

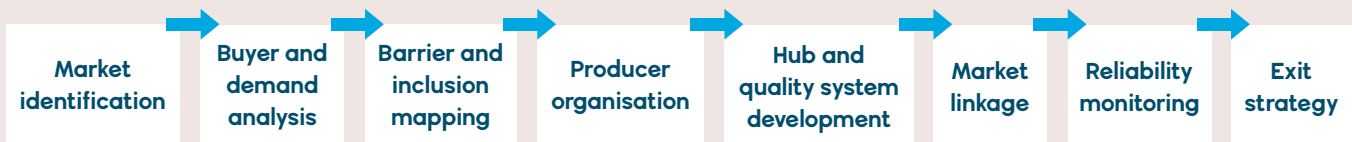
Dorcas

Building reliable value chains



September 2026

Dorcas value chain model



Value chains in Eastern Africa

The five value chains evaluated

Value chain	Country	Area
Honey	Tanzania	Chemba
Honey	Kenya	Kitui
Pasture and milk	Kenya	Makueni
Camel milk	Ethiopia	Moyale
Chicken	Kenya	Siaya

The core lesson

Sustainable value chains depend more on reliability than training. Where payments arrived on time, quality systems were enforced consistently, governance was trusted, and buyers were secured before production was scaled. The outcome was producers who thrived. Where any of these systems faltered, even briefly, any gains made eroded quickly.

Market-first matters

Production-first chain

Training
↓
Production increase
↓
No buyer
↓
Oversupply
↓
Price collapse
↓
Exit



Market-first chain

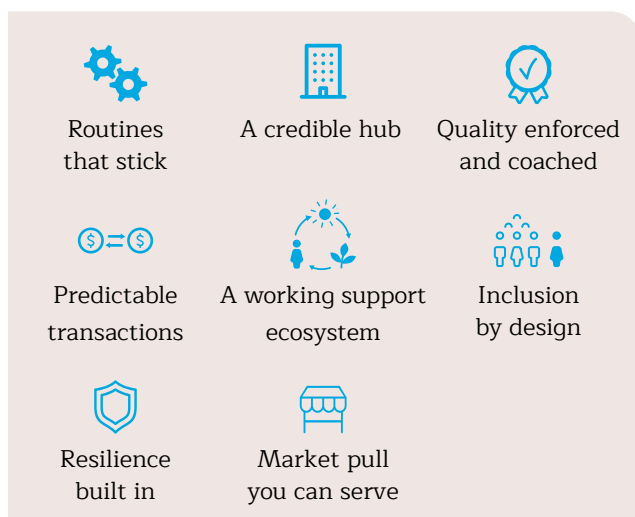
Buyer identified
↓
Standards agreed
↓
Payment system established
↓
Production expansion
↓
Growth



What keeps producers in cooperatives?

✓ Reliable payment	✓ Access to training
✓ Predictable buyer	✓ Better prices
✓ Fair quality grading	✓ Social support

The eight vital elements of successful value chains



What is your role?

- NGO practitioners:** Design from the market backwards, build baselines from day one, and treat payment reliability as a non-negotiable.
- Institutional donors:** Check the value chain is market-first, the governance functional, and the chain will be sustainable after NGO support ends.
- Investors and CSR partners:** A multi-cycle investment pathway is realistic; expecting self-sufficiency within a single grant cycle is not.
- Inclusion specialists:** Inclusion by design outperforms inclusion by intent. Payment architecture, adaptation of roles, and governance rules determine who benefits.

Do you work on value chain challenges or invest in value chain impact? We would like to get in touch with you to share experiences and explore opportunities together. Contact us at learning@dorcas.nl or partnerships@dorcas.org