Farmer Associations

What exists now?

Local groups/associations exist

Farmers groups at regional level are needed → need to empower

Association exists at national level with high profile names/champions but no power to do things, no follow up.

So need to re-establish from the bottom up.

National association is a programme of government to show success of government, but farmers are not empowered.

At present, key roles are filled by political individuals or powerful people pursuing political interests.
WHAT EXISTS NOW?

Big associations (e.g. MPKI) headed by people with political interests.

In forestry, national association only represents big concessions - not farmers.

Existing association does not belong to farmers.

Market is manipulated by industry - farmers have to deal with brokers. Need to group to be empowered to negotiate.
WHAT MORE IS NEEDED?

• Need to decide at which level to develop association. Must not be centralised because regions differ.

• Sometimes farmers do not see the reason for association. It is critical that they should drive the process.

• Government hopes that one day there will be an association coming from farmers themselves.

• Association needed specifically for community forest entrepreneurs.

• Glue that sticks association together must be shared interest.

  → So critical to give/find time and space for farmer to talk this through on their own.

• Need to remember the power of one voice—grouping provincial association into national federation.
WHAT MORE IS NEEDED?

Farmers will be empowered when they are standing with one voice — they need to reform their own group — not one designed by other individuals.

Might a strong farmer association be a partner to government or be seen as a threat?

⇒ Not against them being strong if they are really pursuing good forest management

⇒ But big enterprise may see a threat and influence government in many such companies use bad competitive practices.

One of ways to avoid being seen as a threat is to lobby local authorities to show benefits/service delivery from association — partnering government in service delivery.
WHAT MORE IS NEEDED?

NEED LARGER GROUPS TO INCREASE VOLUME OF TIMBER

NEED TO BUILD FROM BOTTOM UP BASED ON OUR BUSINESSES — NOT ALLOWING NON-FARMERS TO BE MEMBERS

NEED TO BE CLEARER ON ROLES & WHO FILLS THEM — TO AVOID CAPTURE OF ROLES BY POLITICIANS

WOCAN RESULTS SHOW WOMEN NOT ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED IN EXISTING ASSOCIATIONS.

CRITICAL TO ASK YOUTH WHAT THEY NEED TO ATTRACT THEM TO BE INVOLVED.

FINANCING & BEST HANDLED BY TAKING PERCENTAGE FROM FEES FOR MARKETING PRODUCTS — NOT GRANT FROM GOVERNMENT.
WHAT MORE IS NEEDED?

EXPLORE TAX ADVANTAGES OF ASSOCIATION/CO-OPERATIVE BUSINESS