

## Introduction

The Uganda Oilseed Subsector Platform (OSSUP) represents a case of a multi-stakeholder platform established to address the strategic and policy dimensions of complex problems such as market coordination, technological upgrading, and financial services. This platform assembles a variety of actors, including business and processors associations, producers' organizations, non-governmental organizations, public agencies and researchers. A research paper was written to inform discussion among the members of the Ugandan Oilseed Subsector Platform (OSSUP). This paper importantly builds on the experiences in Latin America, particularly Bolivia, with mutual agreements and joint action in commodity sectors. This brief captures the key messages.

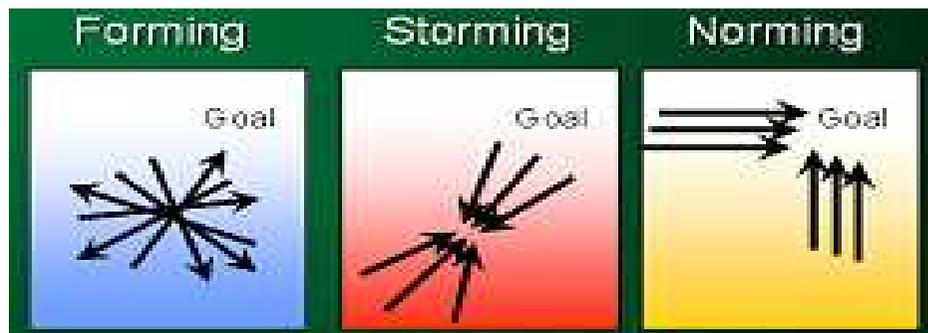
## Phases in platform development

Platforms have different phases in their development. In the start-up, participants need to discover the value added of the networking with others around the issue that defines the platform. For commodity platforms, these issues will be related with the specific sector. In the platform they need to develop, as a group, a functional role within the commodity system. However, too often platforms start norming their functioning with statutes and by-laws, without having experimented activities of clear benefits to the members of the platform. This can lead to institutionalizing 'would-be-functions' instead of 'as-they-are functions'. The challenge is to generate, in an early stage, activities that members perceive as being beneficial to them. These activities are not necessarily undertaken by the group as a collective, but may well be a spin-off activity between two or more members that would not have

occurred in the absence of the platform meetings.

## Platform facilitation

Platform facilitators need to maximize the possibilities for spin-off activities with sub-sets of members in the early stages of platform development, even when these may not be the most important activities on the long term for the group as a whole. This initial dynamism will induce the development of the function of the platform as a mechanism to generate varying coalitions of members looking for workable solutions to practical challenges. The exact form of institutionalization of the platform will follow this function and build on incremental problem-solving activities. The initial spin-off activities will induce a platform that primarily facilitates the activities taken up by the members and not establishing a bureau to implement activities for the members.



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# Functions and spin-offs of multi-stakeholder platforms in commodity sectors

# VC4PD

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April 2010

VC4PD Brief 1

## Spin-off effects

Spin-off effects can be diverse in nature, but all are defined by being relevant for only a sub-set of platform members. The 'competitiveness committees' in Bolivia show an effective way for building commitment of members in commodity platforms. The process catalyzes activities in small task groups to agree on activities to be realized in mutual responsibility by sub-sets of members. Platform members, with different interests and perspectives, joined on minor communalities while arguing on major divergences. Consequently, task group meetings provide a means to engage in informal face-to-face contacts on the sidelines of official platform meetings and improve interpersonal relations.



*Regional OSSUP platform and farmer group meetings in Lira*

This brief is a result of the action research program Value Chains for Pro-poor Development (VC4PD), implemented in collaboration with Agriterra and AgriProfocus. In Uganda, the programme supports the Uganda Oilseed Subsector Platform (OSSUP), which acts as a steering committee of the action research, in collaboration with Makerere University, the Netherlands Development Organisation SNV, and UOSPA (Uganda Oilseed Producers and Processors Association).