February 2016

RURALITY

APPROACH
OUR APPROACH: VTTTV

PHASE 1 VT

SCOPING VISIT AND RURAL DYNAMICS DIAGNOSTIC
We look at the supply chain together with the companies/brands and we select the potential candidates (mills/factories) that are supplied by farmers. Then a rapid assessment of the candidate is done in order to see to what extent the candidate is sharing Rurality’s vision. If the scoping visit is successful - showing a need for Rurality - we proceed with the Rural Dynamics Diagnostic (RDD). We believe that readymade solutions imposed on farmers are not the way forward. The proximity and close ties with farmers are key to understand them, to build trust and to propose avenues for change and innovation.

PHASE 2 TV

TRANSFORMATION AND VERIFICATION
Upon completion of Phase 1, the action plan agreed by farmers is implemented in collaboration with those who are willing to embark on the journey. They will execute strategies related to profitability, production, accounting, environmental/social responsibility, management, and basic development needs. During and after transformation phase, various indicators are analyzed in order to appreciate the impacts of Rurality on farmers’ resilience. Those indicators are collected by third parties including farmers and their communities.
# GLOBAL OVERVIEW

## PHASE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCOPE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify potential locations and farmers for Rurality projects</td>
<td>Look at the supply chain and hold meetings to introduce Rurality to the traders/mill</td>
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<td>Engage with those farmers</td>
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<td><strong>RDD</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain a better understanding of the farmers' situation and challenges</td>
<td>Conduct group and individual meetings with farmers and stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthen the trust between Rurality teams and all the stakeholders (including the farmers)</td>
<td>Develop a participative action plan that works for all stakeholders</td>
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## PHASE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSFORMATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop partnerships and foster communication between farmers and other supply chain actors</td>
<td>Implement the action plan defined in the findings of the RDD</td>
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<td>Develop and promote innovations and entrepreneurship</td>
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<td><strong>VERIFICATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitor the results of the project</td>
<td>Assess the impact of Rurality with KPIs</td>
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Because Rurality doesn't believe in a one size fits all solution, there is a need to understand the current situation and the real challenges that farmers are facing.

- A Rural Dynamics Diagnostic (RDD) is the tool used by Rurality in order to get a holistic understanding of the farmers' environment.

>> Each RDD is unique and adapted to the local context.

THE RURAL DYNAMICS DIAGNOSTIC (RDD)

UNDERSTAND THE FARMER

>> RDD doesn't focus only on farming system but also at management practices, financial issues, housing etc.

- Decision making process
- Farmers' History
- Farming system
- Living conditions
- Working conditions
- Household economics
- Farmers' vision and expectations
- Observing his/her agricultural and management practices
- Understanding his/her challenges
**MAP STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH FARMERS**

- Stakeholders: each person/organisms that have an impact on farmers’ work and life.
- Identify key stakeholders, their respective interests and feedbacks.
- Understand living and working conditions of permanent and temporary workers.
- Understand the interactions with mill/factory.

>> RDD doesn't focus only on the farmer but also on all its interactions between farmers, mill/factories, NGO, government, associations, workers, middlemen etc.

- Decision making process
- Farmers’ History
- Farming system
- Living conditions
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INTERACTIONS OF FARMERS AND STAKEHOLDER WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

As we work in the framework of TFT, environmental issues are also significant in our approach. We also study compliance of all stakeholders with legal issues.
The Rural Dynamics Diagnostic (RDD)

IDENTIFY MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

As we have a market based approach, we study farmers’ challenges to reach the market and we look at market opportunities before choosing to develop a specific activity (diversify crop, processing etc.).

>> We do not focus on one commodity but we look at all the market opportunities.

DEFINE KPIs

As our objective is to increase farmers’ resilience, we need to define for each different RDD Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for a baseline to enable monitoring of project’s performance from the current baseline onwards. Here are listed some KPIs that are common for all RDD (not exhaustive list):

- Number of sources of incomes — diversity of incomes/household.
- Surface of food crops/person (each crop to be detailed).
- Surface of cash crops/person (each crop to be detailed).
- Number of dependents/ farmer.

Those KPIs will be followed in the short, medium and long-term by third party auditors including farmers and their communities.
**BUILD TRUST**

Fundamental to the approach is the trust building with all the key actors, not only farmers but members, dealers, mills, farmers’ organizations, etc.

"AT FIRST I DIDN’T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY WERE HERE, BUT WHEN I SAW THEM WALKING ME ON MY PLOT, GETTING DIRTY, ASKING A LOT OF QUESTIONS, I KNEW THEY HAD A REAL INTEREST."

Farmer

"WE LEARN ABOUT THE FARMERS’ STORIES AND NOT JUST ABOUT THEIR FARMING PRACTICES. WE CAN SEE THEIR ROLE IN THE VILLAGE, THE WAY THEY THINK ABOUT NGO’S, THE GOVERNMENT, OR JUST LIFE IN GENERAL. YOU REALLY BUILD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH FARMERS WHEN YOU GET TO SEE THEM MORE THAN ONCE."

Rurality staff

"SOME FARMERS THINK WE ARE TAX COLLECTORS. ONE OF THEM DIDN’T WANT TO LET US INTO HIS HOUSE, DURING THE FIRST VISIT. WHEN WE CAME BACK, IT WAS TOTALLY DIFFERENT. HE INVITED US IN, WE SHARED MEALS WITH HIS FAMILY."

Rurality staff

"RURALITY STAFF STAYS IN THE VILLAGES, WE SEE THEM AROUND OR IN THEIR OFFICES NEARBY. THEY DON’T JUST COME ONCE AND NEVER COME BACK."

Farmer
To get the information we need, we have to collect data from the field. However, Rurality has a holistic approach and privileges qualitative understanding of system functioning rather than quantitative data that are then put into statistics.

**DATA AREA CAUGHT AT DIFFERENT LEVELS:**
- community,
- farmer,
- middlemen,
- mill/factory,
- local authorities, health centers, schools,

**AND BY DIFFERENT WAYS:**
- **Document review**
  Documents from mill/factory, farmers, health authorities, schools etc. are reviewed by our staff in order to assimilate information about volumes sold, quality, statistics etc.
- **Individual Interview with farmers**
  Our staff conduct one-to-one farmer interviews starting in the farmer’s house and ending in their fields.
- **Group interviews in communities and village**
  They are conducted to introduce Rurality initiative and approach to farmers, associations, dealers, local authorities etc.
• **Field Visits**
  Our staff visit each farmer’s fields to take information about maintenance, fertilization system and topography. Some short technical supports can already be given at this stage.

• **GPS Measurements**
  GPS Measurement of each farmer’s plots are done by our staff that have to walk all around the field borders with the farmer. Those moments are an opportunity to build trust between Rurality team and farmers. Field size and shape can be read directly from GPS screen and are given to the farmer.

• **Stakeholders Interviews**
  Semi-structured interviews are conducted with stakeholders (dealers, middlemen, mill/factory, associations etc.).
The way we collect our data

**TOOLS USED BY OUR STAFF IN THE FIELD:**

- **Questionnaires**
  They are elaborated by each Rurality field team. Each questionnaire is specific to the area, local context, language etc. They are composed by qualitative and quantitative questions and guidelines for semi-structured interviews. They are used as guidelines as individual meetings should be conducted as a normal discussion.

- **GPS** for field measurement.
- **Database** that contains all the quantitative and some qualitative data that are entered and stored to be afterward statistically analyzed.
Rurality undertakes the work by placing at least one of its team members in the field, living in the rural environment and in constant relationship with the mill and the farmers. We believe that only by field presence the trust can be built and maintained throughout time with different stakeholders: smallholders, mill manager, local government etc.

What are the qualities we are looking for to hire Rurality staff?
• Have an open mind and be concerned about rural issues.
• Ability to talk local languages.
• Humble, have good listening qualities and be respectful.
• Ability to work in remote & rural areas independently.
• Able to develop and free up innovations from farmers.
• Have an agricultural/social background.

OUR TEAMS
IN THE FIELD

Charles and Grace are Rurality staff working in Ghana. Here you’ll find their experience about doing a RDD with oil palm farmers in the area of Takoradi.

Organization of their work: they spend 4 days per week in the villages and 1 day at their office. They sleep at the farmers’ houses or in village guesthouse.
LAKARIM
Lakarim has a Bachelor of Science, with a Major in Wood Science & Technology, and a Master of Science (Wood Science). He previously worked at Sime Darby Research Centre for 1 year. After pursuing his masters studies, he joined KLK (Kuala Lumpur Kepong) company as an assistant manager which specialized in upkeep and maintenance, Fresh Fruits Bunches, harvesting etc.

LISA
Lisa has a Bachelor of Arts (Social Science) with a Major in Sociology and Social Anthropology. She previously worked as a social analyst with an environmental consultancy firm for 4 years in Sabah, Malaysia. She is specialized in handling social Impact Assessments for development projects, such as in housing development, quarry, sand mining, esplanade, jetty, government’s building, palm oil, rubber estates, logging, roads construction & forest reserves.

Debriefing of Prasad the Local Office Manager of Malaysia
“This interview session consisted of group ice-breaking activities, fun group activity, presentation about TFT and Rurality, individual presentations, role play, document preparation and individual interview. The whole interview session gives room for more interaction, sharing of personal thoughts, inducing cooperation, enhancing creativity and innovation”.

Our teams in the field
A DAY WITH OUR TEAMS

THE PREVIOUS DAY
Rurality team made appointments with 6 farmers (3 farmers/day each). They ask them to clean the field boundaries in order to facilitate field mapping.

6AM
• They wake up with the farmers.
• They go to one farmer’s house and start talking with farmers. Questionnaires are used like guidelines, individual meetings are conducted like a normal discussion.
• In farmer’s house, they discuss about living conditions, household incomes, school and health access.
• They also draw with the farmer a map which shows all the different fields and crops and their localization with respect to the farmer’s house.

11AM
Then they can join the farmer who is going on the fields. They walk with the farmer to reach oil palm plots that can be located more than 3km from the village. Walking is part of the job as it gives space for open talking facilitating trust building and also helps to realize farmers’ challenges: access to the plots, access within the plots, challenges for harvesting and transport FFB etc.
1PM

- They visit the fields with farmers asking questions and observe maintenance, fertilization, erosion, harvesting, date of planting etc.
- They map the field by walking with the farmer following the boundaries. This task could be difficult if boundaries are not cleaned. They need to be equipped with waterproof boots as some of the plots are swampy. They can give the plot size directly to the farmer as it appears on the GPS screen.

2PM

They provide technical and practical trainings, in weed control, chemicals contents, seedlings, and maintenance for example.

3PM

- Finally they have a chat together in order to share their comments about what they have seen and heard during the day and their understanding of the context. They take notes that will be used for the writing of the report. They fill progressively the database.
- They enter GPS coordinates in ARCGIS software and draw farmers’ map.
- This is the end of the day; they take part of house and village activities. They can also meet farmers to make appointment for the next days.

4PM

Once they’ve finished interviews, field visits and mapping they come back to the village. They have a rest and they can meet some farmers to complete some specific questions like the exact amount of FFB (Fresh Fruits Branches) sold or look at the information contained in empty bottles’ labels.
The entire RDD is written by the staff that has conducted the individual interviews and field visits/measurement. Rurality places particular emphasis on this point, because this staff has a holistic understanding of the situation and can bring knowledge that doesn’t only come from statistical data or questionnaire answers but from open and informal discussions, feelings and observation. GPS coordinate are analyzed with ARCGIS software and maps are shaped. Farmers’ maps are integrated to a file containing information such as farmer name and surname, village, number and age of trees in the plot, distance of the plot from the house etc.

TOWARD THE ELABORATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

Once the in-depth holistic understanding is drawn, we are able to propose an action plan that will answer the identified challenges. Each RDD is different therefore action plan can have different aspects as they address very different issues. Even two action plans addressing the same issues won’t propose the same strategies as RDD is adapted to each context and each farmer or farmers’ association story, management, practices, organization etc. The action plan is continuously presented and discussed with farmers, mill/factory and other stakeholders.

• The full RDD report containing findings, data analysis, database, KPIs and action plan as well as a shorter version is delivered to our member.
• Printed maps are then given to farmers to increase farmers’ knowledge about their field. Those maps are not land tittle but they can be used to request a loan for example.
• A catalogue detailing all the innovations that have been observed on the field.