increase farm income, increase competitiveness and create more jobs.

### MARKETS and Cowpea

The objectives of MARKETS cowpea program include:

- Assist farmers with techniques to enhance the productivity of cowpea through improved access to production technology, input sources and markets.
- Introduction of high yielding varieties that are resistant to pests and diseases, and have high protein content and high flour yield to grain ratio.
- Establish cowpea market outlets at competitive prices.
- Assist farmers to meet identified market demand in terms of quality and quantity
- Improve processing of cowpea to various products that improve their ease of use, shelf-life and offer more variety to consumers.
- Establish sustainable and credible business relationships that are purely private sector driven.



### Achievements to date

During the 2006 growing season, MARKETS in collaboration with IITA/Gatsby project worked with farmers to improve their productivity. Due to this intervention productivity increase ranges between 11% - 150%. A total of over 3,000 tons of improved varieties of cowpea worth about N123 million have been produced during the 2006 cropping season in Kano and Kaduna states. To enhance value addition activities, three Kano-based investors established cowpea processing plants. In addition, MARKETS is working with three other processors in the Lagos/Ibadan axis to improve their services and link them with producers of improved varieties of cowpea.

MARKETS has reached an advanced stage in establishing sustainable demand-driven market relationship between processors and producers.

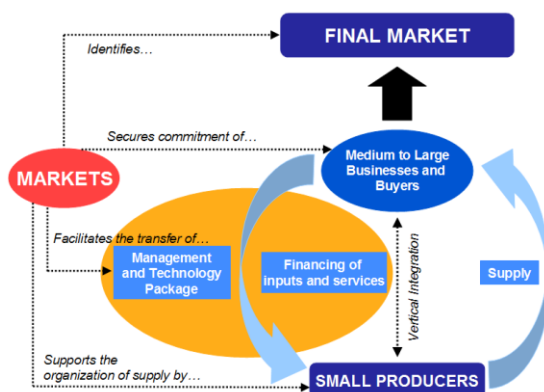
## Opportunities in the cowpea sub-sector

- Presence of large, barely tapped markets for processed cowpea
- Investors willing to move into cowpea processing and marketing.
- A number of improved varieties of cowpea released for production
- Growing credibility of MARKETS project among its clients as an honest broker.

### Expected Results (2007)

1. Cultivation of about 10,000 ha using improved technologies.
2. Facilitating the production of 5,000 MT of improved cowpea varieties.
3. Involvement of about 10,000 farmers.
4. Assistance to 2 additional entrepreneurs to invest in cowpea processing.
5. Improvement per hectare yield by 50%.
6. Continued assistance to 5 processing industries to perfect their operations and

## About MARKETS



Since 2005 MARKETS – Maximizing Agricultural Revenues and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites – has been expanding economic opportunities in the agricultural sector by increasing jobs, sales, and investment for farm and non-farm agricultural businesses. By promoting commercial agriculture, improved productivity, value-added processing and expanding final product markets, MARKETS is having an impact on improving rural household livelihoods and reducing poverty.

To facilitate the development of value chains focused on domestic demand, MARKETS is promoting commercial alliances among actors operating in different segments to improve overall competitiveness and profitability, the key elements in MARKETS sustainability strategy. Through this approach, MARKETS is creating real demand for production enhancing technologies all along the value chain. The resulting demand provides a viable commercial platform for the expansion of private sector-led service markets along the value chain, involving the supply of goods and services ranging from production inputs to product development services for final consumer markets. As they evolve to become increasingly more competitive and profitable, value chains become dependent on innovative new technologies, driving the development of service markets, including ICTs that can facilitate and secure financial transactions, such as e-banking.

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