

**Assessment of Challenges Encountered by Small Scale Cut-Flower Sector in Central Kenya
in Complying with Environmental Standards**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to assess the challenges faced by small scale cut-flower growers in Central Kenya in complying with environmental requirements of the international markets and propose potential interventions. The specific objectives of the study were: to identify activities, actors/players along the supply chain involving smallholder cut flower growers, audit these activities for compliance with key international markets requirements with emphasis on environmental standards and to propose viable compliance interventions for small scale cut-flower growers.

The study was carried out within 3 regions in Central Kenya: Nyeri, Murang'a and Kiambu. A total of 360 small scale cut flower growers were randomly selected. Four main methods were used to collect data namely; field visits and interviews whereby the researcher used closed ended questionnaires, observation and a checklist as means of data collection instruments, consultations with experts and desk studies were also used to help the researcher to reach a conclusion. Analysis was done using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. To achieve this MS Excel computer package was used.

The findings of this study revealed that farming, post harvest handling, transportation, inspection and distribution of flowers to markets are the activities along the supply chain involving small holder cut flower farmers. The major actors/players along the value chain are input suppliers, exporters, Horticultural Crops Development Authority, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services, Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya, Kenya Flower Council, Ministry of Agriculture and donors. Key constraints faced by out growers in producing and complying with environmental requirements administered by international markets include: lack of pesticide

storage facilities, lack of training in safe use of pesticides and fertilizers, first aid, water and waste management in flower production, lack of proper record keeping, lack of financial assistance, poor human safety related to handling of chemicals, poor waste disposal strategies, poor water management skills and lack of proper post harvest handling infrastructure.

The proposed interventions include formation of stable producer groups with organizational structures to be classified as single farms, facilitation of group certification under the option 2 of the GlobalGAP, strengthening of capacities to meet environmental standards by government, private sector and donors. An enabling policy framework that assures environmental requirements and provision of incentives to comply with private voluntary standards was recommended.