Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model for Scaling Bundled Cattle Innovations in Son La, Vietnam

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Problem statement

- Beef demand in Vietnam is rising, but domestic production struggles to keep pace. Son La Province hosts the country's largest cattle herd; however, cattle productivity and profitability remain below potential. Key constraints include low adoption of advanced technologies and limited market-oriented production.

- A bundled innovation package, combining artificial insemination, improved forages and feeding, and herd health services, introduced through the CGIAR's SAPLING initiative (known locally as *Chan-Henh*) and now continued under SAAF program, has demonstrated strong potential to improve cattle productivity. However, scaling its adoption is constrained by the lack of viable business models to coordinate services, reduce transaction costs, and align incentives across the cattle production system.

Cattle feeding, Thanh Lo/ILRI

The solution

- Bundle input and output markets through retooling of village agents.
- Testing viability of 2 types of agents: Technically-oriented paravets & business-oriented cattle collectors
- **Intervention**: Entrepreneurship incubation and linkage of trained village agents to higher-level actors – input/service suppliers & large cattle traders.
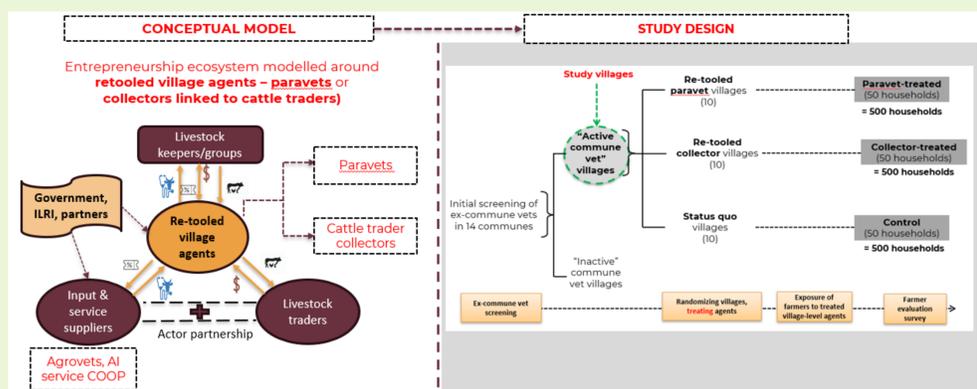
Key results

- A market systems analysis has been completed, identifying key constraints limiting smallholder cattle farmers' effective participation in the beef market and highlighting existing relationships that can be leveraged to strengthen the overall system.

- The analysis identified two village agents, including paravets and cattle collectors, as potential leverage actors, due to their trusted relationships and frequent interaction with farmers, as well as emerging linkages with input and output markets (e.g., commission-based sourcing by livestock traders and collaboration with input suppliers for veterinary services).

- Initial efforts will focus on strengthening the entrepreneurial skills and linkages of paravets and collectors, aligning farmer improvement with their business growth. Farmers' uptake of the bundled innovation package during the pilot will inform which village agents are most effective for future investment in scalable business models.

Scalability and regional relevance

- The intervention provides entrepreneurship incubation support that can be seamlessly integrated into public capacity building initiatives, facilitating widespread skill development. If proven effective for paravets, the program may also be incorporated into paravet training curricula.

- By focusing on behaviour change among established market actors within government programming or livestock markets, the intervention creates opportunities for replication across regions.

- Intervention leverages economic incentives for key stakeholder/market actors – collectors, cattle traders, private veterinarians & input suppliers, who will likely replicate the innovation in their business transaction elsewhere if they find it desirable.

Partners and donors involved

Key partners

- Vietnam National University of Agriculture (VNUA)
- Department of Agriculture and Environment of Son La Province (Son La DAE)
- Sub-Department of Animal Husbandry, Veterinary and Fisheries of Son La Province (Son La Sub-DAH)
- Agriculture Divisions and Agricultural Service Centers in selected communes of Son La Province

Donor support

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