



## NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2013



## Markets for Meghri (M4M) Project



### MAIN EVENTS

On June 1, 2013 “Markets for Meghri” (M4M) project initiated the organization of a Business to Business (B2B) meeting for fruit producers of Meghri region and potential buyers from all over Armenia for the discussion of issues regarding potential cooperation between these parties. More than 60 people participated in this event. The B2B meeting took place in Agarak, Meghri region. Actors in Meghri have low access to market information. Public services are under-funded so that there is little or no published information on markets, prices, trends, key market players. Commercial market research services are rare and costly. Weak organization between farmers, high transaction costs for buyers and trust between farmers and buyers is poor. Many higher value markets remain unexplored or have yet had little impact on the sector in Meghri. This B2B meeting was organized in order to find the solutions for some of these issues. The event aimed to reach:

- common understanding among stakeholders about the current situation of fruit production in Meghri;
- common understanding of demanded fruits' volumes and quality requirement for delivered fresh and processed product;
- preliminary agreements on further cooperation.

During the event participants have formed three working groups, namely “dried fruits”, “fresh fruits” and “processors” which have discussed problems of the relevant value chains and presented the following recommendations:

- training and skills development for farmers to be facilitated by the project: improvement of management, organizational, marketing and general entrepreneurship skills; assistance in product diversification;
- reduction of transaction costs in raw material supply-direct buying from farmers by identification/collaboration, contract negotiation, etc.;
- improvement of market access to higher value products through better market information for processors and farmers and improving quality management skills.

At the end of the event the linkages were established between farmers and the processing and trading companies. These linkages should be further developed and flitted to more practical stage-contractual relationships. Thus the M4M team is planning to organize a follow up event in the near future.

On June 4 M4M team organized an initial meeting with the donor organizations, local organizations and Government representatives who are involved in the agriculture development process in the region, in order to launch the Agricultural Platform for Syunik marz. The main idea of the Platform is to discuss the issues related to the agricultural development in the region with all stakeholders during the bimonthly meetings in order to create a more efficient environment for farming development in the region. On July 2 the second platform meeting was held during which Marzpetaran's staff presented the achievements of past four years. The 2014-2018 development plan of the Syunik Marz was discussed at this event as well.