Tamale, January 12. The Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) is implementing a four-year project to assist smallholder farmers in three African countries to supply their national School Feeding Programmes.

The Project known as: “Procurement Governance for Home Grown School Feeding Programs” which is to be implemented in Ghana, Kenya and Mali is been funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with a 7.5 million dollar grant.

Under the Project over 78,000 farmers from these countries would gain access to previously denied markets, improve their livelihoods and incomes, while millions of children would receive better nutrition through their schools.

Mrs Fati Bodua Seidu, Country Coordinator of the Project, said this at a “two-day stakeholder planning workshop on facilitating smallholder farmer access to the GSFP ready market” in Tamale.

The workshop was on the theme: “Partnership for a viable market opportunity for smallholder farmers.”

Mrs Seidu said under the project in Ghana, 20 districts would be selected and it was expected that over 10,000 smallholder farmers, including at least 30 per cent women would gain access to the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) as a market.

She said the over dependence of smallholder farmers on market prices mirrored their vulnerability since increase in production led to price deterioration because domestic demand for staple crop was inelastic.

She said although some marginal efforts had been made to procure local food for the GSFP, procuring food crops from smallholder farmers in the beneficiary communities in a planned, coordinated, participatory and strategic manner still remained a challenge.
She said for smallholder farmers to gain access to these markets there was the need to explore feasible supply and procurement chains for the GSFP and to strengthen the linkages between the GSFP as market and caterers, processors and smallholder farmers for active participation and ownership of local institutions.

She said creating alternative viable markets for these smallholder farmers would greatly boost local food production and enhance their incomes.

SOURCE: GNA