

NOBLE CONSULTANTS COMPANY LTD



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Corporate Profile

Table of Contents

1.0 About Noble Consultants Company Ltd.....	3
1.1 Background	3
1.2 Vision Statement.....	3
1.3 Mission Statement	4
1.4 Our core values	4
2.0 Products and Services	5
2.1 Project Cycle Management (PCM).....	5
2.2 Farm Planning and Management.....	5
2.3 Impact Assessment	5
2.4 Environmental Impact Assessment and Related Studies.....	6
2.5 Feasibility studies and Baseline Surveys	6
2.6 Capacity Building.....	6
2.7 Business Development Services.....	7
2.8 Certification of commodities	7
2.9 Business Financial Services	8
3.0. Recent Key Assignments	9
4.0. Our People	11
4.1 Corporate Govenance	11
4.2 The Noble Team	11

1.0 About Noble Consultants Company Ltd

1.1 Background

Noble Consultants Company is one of the regional agricultural and rural development consulting firms founded in 2003. The core business of the firm is providing consultancy services in the agricultural sector. Noble have twelve year experience in Kenya's Agricultural sector which has provided the necessary exposure required by our range of clientele. The core members of Noble, together with the associate network, offer a wide spectrum of services to the agricultural industry in East Africa. Members of Noble and its network are to be found at the forefront of the provision of professional services to farmers, companies, municipalities, state departments, public bodies, financial institutions, insurance assessors, advocates, attorneys and others.

In many cases the company has been asked, not only to advise but also to put into action the plans devised. Noble proven ability to do this has led to more demand for services it offers and an ever widening scope of accumulated knowledge and experience.

Our values are uncompromising professionalism in all aspects of our consultancy services, building and maintaining long term relationships with our clients, endeavouring not only to meet the clients' expectations but also to execute them whenever possible within the agreed time and financial budgets and providing quality services. Our services to both public and private sectors covers institutional reforms, restructuring of policies, environmental audits, capacity building in small and large coffee producers, monitoring and evaluation of projects after their implementation.

Many agricultural consultants have specialised in niche areas but the following range of services is indicative of the wealth of expertise available within Noble.

- Project Cycle Management (PCM)
- Farm Planning and Management
- Impact Assessment
- Environmental Impact Assessment and Related Studies
- Feasibility studies and Baseline Surveys
- Capacity Building
- Business Development Services
- Certification of Commodities
- Business Financial Services

We have a well-developed project monitoring and management system. Work progress is regularly assessed and compared with the work plan. Variances are investigated on time to ensure that project performance is on schedule.

Financial controls are maintained to ensure that all expenditure is approved in advance.

The Noble organization structure is made up of three main organs: the Membership (that constitutes the Annual General Meeting), the Board of Directors(that oversees the operations on behalf of the membership and also receive, hold and administer funds and property), and the Management (headed by the Managing Director and charged with day to day operations, management and administration).

1.2 Vision Statement

To see development and growth of the agribusiness sector in Africa to become a major driver of economic development, job creation and empowerment on the continent.

1.3 Mission Statement

To promote sustainable and competitive agriculture through provision of professional consultancy support services to enhance food security, income and employment.

1.4 Our core values

Our values are uncompromising professionalism in all aspects of our consultancy services, building and maintaining long term relationships with our clients, endeavouring not only to meet the clients' expectations but also to execute them whenever possible within the agreed time and financial budgets and providing quality services.

2.0 Products and Services

Noble is a regional agricultural and rural development consulting firm which operates as a network of professional consultants, experts and specialists in the fields of agriculture, agribusiness, food and environment all of whom are successful in their own right and who work independently for a wide range of clients. Noble assembles teams that bring together the skills and experience a client needs without maintaining a large full-time staff that raises overhead costs without increasing the cost to our clients.

The goal of Noble is to facilitate the access of companies and institutions, whichever country they are based in, to quality consulting or expertise services, by helping them locate specialists for their local development as well as their international development, be it for a one-day assignment or a long-term mission.

Noble staff and affiliate network consists only of senior consultants, each of whom has a minimum of 10 years of experience in his or her relevant areas of expertise. When you hire Noble you get experienced professionals.

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2.1 Project Cycle Management (PCM)

We offer specialized services in project planning and implementation. We also specialize in monitoring and evaluation of ongoing projects. Through the PCM approach which is a well-established and proven method for the identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation of projects and programmes. Through PCM we identify, formulate (appraise), implement and evaluate projects and programmes mainly related to rural development.

Aspects of programming, identification, formulation, financing and evaluation are well coordinated and managed to ensure desired impact based on client expectations.

2.2 Farm Planning and Management

We offer specialized service in the fields of farm planning, especially in mixed farming in smallholder agriculture. Further our firm provides training in aspects of farm management, for both large and small-scale farmers. Large and small-scale farmers face serious problems in this complex and dynamic production and marketing system. These farmers often make management decisions without fully considering such components as cost of production, financing, market demand, associated farm risk, and profitability of return on investment. Knowledge about and integration of all levels of production and marketing systems are required to improve profitability and viability.

2.3 Impact Assessment

Our firm specializes in impact assessment studies, thereby providing our clients with the necessary tools and information to make the right decisions regarding either completed or ongoing projects/programs.

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In developing countries, development applications are inevitable and often these development applications involve land which has originally been allocated for agricultural purposes.

Noble engages in providing agricultural impact assessments which provide the authorities with relevant and objective information pertaining to the anticipated positive and negative agricultural impacts associated with the project, together with appropriate management and mitigation measures in order to enable decision-makers to promote sustainable development.

2.4 Environmental Impact Assessment and Related Studies

Our firm has retained fully registered and approved environmental auditors and assessors. In this respect, we undertake environment impact assessment and audit studies (EIAs) for our clients as required by NEMA, and follow up to ensure the client gets the necessary certification.

We also carry out studies on all environmental conservation aspects related to farming and agro-business as a whole.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a core aspect of environmental and planning work undertaken by Noble. EIAs are routinely required for larger development projects which we ensure to deliver and process approval and certification. Other specialist inputs are provided by specialised independent consultants depending on the expertise required for the specific project and environment.

2.5 Feasibility studies and Baseline Surveys

Our firm carries out baseline surveys, and feasibility studies for our clients in the field of agro-business, livestock production and marketing. After analysing the data gathered under various studies, the firm compiles the necessary reports as required by the clients and submits them within the set deadlines. The firm also undertakes studies on carbon sequencing projects, and all other aspects of agro-forestry.

Noble usually conducts feasibility studies/ analysis at times when clients are considering significant change in their present operating situation because one purpose of conducting the analysis is to avoid costs associated with making a wrong decision. The studies usually entail two major phases: An analysis of directly influencing factors and an analysis of environmental conditions. They also seek to provide basic information required to determine the economic viability of the proposed enterprise.

Baselines studies are usually conducted to provide information base against which monitoring and assessment of activities/ progress and effectiveness during implementation and after the activity is completed. Data collection is usually conducted through Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA) and other related participatory approaches (PLA) at the group or community level to ensure proper information gathering.

2.6 Capacity Building

The firm specializes in capacity building for organized farmers groups, associations, cooperative societies and other institutions dealing in commercial production, processing and marketing of coffee, tea, horticultural crops, livestock and food crops.

The main objective of the capacity building programmes is to enhance the capacity of the farmers to produce more quality food through efficient use of limited resources (land, water, labour, etc.) and earn more per unit area per unit time. Noble usually prepares rigorous frameworks with feedback mechanisms that guide

effective capacity-building activities which particularly target women and prioritize topics on climate-friendly agriculture.

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We engage various stakeholders to identify training needs and develop appropriate materials to address these needs, and where appropriate assist in modifying training materials as needed. The capacity-building plans developed are usually consistent with country/regional needs, particularly on climate-friendly agriculture. Noble usually conducts tailor-made trainings based on client specifications and also scheduled trainings as developed internally. We ensure that credible curriculums are designed for the learning processes for farmers and oversee the translation in local languages, and help conduct the courses in the target areas.

2.7 Business Development Services

The firm promotes the development of businesses through provision of technical and managerial services to upcoming entrepreneurs in the field of agri-business.

Creating a viable value-added agricultural business involves finding an idea or opportunity in the marketplace and then building a viable business to take advantage of the opportunity. This requires going through a process or series of steps. Although this is not a hard and fast process, there are steps that you need to take – and you need to take them in order.

Noble provides these services through the following steps/initiatives to ensure success of many of the agri-businesses engaged in i.e. Maximize internal efficiencies, opportunity scoping, resource situation assessment, technical and economic feasibility assessment and preparing for implementation.

Noble seeks to support value-adding business initiatives that allow producers to be rewarded for performing activities that have traditionally been performed by others downstream or fulfil a need downstream that has never been met. Value adding initiatives have the potential to improve producer's revenues and impacting positively on income levels which will result in reduced poverty levels in target communities.

2.8 Certification of commodities

In conformity with certification requirements by various consumers in the world, commodity suppliers are required to conform to some established standards. In this respect the firm undertakes studies in gap analysis of the supply chain with a view to advising the clients/suppliers on requirements for various certification standards, e.g. cafe-practices; utz-cafe; fare trade; rain forest etc.

One of the critical challenges confronting Africa's agricultural commodity market include the lack of confidence in its ability to meet industrial demand for agricultural commodity in the required volume, quality and standards. The cost of transaction in meeting local and international industrial demand is huge due largely to the fragmented nature of gathering small quantities of produce from dispersed locations and the cost of product handling and upgrading.

In most of the studies conducted on the local commodity value chains, the issues of product adulteration, standardization and quality control has been a recurring decimal and commodities originating from Africa are very often presumed substandard and immediately discounted to the detriment of the value chain stakeholders and the nations at large.

Nobles' intervention to that is usually to establish an objective mechanism for ascertaining quality standards that will provide assurance to buyers and end users of products from client countries that has thus become necessary. The implementation of this mechanism will also serve to motivate value chain actors to work to improve quality, raise industry standards and to apply collectively agreed quality measures. Enforcement protocols and capacity enhancement strategies for voluntary compliance are also developed.

2.9 Business Financial Services

The agricultural sector requires financial resources to prosper. In view of this, the firm undertakes training and advisory services to entrepreneurs on sourcing financial services available in the market. The firms' services covers bookkeeping, accounting, project financial proposals, insurance and auditing.

Noble seeks to support client countries in mobilization of and unlocking resources of the financial private sector both domestic and international to improve access to financial services for the agricultural sector and also for investment plans/programmes. We endeavour to ensure that access to information on how to improve financial systems and framework conditions to expand financial services for producers.

3.0. Recent Key Assignments

Country	Year	Project Description	Client/Partner/Donor
Kenya	2011	Coffee sub sector reform proposal aimed at drafting the new coffee act in Kenya and the attendant rules	Mild Coffee Traders Association of East Africa
Kenya	2011	Study of the coffee future prospects of the farmers cooperative societies in Kenya with an aim of identifying their strengths and weaknesses in a liberalized primary commodity marketing system.	USAID
Kenya	2011	Participated in impact assessment for SIDA supported National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Project. The study aimed at evaluation of the impact of extension to the small scale farmers in 42 districts in Kenya.	SIDA
Kenya	2011	Participated in the mid-term review for the IFAD supported Central Kenya dry area project, with an aim of assessing the benefits received by farmers, and recommended the extension of the project for a further three years.	IFAD
Kenya	2011	Participated in feasibility study of the extension of Ahero and West Kano irrigation scheme financed by National Irrigation Board of Kenya, aimed at evaluating the possibility of changing from a “water pumping irrigation system” to a “gravity fed system” and explore the possibilities of diversification from rice to other high value crops i.e. horticultural crops.	National Irrigation Board (NIB)
Kenya	2012	Conducted a training evaluation for many coffee cooperative societies in various coffee growing areas in Kenya on capacity building projects a beneficially of the World Bank’s Marching Grant Fund, managed by Deloitte consulting Ltd.	Deloitte Consulting Ltd.
Kenya	2012	Conducted initial environmental study for coffee cooperative societies Embu, Muranga, NyeriMachakos and Kirinyaga Districts. The studies were aimed at identifying environmental issues, their potential environmental impacts and recommending mitigation measures, in accordance with NEMA compliance requirements.	-
Kenya	2012	Prepared an Internal Control System (ICS) document for various cooperatives which includes all the aspects of the organization’s policy, procedures, responsibilities, risks and mitigation measures in the course of managing their institutions in preparation of coffee certifications. This includes programs such as Utz Certified, Starbucks Café Practices and Fairtrade standards	-

Kenya	2012	Conducted a Gap Analysis study on coffee estates, Coffee Cooperatives and three dry coffee mills in preparation for their compliance with CAFÉ Practices and UTZ Certification programs	-
Kenya	2012	Conducted various capacity building trainings in various cooperatives in Muranga emphasizing on Good Agricultural Practices, Good Processing Practices and Good Manufacturing practices. These were aimed at increasing productivity and quality improvement as well as facilitating market access.	-
Kenya	2013	Carried out assignments on strengthening the productivity and competitive position of organized stallholder coffee farmers in Kenya through the implementation of a Quality Management System in coffee cooperatives in Muranga	-
Kenya	2013	Undertaken agribusiness opportunity assessment in the districts of Isiolo, Samburu, Laikipia and Nyeri for African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).	
Kenya	2013	Partnered with CIDIN of Netherlands carried out a study on the impact of UTZ and Fairtrade certification standards to coffee producers in Kiambu and Nyeri districts in 2013.	
Kenya	2014 & 2015	Undertaken an <i>organization strengthening project</i> for Coffee Cooperatives in Kenya financed by SECAEC in the year 2013/14; which was extended for a further one year	
Kenya	2015	In collaboration with SECAEC, developed a Diagnostic Tool for assessment of performance standards in coffee husbandry, processing, marketing and management of coffee producer organisations.	

4.0. Our People

4.1 Corporate Governance

Noble has an established Board of Directors which meet bi-monthly to govern Noble:

- Non-Executive Chairman:
- Managing Director:
- Non-Executive Director:
- Alternate Director:
- Advisor to the Board:
- Advisor to the Board:

4.2 The Noble Team

Noble's team of consultants is usually selected for specific assignment to constitute highly experienced individuals who have excelled in their areas of specialization. The team is led by highly qualified consultants who are specialized in the area of the assignment in question.

However the company retains the following team members on a full time basis:

4.2.1 Jeremy.A.K. Mbai

A Company Director/Consultant

MSc. Agricultural Economics

BSc. Agriculture

Environmental Impact Assessment Expert

Business Development Services Specialist

Mr. Mbai has an extensive operational background throughout East African Territory, experience in farm planning, participatory community based approached to planning and implementation, project management, agricultural extension services, project cycle management and capacity building and training.

Mr. Mbai has led a number of large management and advisory projects for Danida, Ministry of Agriculture, TaitaTaveta Agricultural Project (TTAP) and Agricultural Departments in the County Governments. He is also conducted feasibility study for extension of Ahero and West Kano Irrigation Schemes jointly with CODA Corporation as an Agronomy Consultant.

Mr. Mbai has also conducted a Midterm review for central Kenya dry area smallholder and community services Development project (CKDAP) jointly with In-depth Consultancy Company. He is also co-founder of Noble Consulting Company Ltd.

4.2.2 Mzee Hamisi Ngutu

Managing Director/Consultant

Post Grad. Agricultural Economics

BSc. Agriculture

Agricultural Extension Services Expert

Cooperative Societies and Financing Specialist

Mr. Ngutu has over thirty years' experience gained in Agricultural Extension, Project Management, Disbursement of Agricultural Credit to Smallholders and Primary Processing and Marketing of Agricultural Commodities in Kenya. He has gained extensive experience in growing and marketing of various agricultural commodities in Kenya particularly coffee.

Mr. Ngutu has been an extension officer with the Ministry of Agriculture in Nyanza and Central Province for a period of 3 years as a District Agricultural Officer, rising to the position of National Coordinator:- Smallholder Coffee Improvement Projects (SCIP I&II) financed by the World Bank and CDC as well as the Kenya Government. As the National Coordinator of these coffee projects, Mr. Ngutu gained considerable experience in the management of Inter-ministerial Projects, involving the Ministries of Agriculture, Cooperative Development, Finance and the institutions of Cooperative Bank of Kenya, the World Bank and the Commonwealth Development Cooperation (CDC).

On leaving the Ministry of Agriculture in November 1985, Mr. Ngutu joined the Coffee Board of Kenya as a Field Services Manager. He was in charge of ensuring proper field management, disease control, credit appraisal, licensing of farmers and growers' advisory services. He was then promoted to the position of Deputy General Manager in 1990, a position he held until he left the services of the Board in September 1999. In the course of his working career he also attended various courses and seminars related to the field of coffee and agricultural management both locally and overseas.

Mr. Ngutu also played an instrumental role in the process of liberalization of the coffee industry, since its inception in October 1992, thereby giving him an insight of the direction the Agricultural industry in Kenya was bound to take after its liberalization and privatization. Mr. Ngutu gained valuable experience in Project Management, Administration of Credit to farmers, Marketing of Agricultural Produce, Human Resource Management and a sound knowledge in Institutional Management in general.

4.3 Associate Consultants

Noble has a pool of associate consultants that it assembles for each task that it is contracted to perform. Through this policy, Noble has managed to accomplish various assignments within contract time schedule, without fail.