‘It takes two to tango’: participatory tool for assessing firm-farmer relations

Firm-farmer partnerships and contracting: taking market linkages to the next level

Grace House, Nairobi, March 6th 2012
Participatory assessment tool

« It takes two to tango »

A tool that helps to harness views of farmers and firms on their business relation, based on the same set of statements

Purpose: substantiate and fuel exchange between farmers and firm on issues at stake and options to improve the relation
Methodology
# Seven steps

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1. **Customization and organization**

- Every situation is different

- Tool allows for (and encourages) customization:
  - Exchange with farmers and firm on appropriateness of tool
  - Define context, objectives and main chapters (assessment areas)
  - Identify indicators
  - Formulate statements
  - Agree on sample and identification of respondents
  - Plan debriefing and next steps
Assessment areas : example

• Case of chili contract farming with company specializing on drying and export of ABE chilies
  – Production
  – Functioning farmer groups
  – Markets and prices
  – Contract
  – Quality standards and record keeping
  – Benefits of contract farming
2. Identifying indicators and formulating statements

• Indicators for identified assessment areas
• Formulate easy to understand statements

• Lessons:
  – Positively stated statements
  – Active tense
  – Test statements (also translation)
  – Check whether statement indeed ‘measures’ one issue
  – Sometimes use two or more statements for same indicator

Example of statements
3. Introducing the self-assessment to farmers

- Optional: introductory session
- Sample of respondents
  - Leaders, staff and members
  - Owner and direction company, staff of company
  - Men and women
  - Geographic location
## 4. Farmers scoring statements

### Scoring the statements
The scoring form looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.......... STATEMENT ........</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every member gives his/her opinion on the statement by asking “Is this statement true or not true?” And: “To what extent is this true or not true?”
4. Farmers scoring statements: experiences

- Likert scale: 0 to 5 or 0 to 3 (scores can be put on 100-scale)
- Duration: 30-120 minutes

- Lessons:
  - Explain scores (0-5 or 0-3) very well
  - Use local scoring systems and use symbols
  - Seating of respondents
  - Individual, pair-wise or group scoring
  - Everybody can do it, even illiterate farmers
5. Data entry and processing

- Pre-defined work sheets
- MIN-MAX
- STDEV
- Totals and averages, also for sub-groups
- Graphs automatically generated

Lessons:
- Make sure that work sheets match with (tailored) questionnaires
- Immediate data entry and quick debriefing very much appreciated
- Accept to work late at night ....or make appointment for next meeting
6. Preparing debriefing report and meeting

Presentation in form of graphs and basic reports

- Introduction
- Overview of total average scores and scores per assessment area
- Overview of scores per statement
- Graphs showing level of agreement
- Major outcomes according to survey results (no interpretation)

Example report
7. **Sharing and discussing self-assessment result`s**

- First step: Explain how scoring forms were processed, how calculations are done and how graphs are generated
- Second step: discuss results in detail

**Lessons**

- Let farmers and firm check data entry (using scoring forms)
- Go ‘into the computer’. This transparency is highly appreciated
- Farmers generally quickly understand the line-bar graphs
- Start discussion on results (first bilaterally; with farmers and with firm)
- Let farmers and firm proceed, facilitator comes back later
- Facilitate dialogue between farmers and firm
Examples of graphs and output
Overall results (scores on 100 scale)
Overall results (difference in scoring)

Level of agreement (sub-groups of respondents)

Areas

Production
Functioning farmer group
Markets and prices
Contract
Quality standards and record keeping
Benefits of contract farming

Difference in scores farmers and company

-10
-5
0
5
10
15
For what subject should (apparently) something be done?
Where is highest and lowest agreement on statements? What does this imply?
Four possibilities

- Farmers and firm agree on high score
- Farmers and firm agree on low score
- Farmers are (much) more positive than firm
- Firm is (much) more positive than farmers

→ What does this mean/imply?
→ How to deal with this as a facilitator?
Draft report

• Cf. draft report for results of other assessment areas

→Report can/must be improved. What could for instance be done?
Follow-up

- The self-assessment does as such not lead to advice or suggestions for improving the firm-farmer relation.
- Follow-up is crucial, otherwise the tool is confined to mere data collection.
- Interpretation is necessary. Why are high or low scores given? Why are farmers and firms having different views?
- It is up to the farmers and the firm to analyze the results of the self-assessment and discuss follow-up action.
- Outsiders (facilitators) may however ask questions and eventually give suggestions and even advise
Some final remarks
‘It takes two to tango’

- Practical and flexible tool
- Gives quick results, that are easy to understand
- Facilitates communication between farmers and firm
- Tool for self-assessment of F-F relation, but also of potential interest for external facilitators
- Tool is transferable to PO’s, firms and facilitators, can be applied by PO staff, company staff, young professionals
The tool holds a mirror

How do the farmers and the firm see their relation?

Where are the white, black and grey spots?

Mirror: helps with combing hair, putting make-up, shaving, ...

→ improving the relation

‘Magic tool’
Other – additional use of the tool

• Public sector or donor/NGO interest to support firm-farmer relations
  – Self assessment can be linked to more in-depth analysis of the F-F or contract farming relation (using other methods and tools)

• Also other interfaces such as farmers and research, farmers and banks, farmers and ....
“If external people come to you and start pointing at your weaknesses you are likely to defend yourself but do nothing.

If you discover the same weaknesses yourself, you most likely start working on them, especially if improved performance translates in better business”