



Round Table Africa: stimulating sustainable business in Africa

<http://www.roundtableafrica.net>

Below you find a brief update of Round Table Africa (RTA), a research-based program stimulating expertise development in the area of sustainable business in Southern and Eastern Africa. In 2011 the program entered its 4th year. The program extended its projects more in the horticulture and tourism areas in Tanzania and Kenya while sustainable mining remains the number one program for Zambia. Recently we finalized a Code of Best Practice for Zambia's Mining Industry. Two association have recently been launched in Tanzania: the sustainable tourism association and the sustainable Tanzanian edible oil association.

At present Round Table Africa is in the process of signing a framework agreement with AC-BEST, a Tanzanian business environment strengthening program focusing on lobby, advocacy and research. Round Table Africa is asked to team-up with AC-Best on research and lobby in the field of micro-finance, oilseeds and cashew nuts.

Round Table Africa also proudly announces the third DBA intake (Doctorate of Business Administration) which started May 9 in Arusha with 24 students. Another 20 students are in their final stages of their DBA program (started in 2007/2008).

Round Table Africa continues to provide a link between research and business development. Over the last four years, we have provided and built expertise for DBA students, staff of ESAMI, various producer organizations and ministries. Increasingly, the multiple stakeholders in economic sectors and value chain are finding each other in the Round Table meetings organized by Round Table Africa. As a consequence, Round Table Africa is more and more seen as neutral facilitator in this multi-stakeholder partnership process.

All these activities will cumulate in a conference on sustainable business to be held in Arusha (Tanzania) on 15 and 16 December where the various public, private and NGO stakeholders – including financial – will exchange views, get the latest on sustainable business, and most important will be facilitated in creating more sustainable business in Africa.

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Sustainable Business Developments: short summary of activities

By Arda Riedijk, Researcher Agriculture

Waste recycling in the Serengeti Ecosystem

RTA and the Serengeti Ecosystem Community Conservation Forum (SECCF) successfully linked key stakeholders in order to clean up solid waste in the Serengeti Ecosystem and to make business from this waste. Currently, the Serengeti Ecosystem lacks systems for proper waste management. Hotels, SECCF, Serengeti District Council, and Serengeti National Park agree that something needs to be done about this situation. RTA first conducted an assessment of the current situation, then mobilized stakeholders and made a feasibility study for establishing a waste recycling facility in bordering town Mugumu. Local entrepreneurs from Mwanza and Mugumu are now preparing their business plans. The investments needed to establish the business will come from the entrepreneurs and hotels.



Sourcing high value fruits and vegetables from Serengeti farmers to hotels

Most hotels and lodges in and around Serengeti National Park currently procure their fresh produce in Arusha. Hence, the products travel 2-3 hot days on bumpy roads to supply the hotels and lodges. RTA has assessed that the demand for fruits, herbs and vegetables is sufficient for a viable local business situated in Serengeti District. The biggest challenge however is to increase capacity of local small holder farmers to supply the quality and quantity required. RTA linked several organizations who have committed to secure the supply side. They will cooperate with an entrepreneur from Mwanza who is able to establish a commercial distribution centre to serve hotels and lodges with fresh produce grown in the vicinity of Serengeti National Park.



Cooking with clean cook stoves: boosting a sector

Improved Cook Stoves are stoves that use less biomass energy than traditional stoves. Ninety percent of Tanzania's energy supply is met by firewood and charcoal, causing serious environmental and health effects. Despite many efforts by a wide variety of stakeholders, the market penetration of Improved Cook Stoves in Tanzania remains limited. RTA conducted a desk study, in partnership with SNV-Tanzania that defined the challenges the sector faces. These challenges relate to a lack of coordination, policy, quality control, marketing and awareness. The report will be used to encouraging discussion in a stakeholder workshop about coordinating, up-scaling and commercializing the sector.



Developing sustainability guidelines for the Tanzanian Horticultural Industry

Horticulture is the fastest growing agriculture sub-sector in Tanzania with an annual growth rate of 10%. Horticultural exports are even increasing by 30% per annum. Tanzania however exports not even 5% of the Kenyan export level. The Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA) represents the private sector and cooperates with RTA in developing guidelines for sustainable horticulture. At this moment, incorporating sustainability aspects is a voluntary decision for companies. RTA and TAHA intend to provide guidelines for TAHA members to be more aware of the impact of horticultural operations on the direct social, economical and physical environment.



Mapping the Northern Tanzanian sustainable tourism cluster

Tanzanian tourism is a cluster identified by the Tanzanian C luster Competitiveness Program but a focus on Northern Tanzania is absent. Many small tourism related projects are ongoing in Northern Tanzania but often without a link or notion of what is already there or has been done by others. By offering a cluster mapping methodology to decision makers and project developers, the various actors active in the cluster will be clearer and gaps and opportunities for development of the cluster will be highlighted. RTA started developing this cluster mapping methodology.



Researching community – business relations

By Laura Tarimo, Researcher Tourism

The research on community–business partnerships in the Mining, Tourism and Agriculture sector is currently focusing on six cases from the Tanzanian Horticulture Association. The destruction over a dispute of land in the recent months of three large farms by angry villagers shows that a sound model for business –community partnerships is of crucial importance. RTA is among others developing guidelines for responsible practice in liaison with the various ministries and associations, in particular the Tanzania’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. A web site is being developed offering all the information about these CSR guidelines to tourism operators in Tanzania.

The Tanzania Natural Resources Forum has provided an avenue for meeting and discussing with actors working on tourism and conservation issues. A workshop is organized for inhabitants and governors of a village on the border of Ngorongoro conservation area and Serengeti about implications of establishing a Wildlife Management Area – one of the partnership models studied by RTA. In this area, RTA is working together with The Nature Conservancy, an organization aiming to work with local communities to plan and implement conservation projects.

In autumn 2010, an RTA researcher attended a Master class on sustainable tourism in London, prepared by Totem Tourism: <http://www.totemtourism.blogspot.com/>. Participants were present from around the globe, and presentations covered topics such as responsible tourism initiatives and joint ventures that sustainably benefit local people in Kerala, India; and the practical application of sustainable practice by Scandic and Hilton Hotels.