

Event Schedule

Chair: Dr Nick Chisholm

09:30 **Welcome by Head of UCC's College of Science, Engineering and Food Science (SEFS)**

Professor Paul Ross, Head of SEFS

09:35 **Food Security Research in UCC**

Dr Nick Chisholm, Senior Lecturer, Department of Food Business & Development, UCC

09:40 **Valid Nutrition's Approach and Contribution to Addressing Acute Malnutrition**

Dr Steve Collins, Chairperson, Valid Nutrition

09:55 **Opening Address**

Seán Sherlock T.D., Minister of State for Development, Trade Promotion, and North-South Co-operation.

10:05 **Smallholder farmers' experience with groundnut production – results from four year livelihoods analysis**

Gretta Fitzgerald, Project Researcher and PhD candidate, University College Cork

10:55 Q&A

11:05 Coffee

11:20 **The Utilisation of ICTs in Development Research**

Mike FitzGibbon, Lecturer, Department of Food Business & Development, UCC

11:25 **Constraints faced by Malawi farmers and possible policy remedies**

Howard Dalzell, Director, Valid Nutrition

12:15 **Local and International Macroeconomic Constraints to Competitiveness in the Malawi Groundnut Value Chain and RUF Production**

Paul Murphy, Chief Executive, Valid Nutrition

12:30 Q&A

13:00 Close

Background to the Study

PRESENTATION OF A RESEARCH STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A LOCAL RUTF VALUE CHAIN TO COMBAT ACUTE MALNUTRITION IN MALAWI

Since 2010 the Department of Food Business and Development at University College Cork, in conjunction with Valid Nutrition and the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development at Bunda College, Malawi, has carried out research on the development of a Groundnut-based Value Chain, the purpose of which is to produce Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) in Malawi for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition. This research, and the associated value chain development, have been largely funded by Irish Aid.

The specific purpose of the research was to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the intervention on the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. The intervention comprised of the setting up of a guaranteed groundnut purchasing scheme for smallholder farmers, allied to advisory supports to address the problem of aflatoxin contamination, as part of a larger project to establish the value chain.

MALAWI: WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Almost 15 years ago, the founders of Valid Nutrition, together with Irish Aid and Concern Worldwide, piloted a radically new approach to the treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). SAM kills approximately 1 million children under 5 years of age each year. The new approach was called CTC (Community-based Therapeutic Care), now known as CMAM (Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition). CMAM is based on the use of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food, (RUTF, a peanut paste product highly fortified with vitamins and minerals) distributed through organized community networks. Valid Nutrition manufactures groundnut-based RUTF in Malawi and argues that all the RUTF and its ingredients should preferably be produced locally, provided various constraints can be overcome. This involves development of a sustainable local RUF value chain.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL RUF VALUE CHAIN

Through various local partners, Valid Nutrition in Malawi has been working to develop a sustainable value chain for high quality, aflatoxin-free groundnuts, mostly sourced from poor smallholder farmers, and suitable for the local production of RUF. Since Valid Nutrition began production in Malawi in 2005, they have faced many obstacles; one of the biggest and most persistent is the sourcing of sufficient quantities and quality of groundnuts all year round.

SCHEDULE FOR THE EVENT

The event comprises three major presentations. The first presents the results of the four-year study tracking changes in smallholder livelihoods as the intervention developed. The second comprises an overview of higher-level, policy-related constraints in Malawi which also need to be addressed if smallholder farm families' livelihoods are to be improved. The third discusses the economics of local RUTF production. There will also be a shorter presentation on the use of digital data-gathering devices, which were used to collect the data used in the livelihood analysis.

