

PILLAR 4  
Agriculture  
for Income

# Multiple Skills for Farmer Groups



Photos: David Snyder, Richard Lord, Sean Sprague

## Problem

Linking farmer groups with markets is one key to reducing poverty. How can this be done? **What skills do farmer groups in rural areas need to engage effectively and sustainably with markets?**

## Solution

Results from a major study undertaken by CRS and CIAT in 2005–2006 indicate that farmers require **multiple skills**. The combination of these skills helps farmers engage with markets and pull themselves out of poverty. There are 5 key skills that farmers in Africa, Latin America and South Asia consistently mentioned.

### Five Skills

#### 1. Skills on how to manage themselves as a group

- How to develop and implement a common vision

#### 2. Savings and financial skills

- How to protect and accumulate assets
- How to increase savings and group cohesion

#### 3. Basic business and marketing skills

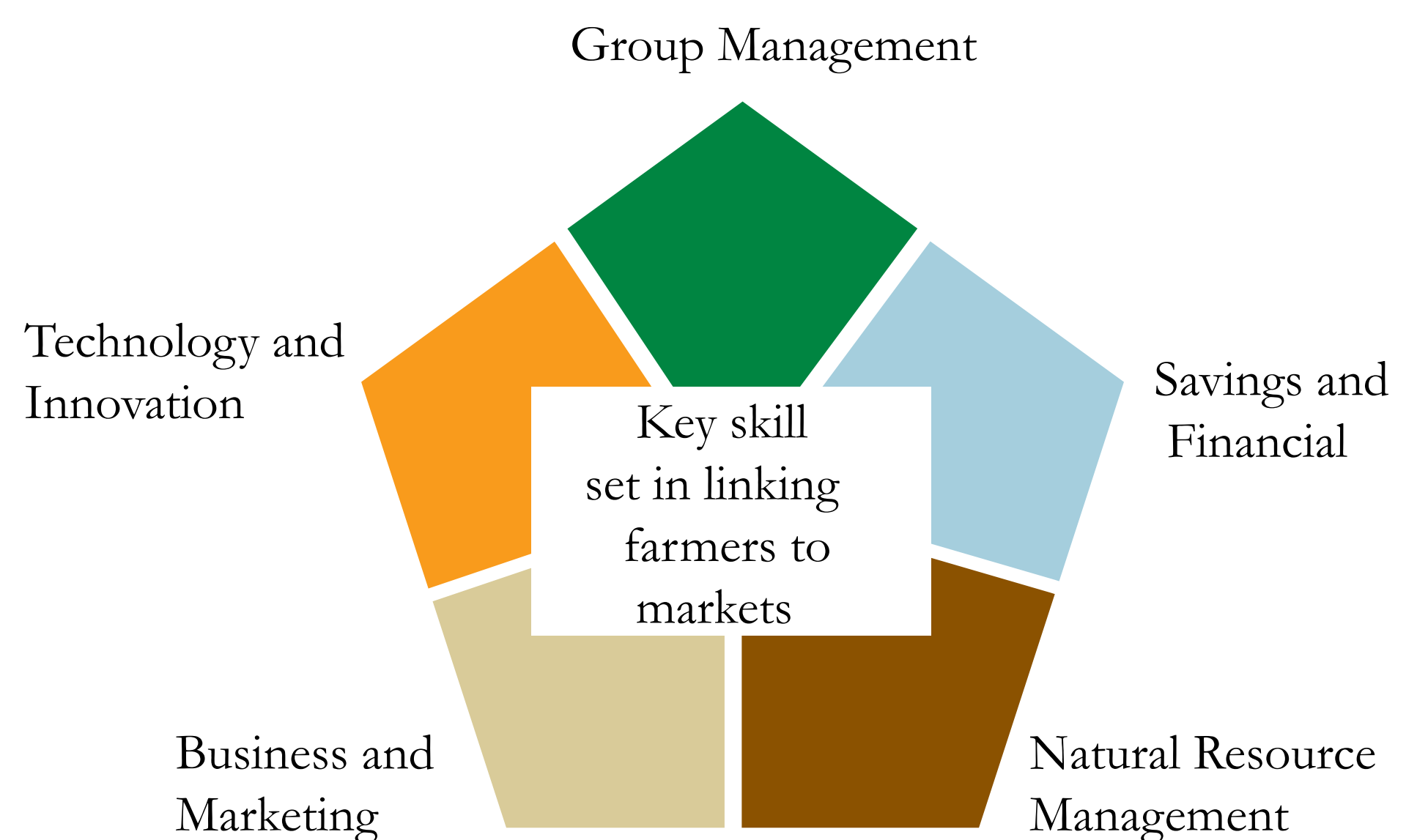
- How to identify market opportunities, understand value chains, and identify appropriate entry points

#### 4. Technology and innovation skills

- How to access, adapt, and apply new technology to increase productivity and profitability of their enterprises

#### 5. Natural resource management skills

- How to maintain or increase the productivity of their natural resource base
- How to understand the importance of natural resources and ecosystems.



## Why is this innovative?

Providing farmer groups with the skill sets they need – rather than just one – is different from the usual development approaches, and vital for empowering farmers to stimulate development for themselves at the local level.

### The power of combining skill sets

When farmer marketing groups in Tanzania received training in savings and financial skills:

- the volume of product sold collectively quadrupled in 2 years
- the price received by farmers increased by over 30 %



Photo: Richard Lord