

Rationale and protocol for 'Enquiry Visit I' (Dr2)

Output 3 and the enquiry objective

The objective of Output 3 of the project is 'to develop a focused understanding of the factors which influence farmer decision-making with respect to grain storage technologies to better facilitate the uptake of DEs'. The enquiry visits, and associated framework, were designed by us to explore farmers' ideas about these factors.

The study communities are Mlali, Mwamakaranga and Babati, i.e. a subset of the RMT locations that were selected to introduce agro-ecological diversity into the study. The tool itself is 'farmer' rather than 'resource' or 'location' focussed, so might be used anywhere. There are however advantages in working in the same study areas as the FMTs.

The project purpose cites the development and promotion of strategies that will improve the food security of 'poor households'. Poverty has been described as having multiple dimensions. Key project stakeholders hold and operate according to different interpretations of poverty (e.g. a fair claim can be made that 'middle wealth' households in the study locations, as ranked by key local informants, are relatively impoverished i.e. compared say, to central government officials (?), First World farmers). It is suggested that the enquiry visits be carried out for 18 HHs at each location, of which a minimum of 6 (max 8) HHs should come from the 'least wealth' group, as previously identified by key village informants. The bulk (or all) of the remainder should come from the 'middle wealth' groups. Sampling issues, which have already received much theoretical consideration by us, will not be elaborated here. The preceding proposal is recommended as a pragmatic approach that will allow us (after the 3 enquiry visits) to elaborate on the realities of poverty at the village level, to link this to the factors associated with farmer decision-making, and to be able to make recommendations on the dissemination and promotion of DE technologies (e.g. focussed dissemination outputs, complementary/alternative pro-poor extension messages, improvements to extension services).

The unit of analysis for the enquiry visits is the 'household'. The enquiry framework was also intended to provide for the systematic collection of gendered data on post-harvest activities and resources. This should not rule out our use of existing sources of information (please share references) but will elaborate and underpin present levels of understanding.

Enquiry visit I format

The enquiry should follow the same pattern on each occasion (see outline below). The context for 'enquiry visit I' is that of recent (3-4 months) **pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest activities** (past & current), and the actual '**outcomes**' (e.g. quantities harvest, stored, sold etc) of these activities. The farmer, as expert, is invited to share with the interviewers what s/he has been doing. No leading questions, but the interviewer or recorder should probe against specific activities (i.e. who, when, how, where, how much, why).

This should not be an 'extractive' process in which the interviewer is only seeking to fill boxes and complete the task. In processing the data it is very obvious where this has already happened as the information becomes 'generalised' with the farmer feeling increasingly under pressure to meet the interviewers demands and providing answers that refer to what they might 'normally' do as opposed to what they actually 'did'. A balance has to be found between our desire for comprehensive information and the farmer's (and our) time use. The interview team should not be visiting farmers with the intention of collecting all data for season-long activities in one visit.

After hearing about recent activities and their outcomes, the interviewer invites the farmer to indicate any 'causes' - **factors - behind the outcomes**; this first requires inviting the farmer to indicate what might comprise a '**normal**' outcome to establish whether current outcomes are better, worse or the same as previous seasons. The farmer will probably already have referred to some of these matters while talking about activities undertaken. It was because of the potential for overlap and repetition - but also so as not to distract the farmer - that we agreed the 'enquiry form' would not be used during the interview, but rather the recorder should simply note all that is said by the farmer in a notebook.

Having heard from the farmer his/her (or their) ideas as to the factors influencing the outcomes, we want to know if the farmer has any specific **plans (future) for the coming period**. At the enquiry I stage we are

specifically interested in post harvest issues: his/her estimates of the HH's total grain harvest, the amounts they hope to store and/or sell, or anything else pertaining to post-harvest matters (e.g. plans to purchase a new kihenge, intended storage treatments etc). It is important not to 'wring' plans out of the farmer; and (on the basis of previous experience) it is quite probable that many farmers will be waiting to see what happens rather than actively making plans. Equally we do not really need to know about farmers' plans for introducing exotic livestock or setting up an eco-tourism business (note suggestions down, but steer the farmer back on course). Post harvest plans that are referred to will serve as a discussion point for the next visit; the success or failure of realising the given plans then serving as an opportunity to explore the farmer's decision-making processes.

The **farmer's information network** (which will be gendered) is explored by inviting the farmer to indicate **recent changes in his/her post-harvest practices**. For each change in turn (e.g. return to use of kihenge, use of ASD etc) the 'who', 'where' and/or 'how' that gave rise to the innovation is explored and noted. This gives rise to quantified and qualitative information on the farmer's information networks, rather than the generalised uncritical list that tends to be offered when a direct approach is used. Typically by this stage the farmer will already have referred to a number of innovations, so that often the interviewer can simply following up on information already shared (e.g. earlier references to: father recommending kihenge, input stockist and pesticide use), plus probe for other innovations.

The final stage of the interview relates to **HH livelihood activities** (disaggregated) and the **HH resource base or assets** (disaggregated). Again many of the activities already undertaken by household members will already have been raised (e.g. cash crops grown, hiring land to increase production, renting out land for cash), as too will many of their assets (e.g. land owned or rented, livestock, ox cart, plough, labour base [including that hired]). This stage of necessity is more extractive, and it is essential to be sensitive. This information will ultimately be used to 'characterise' the livelihood options and/or wealth status of each HH, together with acting as a check on the initial 'wealth ranking'. It should not only enable us to distinguish between different HHs in any one community, but also to make comparisons between communities.

Information overload, particularly re assets and better-off farmers, is a risk here and should be countered with common sense. If someone has a burnt brick house with tin roof, a working vehicle, and multiple occupations etc, they can presumably afford ASD, so we don't need details on the four-posted bed and silk counterpane - a picture will do (of the house - not the bed!). It is harder with people who have much less, and who may not be able to prioritise 'expensive' storage protectants. Here it may be important to spell out the limitations of their resource base (e.g. no access to clean water).

This stage also provides the opportunity for systematically collecting data on their storage structures and equipment - physical capital - and it is desirable whenever possible to take photographs of these assets.

There will of course be changes over time in the mix, quantity and quality of many HH assets, and this together with any gaps will be picked up at the next visit.

Concern was expressed at the recent planning workshop that future farmers' involvement might be diminished (for a variety of reasons). To off-set this possibility, but equally importantly to embed future farmers' experimentation with DEs in 'their' reality, and not an artificial or imposed one, it is proposed to offer HHs that partake in the enquiry work, a 250 gm. packet of DE. Details of just how this is to be implemented using existing extension personnel - Bwanashambas - will follow. It is important to note however that the provision of this protectant, will presumably alter most farmers behaviour for the coming storage season, and we shall need to bear this in mind at the enquiry II stage. The Bwanashambas will be instructed in the monitoring of the selected farmers' use of the DEs. It is anticipated that subsequent interviews with the Bwanashambas, together with the follow-up enquiries, will provide triangulation with the farmers' views, and a further window on the constraints faced or experienced by local extension staff.

Basic visit protocol

- Participant farmers (18) identified in advance based on combination of 2003-04 FMT farmers plus minimum of 6 HHs (max 8) from the 'least wealth' ranked group.
- Bwanashamba informed of proposed visit in advance in order to alert participant farmers and arrange interview times etc.

- Team members need to be fully briefed on the rationale and format of the visit (and 2 at least practised in the enquiry visit procedure) before commencing enquiries.
- Interviewer and recorder need to be designated in advance; the Bwanashamba would also be part of the team, and where competent *might* take the role of interviewer or recorder (providing s/he will also be available for data entry).
- Interviews take place at the participating HH's home.
- No more than 3 people should be present, in addition to household members (and non-participants who might prove to be a distraction are probably best steered away, providing this doesn't place the interviewee under any additional strain - and having local children around may be favourable)
- **Team members should work to ensure the following focii (focuses) during Enquiry I:**
 - Allowing the farmer (or other HH members) to inform and enlighten the interview team - within the specified context.
 - Exploring harvest and post-harvest issues.
 - The grains (or legumes) for which DEs have already been identified as potentially appropriate.
 - Household divisions in labour, other activities, and access to resources.
- **Visit procedures**
 - Meet and greet farmer and household - Bwanashamba makes initial introductions?
 - Interviewer refers to earlier project work at the location and/or involving HH members, making reference to the project's purpose: to develop and promote strategies that will improve HH food security.
 - Interviewer explains the specific objective of this and the two further planned visits to the farmer:
 - to hear from the farmer about how the 2003-04 FMT (if s/he took part)
 - to learn from the farmer about factors that influence his/her and HH PH decision-making
 - to facilitate provision (at a point in the future) of a small quantity of DEs (1 packet - 250 gm) together with instruction for its use by the bwanashamba, for the farmer to use (or not) as s/he sees fit in the coming storage season.
 - Interviewer confirms farmer's interest in taking part in the series of interviews, and that s/he is happy to undertake the interview now (or at a later specified time).
 - Interviewer explains his/her and the reporter's roles, plus the presence of anyone else. The enquiry framework form should not be used, and certainly not filled in during the interview, but rather the reporter should simply and without distortion (i.e. dudus & measurements etc recorded using farmer's words) write down all the farmer says.
- **Interview procedure**
 1. Basic farmer/HH details are collected from farmer (see 1st section, page 1, enquiry framework form, draft 10 [EEF10]).
 2. Farmer's perceptions (generally & specifically: sight, sound, touch, smell etc) on the two FMT samples (p.1, EEF10).
 3. Farmer invited to describe recent (3-4 months) 'maize' related activities, particularly harvest and PH activities; interviewer probes further (e.g. who, where, when, how, how much, why). Information relating to other crops and/or livelihood activities are all relevant, particularly if they have constrained use of time or resources on focus grain (maize) - but identifying all recent activities relating to the key subjects is most important (e.g. any renovation of storage structures, or hygiene practices?) (pp.2-3, EEF10).
 4. Farmer invited to indicate the actual outcomes associated with maize related activities (quantity & quality of maize e.g. harvested to date, shelled, threshed, treated, stored, sold) (p.4, EEF10).
 5. Farmer invited to comment on 'normal' outcomes, and how current outcomes compare (last year is interesting, but is not the same as an estimation of 'normal' - we want 'normal') (p.4, EEF10).
 6. Farmer invited to comment on the factors that s/he perceives as having influenced these outcomes; used in conjunction with concept of normal - why are things better, worse or the same? (pp.4&5, EEF10 - but these are 'confusing' in present format)

7. Farmer asked what if any plans they have, relating to the maize, for the near future (e.g. are they planning to sell so much, store so much, treat so much (with what?), select so much seed etc) (p.6, EEF10).
8. Farmer asked to describe recent PH and/or storage innovations; the interviewer then explores the 'who', 'where' and/or 'how' that gave rise to the innovation - which will include part of the farmer's information network (p.6, EEF10).
9. Using a more direct approach, but also based on much that will have already been conveyed by the farmer, the various activities - livelihoods - adopted by HH members are explored, together with various resources that are available to HH members (i.e. human capital [education, training, health & labour], ownership and/or access to natural resources, social capital [membership, relations with family & neighbours], physical capital [status of house; energy, transport and communication sources; tools & equipment - and specifically PH resources], financial resources [income, access & exit of credit]) (p.7-9, EEF10).
10. Ask farmer now if there are any questions he would like to ask. It's tempting for extension staff to get sucked in to offering the farmer advice - often reverting to the normal top-down mode - at an earlier stage. It's important to stick to the 'learning from the farmer' mode throughout the interview, as otherwise the switch of roles may distract the farmer.
11. With permission take pictures of the farmer in front of his/her house so that construction and roof details are shown and any other interesting assets (e.g. ox cart, oxen, stores). Take pictures of PH storage structures and equipment whenever possible. Cleverly cited pictures can capture aspects of wealth or poverty.
12. Wind-up interview; offer thanks and indicate the probable return dates of the Bwanashamba (with DE packet) and the next interview - enquiry II - date.
- 13.

➤ **Data processing**

- The information should be 'processed' as soon as reasonably possible after the interview. Assuming a number of interviews will be carried out in the village on the same day, then this information should be processed that evening and/or the next day.
- Processing the information requires both the interviewer and recorder to be present to ensure the best possible quality of information is recorded. When in doubt leave it out - and recheck with farmer at a later date.
- Data processing involves transferring all relevant and accurate information, supplemented by the team members' accurate recollection, from the reporter's notebook to the enquiry framework form (EEF). Start at the beginning of the notes and as each piece of information is 'entered' at the relevant place/s in the EEF, use a highlighter to cross through that information. Information that is not entered should not be crossed through (check with Rachel). All notes should be retained.
- Data should ultimately be entered using the computerised form; but initially hand-written forms may need to be generated.
- File computerised data using the agreed data labelling code (check with Rachel).

Some basic 'Dos' and 'Don'ts'

- **Do** please raise any - ANY - issues about Output 3, the enquiry work and next year's FMTs, with MM and the core team ASAP.
- **Do** please give this work the same priority and degrees of rigour - in planning, implementation, data processing - as the RMTs.
- **Do** please stick to the timetable and to the above protocol (modified to accommodate improvements) as far as is reasonably possible - and invite others to be the judge of 'reasonability'.
- **Do** please note any deviation/s from the above.
- **Do not** rely on the enquiry framework form draft 10, if it appears to contradict this document. EEF10 is due to be revised. Its present form was intended to reinforce individual's understanding of the livelihoods framework, but it would seem to be confusing and thus counter productive.

- **Do not** allow any personal opinions or prejudices to influence your contribution to the work (examples on request).
- **Do** please help ensure that the selection of poorer households is undertaken so as to include different aspects of poverty, and not constrained by operational convenience (e.g. many poor people are typically located away from the road and community facilities, when others - the elderly or disabled - may be more readily accessible; ideally we should sample both).
- **Do not** hold farmers' actions with respect to the 2003-04 storage season FMTs (e.g. consumed or sold trial grain) against them. As the subjects of our concern (i.e. those whose food security we wish to improve), and the ultimate arbiters of the success of this project, we should not be sitting in judgement.
- Please supply more...

Protocol for briefing Bwanashambas (to follow later tonight)