



GEAVET DIGI-BASED COACHING MODULE FOR WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE AGRI-BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DELIVERABLE 4.2

GEAVET PROJECT N° IO1129027

“INCLUSIVE GREENING EXCELLENCE IN THE AFRICAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING ECOSYSTEM”



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PART 2: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SECTION 2.1: BUSINESS PLANNING AND MARKET ORIENTATION

Entrepreneurship in agribusiness is more than producing and selling farm products. It is about identifying opportunities, creating value, and building sustainable enterprises that respond to market needs. This section equips women with practical tools to transform ideas into viable, market-oriented businesses that can grow and thrive in competitive environments.

2.1.1: Creating a Business Plan: The essentials of starting an agri-business, from concept to execution

The foundation of agribusiness entrepreneurship starts with the business idea, which helps determine products or services to offer, outline necessary tasks, and assess potential challenges. Agribusiness revolves around marketing these products/services to customers. Women in agribusiness need to understand their product type, key features, and benefits to customers.

a. Essentials of starting an agriculture business.

1. Identify your niche - Determination of the focus or type of agribusiness to establish.
2. Determine the market demand. Conduct consumer research (understand consumers purchasing behaviours, needs, preferences and attitudes) to ensure the business idea is viable.
3. Analyse resources required: Evaluate resources such as financial (cash/capital), land, labour, information, and infrastructure/equipment or facilities requirements of the agribusiness.
4. Identify the risks involved in starting an agribusiness.
5. Understand regulations and compliance.
6. Develop a business plan - A roadmap for success in agribusiness.

b. Why create a business plan?

Before asking farmers to design and compile a formal business plan, it is helpful to provide them with tools to visualise their business plan and to define the different parts of a business plan. This will help them to understand how a business plan is built from basic parts and to understand how the components/parts of a business plan fit together. This visual method to help design a business plan is the model canvas.

c. Business model canvas (BMC)

This is a strategic planning tool used to illustrate and develop the business model. The template is made up of nine key elements that make up a business. It simplifies a

business plan into a condensed form and makes it visual to help understand the business model. The nine main elements of the BMC include:

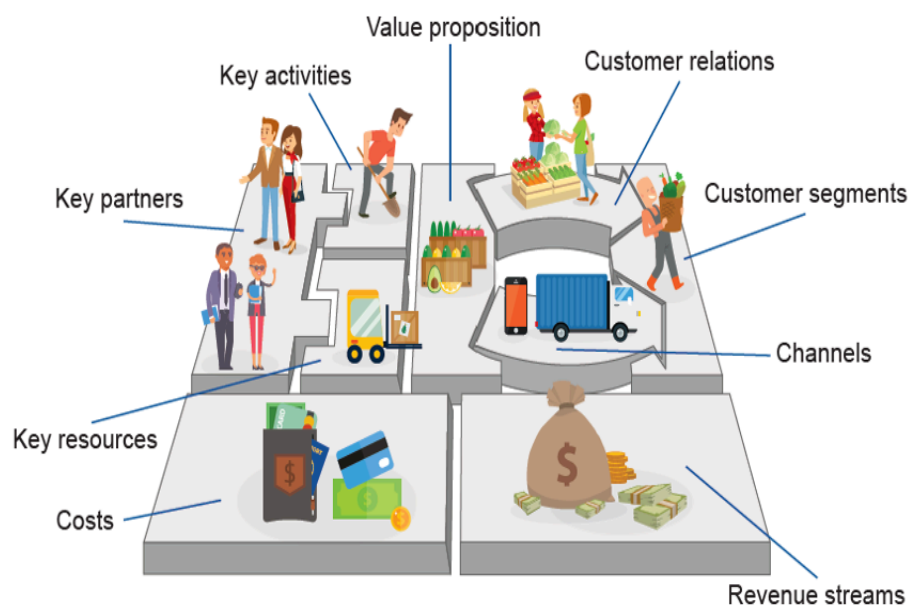


Figure 2: Business Model Canvas (GFRAS, 2012)

1. **Customers:** These are the buyers of the product or services.
2. **The Value Proposition:** This is an important element of the BMC. It is the fundamental products or services that the business operator is trying to give its customers.
3. **Channels:** The different structures and methods to be used to deliver the product or services or value proposition to the customers.
4. **Customer relationships:** These indicate how the business owner plans to identify buyers, create and maintain relationships with them.
5. **Key activities:** Specific activities that are fundamental to the operation of the agribusiness. e.g. planting, crop management, harvesting and drying.
6. **Key Partners (Business services and partners):** Services and partners that the business uses to produce and market its product (e.g distribution partners).
7. **Key resources:** Inputs and resources used to operate and deliver the product/services.
8. **Costs:** The costs that the business incurs to produce and market the product.
9. **Income/ Revenue streams:** Money earned from selling the product or delivering the service.

d. Structure of a business plan

A business plan is a 'road map' to guide the future of a business. It provides direction for expansion, diversification, and future evaluation of the business. [How to Create an Ag-Based Business Plan](#). [How to write a business plan](#). A business plan is usually structured like a book, consisting of the title/cover page, followed by a table of contents and the body of the plan in the following order:

i. Executive summary

The executive summary outlines the business's direction, future goals, and the methods that will be used to achieve them, supported by relevant background information. It also includes the financial analysis and assumptions, demonstrating how the proposed changes will help sustain the business.

ii. Overview, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

This section has three separate portions. The overview includes a general description of the existing or planned agribusiness. This is followed by the mission statement of the business. Goals and objectives should show the reader what the business wants to accomplish and the steps needed to obtain the desired results. Conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis will assist the business owner when developing goals and objectives.

iii. Background Information

Background information provides the context needed to understand the business and its purpose. This includes details about the business, the market environment, and the problem or need the business aims to address. This portion also covers the business history, current state of the business, founders' experience, management team, and any relevant trends or factors that justify the business opportunity.

iv. Market Analysis

This section evaluates the target customers, their needs, preferences and demographics. It also evaluates the competitors and market trends. Additionally, it identifies demand for specific products or services, seasonal patterns, pricing fluctuations, and buyer requirements to help the agribusiness position itself effectively.

SWOT Analysis

An effective way to address business and marketing issues is to conduct a SWOT analysis. The acronym SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths are internal factors that can give the business an advantage (fertile land). Weaknesses are internal limitations that may affect business performance (limited capital). Opportunities are external factors that businesses can take advantage of (growing demand for organic foods), while threats are external risks that could negatively affect the business (market competition or climate change).

Risk Management

Risk management identifies potential challenges such as weather variability, pests, price fluctuations, disease outbreaks, or supply chain disruptions and proposes mitigation strategies. Guiding questions include: What risks could threaten production or sales? How can I protect the business? What contingency plans are needed?

v. Operations Plan

The operations plan focuses on the daily business activities and the strategies that will support them. It explains how the agribusiness will function daily, including production processes, farm management practices, inputs required, labour needs, equipment, and timelines for activities.

vi. Marketing Plan/Strategy

The marketing strategy outlines how the agribusiness will sell its product or service, attract and retain customers. It includes product, offerings, pricing, distribution channels and promotional methods.

Guiding questions include: What unique value does my product/service offer? What pricing strategy will attract buyers while remaining profitable? How will I distribute my products? How will I promote my business?

vii. Financial Plan

The current and future projections of the agribusiness financial performance. The financial plan should focus on the key components of the business- the start-up costs, operating expenses, projected revenues, cash flow, and funding needs. Guiding questions include: How much start-up capital do I need? What funding sources can I access? What are my expected costs and income? How long will it take to break even? What financial records will I keep?

2.1.2: Market orientation: understanding target markets, demands and consumer needs

a. Market Orientation (MO)

Market orientation is the implementation of the marketing concept, emphasising customer satisfaction by aligning agribusiness activities with customers' needs, market demands, and the competitive environment (Farrell, 2000; Deshpande and Farley, 2004; Sisay et al., 2023). It focuses on understanding and meeting both the expressed and latent customer needs rather than producing what is merely convenient for the business.

i. Understanding Target Market

The target market is the specific group of customers an entrepreneur wants to serve with products or services. Understanding market opportunities involves understanding consumer trends, demands, competition, and growth potential. There are steps an agri-business entrepreneur must follow to identify and understand the target markets.

The target market for agribusiness can be identified by the following:

Market segmentation: Categorising customers into groups/segments such as bulk traders, retail consumers, institutional buyers, and health-conscious individuals. Bulk traders are people who buy agricultural produce or products in large quantities and often provide quick sales and reduced risks. Retail consumers, on the other hand, are buyers who purchase small amounts for household use. Institutional buyers are organisations that buy in bulk for regular supply (schools, restaurants, hospitals). Health-conscious individuals are willing to pay premium prices for healthy products. It is essential to select a market segment that is easily accessible, reliable, and exhibits consistent demand.

Market research: This involves gathering information about the market, consumer preferences, buying behaviours, and market trends. Common questions often asked in market research include: Are there specific crops or products that consumers prefer? Who are the market competitors? What are they offering? What are the gaps in the market? Usually, this is done using SWOT analysis, which provides valuable insights into the competitive landscape (Penn State Extension, 2026a).

ii. Understanding customers' demand

Demand implies customers are willing and able to buy your product/service at a given price. High demand indicates regular buyers, stable prices, and quick sales. Low demand suggests unsold goods, price fluctuations, and losses.

An entrepreneur can evaluate customer demand through market observations and customer interviews (market analysis). Checklists include: How often do you buy this? What do you dislike about current suppliers? What season is the demand highest? Would you buy if quality improves? Regular market analysis and consumer engagement help identify new opportunities and mitigate risks.

iii. Understanding customers' needs

Customers do not only buy products, but they also buy value. Women entrepreneurs must identify the needs of the target customers. The needs are usually categorised into functional needs (freshness, taste, quantity, shelf life, hygiene), emotional needs (trust, reliability, good relationship, respectful service), and economic needs (affordable price, flexible payment, bulk discounts). Knowledge of who customers are helps to identify who they are and how to make products or services that address their needs.

2.1.3: How rural female entrepreneurs in Europe and SSA successfully tapped into local and global markets.

Entrepreneurship is a pivotal strategy for fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development. Rural female entrepreneurs in both Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have significant potential to access expanding local and global markets by leveraging digital technologies, strengthening business networks, and improving product

competitiveness with innovative business models. Digital technologies such as e-commerce and e-business platforms, mobile money, and social media marketing, which allow women to reach wider customers, have also been found to promote a transformative pathway for rural women's empowerment and sustainable development. Digital connectivity offers women the opportunity to market agricultural products through established online marketplaces. Digital technologies have been shown to reduce entry barriers, expand market opportunities, and connect women to global networks (Thomas, 2024), thus enhancing competitiveness in local and global markets. Additionally, utilising niche marketing strategy, innovating traditional products, and establishing strong local and international links can enhance women's competitiveness to urban consumers. However, improving product quality and meeting market standards is also critical. Women can enhance their competitiveness by adopting good agricultural practices, value addition, certification schemes, and proper packaging that appeal to domestic and export markets. Access to training through cooperatives, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and government programmes can help build skills in business management, financial literacy, and market intelligence. Membership of cooperatives can strengthen bargaining power, reduce transaction costs, increase visibility to formal buyers and participation in high-value agricultural value chains.

2.1.4: Activity: Creating a basic business plan template for an agricultural product or service.

The participants are divided into small groups. Each group is assigned an agribusiness (product or service). With the guidance of the facilitators, each group completes the Business Model Canvas template. The template is later used to develop a basic business plan for the assigned agricultural products or services using the business plan template: Executive Summary, Target Market, Product/service offering, Marketing strategy and Financial plan. At the end, each group presents its basic business plan. The activity enables participants to experience the process of structuring ideas into a plan. Teams can prioritise what matters most, identify gaps, and practice thinking out of the box while still grounding ideas in business planning. The activity builds confidence in using BMC. Presenting their basic business plan helps participants to practice pitching, which is a skill essential for investors, customers and partners. The activity provides hands-on experience, which makes the concepts stick and prepares them to create individual business plans later. The activity ends with a constructive critique and reflection on the BMC and the business plans.