

Report on kick-off meeting of research consortium headed by prof. Rob van Tulder (EUR/PRC)

'How inclusive business strategies can contribute to inclusive development in SSA'

- Venue: RSM Erasmus University Rotterdam, 22 October 2014
- Presentation: Rob van Tulder (RSM); chair: Maudy Keulemans (NABC)
- Participation: representatives (numbers in parentheses) from consortium partners RSM (3), NABC (2), ESAMI (3), Cordaid (1), Philips (1), FMO (3), Rabobank (1), Green Dream Company (1), ISS (1), BAM (1), AMREF (1), ICCO (1), New World Campus (1), SNV (1), Friesland Campina (1), STC-group (1); also present: INCLUDE Knowledge Platform - Secretariat (1)
NB a similar meeting will also be organized for the African partners in East Africa by ESAMI
- Aim of the research project: This action-oriented research project develops – together with important stakeholders – new business models that provide frameworks, evidence based support and a platform for information exchange on how to actually become more inclusive in a variety of African contexts.
- Aim of the kick-off meeting:
 - Get an understanding of the project (including proposed theory and methodology – stakeholder approach; expectations on outcomes on general and for each participant specific; selection of priority sectors and issues; how to proceed; proposed activities; types of deliverables per period; management organization of the consortium)
 - Signing of consortium agreement; discussion of new entrants
- Understanding of the project:
 - In the morning, Rob van Tulder first discussed the research model (theory) of the project and the various transition stages of companies towards 'inclusiveness' as elaborated in his books 'Doing business in Africa' and 'Managing the transition to a sustainable enterprise' (these books and other materials were provided for free at the meeting). He then explained the multiple roles of the consortium partners (companies, NGOs, government, knowledge institutions) in the diverse stages of the project, with each actor representing a particular angle to the problem of inclusive growth. The consortium partners are research subjects (their transition phase is measured during the first year in order to refine what inclusiveness *is*), but also carry out research (conducting surveys within their companies: checking barriers and opportunities to implementation). And they are offered training by RMS that is based on the literature but also based on insights gained from the research. There was plenty room for questions and discussion during prof. van Tulder's explanation.
 - After lunch, the foreseen activities for this action research during the 30 months were discussed:
 - Focus 1st year: development and validation of indicators of inclusiveness per sector and per country.
 - Focus 2nd year: sequence of training, interventions and stakeholder dialogues; concluded by reporting and sharing. It should be noted that policymakers will be mainly engaged through two rounds of stakeholder workshops that are organized in the second half of the project.

Finally, the legal advisor of EUR arrived to explain the consortium agreement and the agreement was signed.

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