

AIVDP Enhances Value Chain Approach for South West Agricultural Cooperatives through Inter Regional Exchange Visit

With constructions of two semi industrial cocoa processing underway and multiple workshops executed in building capacities of farmer leaders in upgrading and managing their cocoa value chains, an exchange visit to North Western Cooperative Association (NWCA), rounded off the Project's all- inclusive 5 year value chain strategy. The Project's value chain strategy aims at strengthening the current status of agricultural value chains in the South West whilst achieving several SDG (eradication of extreme poverty, promotion of sustainable economic growth full and productive employment and construction of resilient infrastructure and promotion of sustainable industrialization).

The two day the exchange visit, which took place on the 12th and 13th of October, aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills in crop value chain upgrading and performance of South West agricultural cooperatives as business entities, particularly in the domains of processing and commercialization of products. Participants included management staff of farmer cooperatives involved in cocoa production, processing and marketing, management staff of both AIVDP and the North West Farmers Association (NWCA).



Above: Family photo with NWCA and presentation by AIVDP's Gender Development Officer.

The period encompassed a series of briefings, presentations, open discussions and working session with various NWCA Management organs. One major highlight of the mission included a visit to the NWCA coffee processing units where partakers were able to observe successes and challenges in processing, quality assurance/control and branding. As such, the tour of the site and its installations, offered visitors a glance into alternative methods of how they could accomplish similar activities at their respective cooperatives.



Above: Participants visit to coffee processing unit at NWCA, Bamenda

The gathering provided multiple discussions surrounding key issues related to cooperative management governance and mobilization of funds (fund-raising) for undertaking cooperative projects. Equally, the collaborative opportunity has facilitated increased networking among crop value chain actors where they've acquired information on superior ways of upgrading their value chain through horizontal and vertical coordination of businesses, including marketing and market linkages.

Expectations remain optimistic as the exchange visit has provided cooperators a foundation in the necessary knowledge and skills to transform into stable, performing, accountable organizations capable of producing high quality cocoa products. Through these advancements, cooperatives would generate sufficient income to improve their livelihoods as well as those of other cocoa value chain actors.