

The Concept of a Market Access Company (MAC)

The 'Market Access Company' operates in the agricultural services sector. Within this sector it concentrates its efforts on the small farmer population and the local market intermediaries within a district. It convenes producers and market intermediaries for collaborative agreements along the market chain. It operates a sms accessible market intelligence database for local deal making. Small farmer organizations, wholesalers and processors buy the companies' services to achieve greater access to and efficiency in their marketing operations.

Mission and Values

The Market Access Company is a small commercial enterprise that operates in a rural area roughly the size of a district. The company is owned by the operators themselves. In its district the company offers its clients opportunities to:

- get better access to local, national and international markets;
- access locally relevant market information and intelligence;
- access suitable financial sources for R&D and for loans, and
- collaborate with all key players along the market chain from producer to consumer.

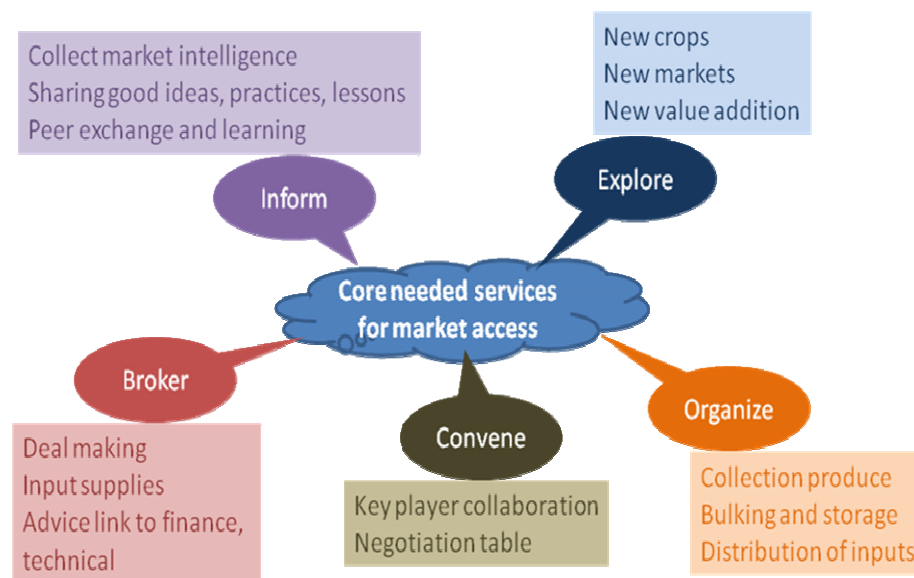
Small farmer organizations and market intermediaries buy the companies' services to achieve greater access to and efficiency in their marketing operations. These clients come to the company because of its unique mission and values. *The mission of the company is to explore and develop opportunities for rural people, especially small holders, to develop the potential they have for increasing their income through diversifying production, adding value to primary produce and marketing.*

The values that govern the activities of the company are:

- Focus on small holder farming families.
- Independence as a broker to key players in the marketing chain.
- Transparency for all players along the chain.
- Fair trade and price discovery between key players.
- Ecological soundness in commodity production and processing operations.

Services and Selling Points

The MAC offers brokering, organizing, negotiating and market intelligence services to producers and other market intermediaries (wholesalers and processors in particular) at the local level as shown in the diagram below. The MAC is a commercially viable entity that is careful to avoid being drawn into trading itself in order to build the required trust-relationship with all players and become an honest broker. The main asset of the company is its network of trustful relationships which allows it to explore and develop a wide range of commodities and services for its clients. Services are not restricted to farming and could include ICT access through rentals of mobile phones and laptops as well as solar panels to charge batteries for mobiles, lights and laptops. Its unique selling point is the combination of trust with skills to facilitate collaboration between key players along the marketing chain.



Company Operations and Incomes

To deliver these services effectively to the whole small farmer population in the district the company requires in addition to its chief executive/manager two professional staff and three information gatherers to seek out locally relevant market intelligence. Collectively the staff should be competent in the following areas:

- managing action learning processes;
- convening and negotiating collaborative agreements among key players;
- gathering locally relevant market information and intelligence and making it accessible;
- using modern ICTs for rapid time-sensitive market related communications; and
- preparing business plans for small enterprises.

All the staff operate 'from home' each having their own office equipment, ie. laptop and connectivity and transport ie. motorbike or pick up. Secretarial services are bought from existing local shops. Information and knowledge management systems are provided for in the franchise agreement as are banking and auditing systems. The company hires a meeting venue on an as need basis for convening key players. The company also rents trucks on an as need basis.

The company will generate income streams from its clients, small farmer organizations and market intermediaries, through payments for the following: 1) Service fees from key players in market chains for negotiating collaborative agreements along the chain; 2) Levy from farmer groups for successfully brokering sales to larger buyers; 3) Service fee from farmers and market intermediaries for access to locally relevant market information and intelligence; 4) Service fee from wholesalers / processors for organizing delivery of products to order; 5) Service fee from microfinance institutions and clients for preparing business plans, 6) fees for controlling quality for branding, trade-agreements, certifications, etc. from producers.